Who Are Your Elected Officials?

History:
The “Who Are Your Elected Officials?” was launched in early September 2010. The goal of this program was to provide an application for the public to find out who their elected officials are without contacting government agencies or departments. The parties involved in creating this website were united in finding a simple, easy-to-use solution for their citizens to contact their elected officials. With such great collaboration, the State of Indiana has been able to assemble an application like none other in the sense that it has over 12,000 elected officials’ information and is extremely easy to use.

Significance:
With over 12,000 elected officials in the “Who Are Your Elected Officials?” application, it is an extremely useful tool for the public in collecting contact information regarding their elected officials. State and County Clerks’ offices across the State are receiving fewer phone calls from the public requesting contact information for their elected officials. Since its release in September 2010, the website has received over 85,000 visits. Spikes in traffic are related to events such as elections and when the President informs the citizens to contact their elected officials. The screenshot below is from November 2011. Please note the increased traffic leading up to election day (each dot in the graph represents a day). On November the 8th, there were 1,693 visits in a single day.

The website is a one-stop-shop for all elected officials in the State of Indiana whether it being a senator, governor, county commissioner, mayor or school board member. Every visit to the website is one less phone call or email being sent to a government employee to find out information about an elected official. By allowing users to access this information online, it reduces the time for users in obtaining this information and allows them to access it 24/7/365. Since time is money, this application saves tax payers money by not wasting the time of government employees by asking them the same questions over and over.
If a user has a question regarding the website, there is a feedback button that allows the user to email a member of the support team for additional support. All questions are addressed within a few hours of submission. Since this information is dynamic in nature, county clerks and members of the Secretary of State’s office have the ability to edit the data as needed. All changes are made effective immediately.

**Impacts / Results:**

This program has contributed to the improved function of state government by providing contact information for elected officials. Many of the elected officials have websites that are linked to this application so the user can click on a website link for a specific official and get additional information such as a supported legislation. By saving valuable time of government employees in relaying contact information for elected officials, these employees are able to be utilized on other projects or tasks.

This application also saves time for the public who is trying to find the information. Often, the public may not even know who their elected officials are which makes it nearly impossible to find the correct elected official. By searching on an address, the information for the elected official serving that area is listed in an easily consumable format.

The application is simplistic in design and is able to serve any user. By simply typing in an address or selecting a location on the map, all elected officials from the President of the United States to the local School Board member is retrieved. Users of the application are able to download reports in Microsoft Excel format.

Another benefit to the statewide website has been for the local governments for not having the burden of deploying their own applications to disseminate elected official contact information. This reduces the cost involved for the other government branches in having to create, maintain and monitor a site. It also eliminates 92 different applications and makes it homogenous across the State. Instead, the County Governments provide a link to the “Who Are Your Elected Officials?” on their sites to encourage the public to obtain the information through the application.

In closing, since the site has become operational there have been 62,993 visits (as of November 2011). Each visit is approximately 1 minute in length. That is over 1,040 hours that the site has been used. Realistically, if a phone call had been placed in lieu of a visit to this site, that phone call would have approximately been 5-10 minutes in length as the person would spend time explaining what information they needed and then wait for the employee to find that information.

**Additional Information:**

Please contact the Indiana Secretary of State’s office (http://www.in.gov/sos) or 39 Degrees North (http://www.39dn.com).