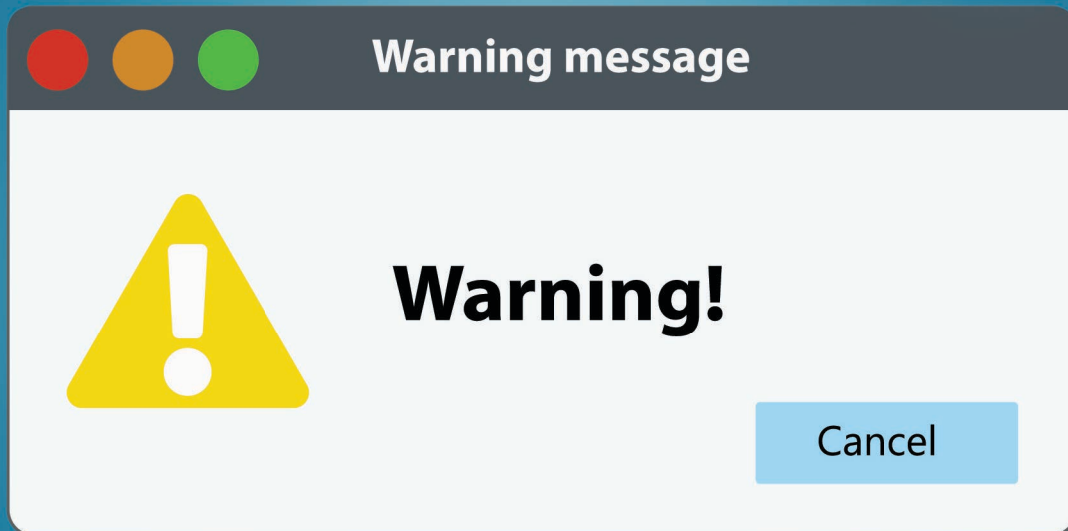


The Iowa County



October 2017
Cybersecurity Month





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ISAC's Mission:

To promote effective and responsible county government for the people of Iowa.

ISAC's Vision:

To be the principal, authoritative source of representation, information and services for and about county government in Iowa.

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Feature - Useful Terms

Anti-Virus

A security program that can run on a computer and protects you by identifying and stopping the spread of malware on your system. Anti-virus cannot detect all malware, so even if it is active, your system might still get infected. Sometimes anti-virus tools are called 'anti-malware', these products are designed to defend against various types of malicious software.

Derek J. Olson

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Drive-by Download

These attacks exploit vulnerabilities in your browser or its plugins and helper applications when you simply surf to an attacker-controlled website. Some attackers set up their own websites that are designed to automatically attack anyone that visits the website. Other attackers compromise trusted websites such as e commerce sites.

Firewall

A security program that filters inbound and outbound network connections. In some ways you can think of firewalls as a virtual traffic cop, determining which traffic can go through the firewall. Most computers today come with a firewall installed.

Malware (Virus, Worm, Trojan, Spyware)

Malware stands for "malicious software". It is a program attackers use to perform malicious activities. Traditionally there have been different types of malware based on their capabilities and means of propagation. Today these distinctions are no longer relevant as modern malware combines many of the characteristics into a single program.

Phishing

Phishing is a social engineering (see below) technique where attackers attempt to fool you into taking an action in response to an email. Attackers send out emails pretending to be something they are not. Their goal is to fool victims into clicking on a link in the email. Once clicked, victims are taken to a website created and controlled by the attacker. If the victim attempts to login, their login and password would be stolen. The term has evolved and often means not just attacks designed to steal your password, but emails designed to send you to websites that hack into your browser, or even emails with infected attachments.

Spear Phishing

Spear phishing describes a type of phishing attack that targets specific victims. Instead of sending out an email to millions of email addresses, cyber attackers send out a very small number of crafted emails to very specific individuals, usually all at the same organization. Because of the targeted nature of this attack, spear phishing attacks are often harder to detect and more effective at fooling the victims.

Social Engineering

A psychological attack used by attackers to deceive their victims into taking an action that will place the victim at risk. For example, attackers may trick you into revealing your password or fool you into installing malicious software on your computer. They often do this by pretending to be someone you know or trust, such as a bank, company, or even a friend.

Ransomware

Ransomware restricts access to data by encrypting files or locking computer screens. It then attempts to extort money from victims by asking for "ransom," usually in form of cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, in exchange for access to data. Payment of the ransom does not guarantee access to your files. A good backup is the only true savior if your files are encrypted.

Feature - Spear Phishing

How I Learned to Slow Down and Read My Emails Before I Clicked

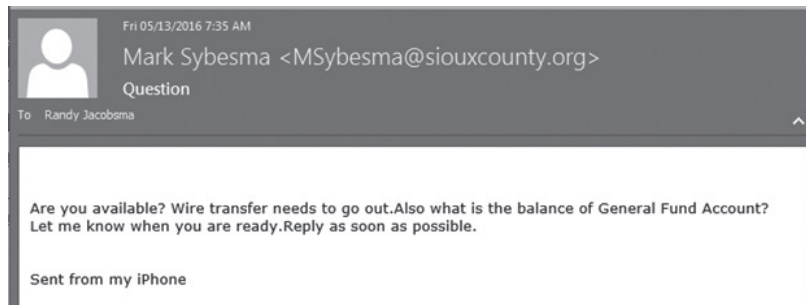
Spear phishing has become a very popular method for the “bad guys” to infect our systems or get information from us. It is a very direct and targeted email that is sent specifically to you. It has information in it that the person getting the email would easily recognize and trust.

Joel Rohne

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A great example is the spear phishing attack that was targeted at the county treasurers last year. This email looked very legitimate. It had the name of the county board chairperson, it had the county treasurer name, and it also asked a question that a supervisor may ask.



Some Treasurers did respond back to this message and were given more instructions on how to do the wire transfer. Thankfully the word on this “attack” spread quickly and everyone was alerted before money left the county. But this does give us a warning that the “Bad Guys” know our names, email addresses, the people that we work with, and some of the terms we use. The attack last year came from somewhere in Nigeria. **We will see more of these in the future.**

The “bad guys” will do more research and create even better emails to try and fool us into doing what they want. I say “bad guys” because not only are we dealing with criminals from the U.S. and the rest of the world, but we are also dealing with foreign powers. China and Russia are known to be big threats.

You will hear the term “social engineering,” and spear phishing is a big part of that. Social engineering is when the “bad guys” try and deceive us and then manipulate us into providing them with information that they will use. This can be done with email, such as a spear phishing attack, or with other methods. Phone calls, pop up messages on your computer, and even letters in the mail are all ways that “bad guys” will try and get us to give them the information that they want from us.

An example of a phone spear phishing attack would go something like this. A county employee gets a phone call from a fake “Tyler” customer service rep (bad guy). The Tyler rep tells the employee that Joel from IT called them and needs them to fix an issue. The Tyler rep needs your help to fix the issue. They then ask for access to your system or maybe a password so that they can get in and fix things because Joel from IT really needs this done soon. By dropping the name of the software company that you use and the name of your IT person (or an elected official) these calls can be quite believable, and we ALL want to help Joel from IT right???

The best defense against these attacks are to slow down and ask a few questions before clicking or giving out that information. Would this person really be asking me for this? Is this something that normally happens around here? Why am I being asked this? A little hesitation and taking some time by confirming what is going on could save you time and money in the long run. Education is always an essential component of cybersecurity! Many counties across the state have a cyber education policy and program that they run throughout the entire year. One example of a good cyber education program is the SANS “Securing the Human” training. This program is actually free for the counties and paid for by the State of Iowa using Homeland Security grants. Email Allison Radl (alison.radl@iowa.gov) to get the details. Another program some counties use is called KnowBe4 (www.knowBe4.com). KnowBe4 not only provides educational videos and training but allows you to phish your employees on a regular basis so that they become more aware of what phishing attacks look like and how to spot them. There is a charge for this service. Please contact me if you would like additional information.

Spear phishing attacks against counties across the state and nation are only going to increase and become harder to identify. We need to be educated and prepared so that we can keep our data and our citizen’s information safe from those “bad guys,” wherever and whomever they may be.

Feature - Phishing

Phishing

Rick Stemming, Zenith County Auditor, wearily clicked through his unread emails. The soft blue luminescent glow of the monitor filled his office. The radio quietly played Vivaldi's Four Seasons in the background, which helped ease his mind. Tomorrow would be the first General Election that Rick would oversee and he needed to make sure that there were no irregularities.

Micah Van Maanen

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Zenith County had recently become Iowa's 100th county as citizens from Douglas County, Nebraska voted to secede to Iowa after a fierce battle over which state could provide the best bacon. Iowa accepted Douglas County with open arms, but required them to change the county name to reflect the wise decision they had made.

Over the previous few months Rick and his staff had worked tirelessly to prepare ballots, register voters, train poll workers, and test election equipment. Throughout that past few weeks the auditor's office had received numerous phone calls and emails from the press and party representatives asking how to obtain the election results. The answer was always the same; please check our website and social media accounts.

As Rick was working through his emails, he noticed one with an invoice attached in a Microsoft Word document. They had been ordering a lot of supplies and equipment for the election, so it wasn't out of the ordinary. Rick opened the attachment but it didn't look like anything he had ordered, so he closed it and deleted the email. After working through a few more emails, Rick headed home for the night since he would have to be at the office early the next day.

When he arrived at work the next morning, he turned on his computer and noticed a prompt that said his computer was infected with a virus. The pop-up box gave him a phone number to call to resolve the issue. Rick was extremely concerned; he needed his computer today and couldn't have a virus slowing him down. So he called the number. A helpful voice answered the phone and told him they would be happy to assist. They simply needed access to his computer to run a scan and remove the virus. Rick asked how long the process would take, explaining that he needed his computer back as soon as possible. The helpdesk professional said the scan would only take 10-15 minutes, but the cost would be \$300 since this was a particularly nasty virus. The \$300 also included support for an entire year so if his computer is infected again, he could simply call the hotline for help. Rick thought that sounded like a pretty good deal, especially the part about having his computer back in 10-15 minutes.

So he connected the voice on the phone to his computer and watched them perform the scan. In 15 minutes Rick was back to using his computer, and he thanked the support professional as he hung up the phone and got to work. Rick answered a few phone calls from election officials and thought everything was going smoothly until he received a text from his wife.

She said that she received an email from him with a strange website link, so she wanted to find out if it really came from her husband. Rick quickly replied and said, "no, that email didn't come from me." Then he received a phone call from one of his staff members who said they received a similar email. Then Rick received an email from the Secretary of State's office letting him know that they too received the same email from Rick.

Rick suddenly had a sick feeling in his stomach. His entire contact list had been emailed this malicious email. This time he knew what to do. He quickly sent an email to his entire contact list telling them to delete the previous email they received from him. Then he turned off his computer and called his good friend, True IT Professional. Rick explained the situation and told Mr. Professional that it all started when he opened that email attachment last night. Mr. Professional asked Rick if he had a recent backup of the information on his computer. Thankfully, Rick had heard at a recent meeting how inexpensive and easy it was to backup his computer, so yes, he had a backup.

Mr. Professional cleaned up Rick's computer and by the afternoon of his first Election Day as county auditor, Rick was back in business. He also contacted his credit card company and they refunded the \$300 he had spent with the fake helpdesk company. The election results came in and were tallied without any issues. Late that night Rick Stemming went home, enjoyed some delicious Iowa bacon, and resolved to be more diligent about verifying that emails were legitimate before opening them.

Feature - Ransomware

Ransomware

It appears that ransomware is always in the news. From CryptoLocker to Wanna-Cry, these risks are out there, and the consequences of an infection may pose more of a risk than you realize.

Adam Woerdehoff

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What is ransomware? Ransomware is a type of malicious software that encrypts the files on your computers and servers leaving them impossible to access unless you pay a fee. Usually, the fee is paid in bitcoin.

How is ransomware spread? There is no one way that ransomware is spread. From email to social engineering, there are multiple avenues for ransomware to enter your system.

What happened to Fake County, Iowa? As many readers may have guessed, Fake County, Iowa doesn't exist! However, this story serves as an example of a ransomware attack and is based on actual events.

It was a normal day. Sheriff Smith was looking through his email on his outdated Windows XP desktop when he came across a familiar looking email from a Best Buy order he had made earlier in the week. The attachment looked as though it was a receipt from his purchase, so he opened it up thinking nothing of it. After a minute or so he tried again. Nothing seemed to be happening, so he ignored it for the time being. He had more important things to do.

As he started digging into his work, everything came to a screeching halt. His whole computer was disabled and he got a pop up that read:



This is an especially tough place to be in for a sheriff. They're not accustomed to paying ransoms as you could imagine. Sheriff Smith then brought in a few colleagues and asked them if they were experiencing anything like this. None of them were, so they decided to dig a bit deeper. Leaving his computer on, Sheriff Smith then went to a working machine and began to check other server locations that had been mapped to his desktop. Sure enough all the files and databases on their network were encrypted and inaccessible.

This had officially become a major issue, an emergency! Open case files, ongoing investigations, day-to-day business files. They were all encrypted. When asked if any investigations were put on hold because of the incident Sheriff Smith responded, "All kinds of investigations

have been set back because of this event even if they're not put completely on hold. We have open assault investigations, drug investigations, and a lot more. This has severely impeded our ability to properly perform our job and could potentially pose a threat to the community."

This is a scary thought because most people wouldn't think that a computer virus could pose a physical threat to the community. With that at stake, the sheriff's office had no choice but to pay the equivalency of \$500 in bitcoin to get the encryption keys to unlock their files. "That's a challenging thing for anyone in law enforcement to do. Twenty years ago, I would have never imagined a computer virus would force us to pay a ransom," stated Sheriff Smith. He also added, "We just did it to protect the citizens of our community and to get back to normal day-to-day business around here."

Feature - Ransomware

How could this have been avoided? First of all, nothing is 100% effective. There is an ongoing battle between security, usability, and bad guys. The more security you have, the more frustrated end users can be. The less security you have, the better chance there is of something like this happening to you. It's a fine line.

As an end user. As an end user some of the most important things you can do to keep you or your business safe is to make sure you're updating your computer. Not just the operating system (Windows for example), but the software installed on the operating system as well. If you see those annoying popups begging you to update them, don't ignore them! Update them! Everyone is on the same page that this is not ideal when you're just trying to get your work done, but just getting it over with can save you a lot of time and money down the road.

Don't open an email that's at all suspicious. If you think something looks fishy, make sure you contact your IT department and ask. Trust me - they'd rather answer your "silly question" than to have to deal with a ransomware attack. If you don't have an IT department there are resources through ISAC, ICIT, and the State that are discussed in this magazine.

Backup your data. Since there is no one way to 100% protect yourself from ransomware, backups are a must. There are countless managed service providers out there that would be happy to help you develop a robust backup system so that in the unfortunate case you are hit with ransomware you can get your data back without paying.

USB Drives. If you find a USB drive laying around, DON'T put it in your computer! You never know what could be on there and someone may have left it behind on purpose just waiting for an unsuspecting user to pop it in their computer and get infected. The easiest way to avoid this is to just toss it in the trash. USB drives are inexpensive these days, so just get a new one.

Social Engineering. Social engineering is when someone calls or attempts to enter your place of business with the goal of doing something malicious on the network, or simply gaining a bit of knowledge about your business for exploitation down the road. If someone asks for access to your server room, such as the cable guy or someone from your internet company, ask them for ID. You might feel a little silly at first, but this is frequent practice, and if they've been in the field for a while this should be completely normal to them.

I hope this story and tips have shed some light on how to stay safe in a constantly evolving online world. Remember to help each other out and to stay diligent!

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Feature - Paying IT Forward

ICIT and Paying-IT-Forward

"Paying it forward" is a third-party beneficiary concept that involves doing something good for someone in response to a good deed done on your behalf or a gift you received.

Hayley Rippel

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This is my chance to tell of the good deed the Iowa County Information Technology Organization (ICIT) did for Benton County in the spring of 2016. Benton County asked them to conduct a review of our current IT infrastructure. At that current time we did not have an in-house IT employee, instead we contracted out. The goal of this project was to provide impartial recommendations for general enhancements and long term visions for how technology would continue to be used to serve our projects and internal services of Benton County.

The ICIT team consisted of five professionals with plenty of experience in IT which was not only developmental, but they were also very familiar with best practices in county government for this project. This project was comprised of two sections: Technology Audit and Technology Plan. The findings were then grouped by category and ranked by priority (critical, moderate, low, and best practice). Additionally, in-depth examinations of areas with the potential to impact Benton County's security, business continuity, or departmental efficiencies were also conducted.

I have personally been acquainted with these individual professionals from attending various ISAC meetings and events over the years, but I also am a member of ICIT and have proudly sat alongside them on conference committees. With that being said, I am in no way an expert in any of the above areas I have mentioned. This team knew how to step down the vocabulary in words that us non-IT employees could understand and agree with. The findings and recommendations were easily defined to our terms. Obviously, critical priorities would need handled as soon as possible. Security and back-up were our main concerns. In fact, we had some things resolved before the team even left our courthouse.

Having neutral faces conducting interviews with our county officials and department heads, it was expressed that most would be happier with an on-site IT professional staffed within the courthouse. This person would provide the same level of customer service while also providing a more proactive approach to our county's needs. Benton County would continue to keep the month-by-month contract with our current vendor to allow time for a full-time employee to be hired. This would allow for a smoother transition and give enough time for the new network administrator to become familiar with operations of existing software and networks within Benton County.

This team was a blessing to work with, not only did they provide the review of our IT situation, they helped guide us with our hiring process as well. They added verbiage for our job description, reviewed resumes, and even sat in on the interviews. They knew what kind of questions to ask that were of most importance and would help make the ending decision the best practical decision to benefit Benton County. I am happy to report that Benton County found the perfect fit for us. Our IT-administrator, Ben Turnis has been with us full-time since November of 2016.

The world can seem like an unfriendly, threatening place, yet we all want the same outcome. Safety, health, and happiness for ourselves, co-workers, and loved ones. Be attentive and aware of your surroundings. Do something nice for others, smile at strangers, open a door for someone, and most importantly, have a positive attitude!! Spread the word, sharing a good thing, or an ability that others don't possess is one way to practice "Paying it Forward". Benton County is grateful for the help and professionalism we received from this team. Cybersecurity is so important and will continue to be even more critical in our future. We can't afford to be without our IT professionals.

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Feature - Tripwire

Vulnerability Management

The State of Iowa's OCIO (Office of the Chief Information Officer) has been helping willing counties increase their security and vulnerability over the last few years. Probably one of the biggest ways they have helped is to provide counties with the Tripwire IP360 EVMS (Enterprise Vulnerability Management System). This is a product funded by homeland security grant money and administered out of the OCIO. If this funding were not available to counties, this program would likely be cost prohibitive. Tripwire has been available for several years now and has probably saved counties that use it countless viruses and malware. So what is it, and how does your IT departments use it?

Andrew De Haan

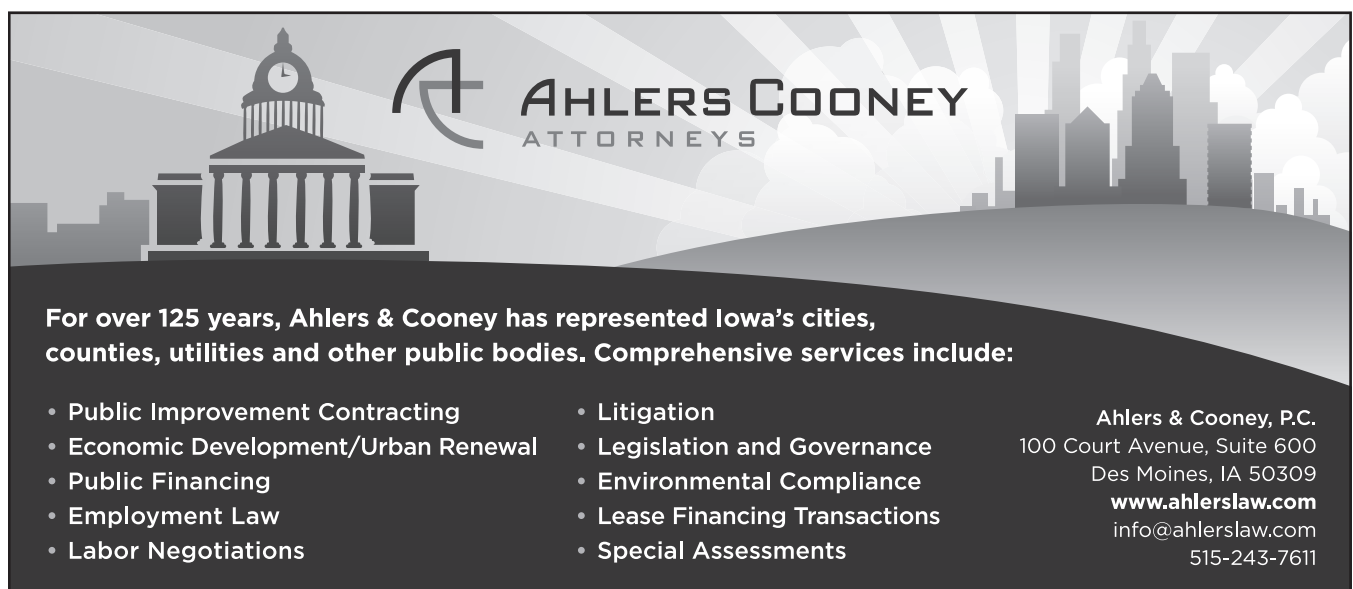
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As you may have heard from your IT professional, the best way that hackers and unsavory people can compromise your computer with viruses and malware is to use exploits in software. Software exploits can be found in the operating system such as Microsoft Windows, MacOS, Android, or even Apple's iOS. Software exploits can also be found in applications that you run on your computers or phones such as Adobe reader, Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, Java, or even internet browsers such as Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, and FireFox. Most well-known and widely used applications will, at some point, be susceptible to some sort of exploit. The software manufactures will often find these exploits and provide an update or a 'patch' to fix an exploit in their software. The best way to protect yourself from those exploits is to perform routine updates on all of your operating systems and third-party software.

This may seem like an overwhelming task, and in many cases it is; however, this is where the Tripwire appliance helps out in a major way. Tripwire is a dedicated computer that is programmed to scan all of your computers, printers, access points, and any other device that is on your network and to look for known vulnerabilities. Usually this is setup on a routine schedule such as daily, weekly, or monthly. Its job is to find vulnerabilities, which are generally in the form of software updates and occasionally some configuration issues. This helps to take the guess work out of what updates and patches may or may not be missing on a particular device.

Your IT professional can easily look at a report and see what the most severe threats are to your computers and can work toward fixing them. This gives a very tangible way to help better protect your computer networks. This can easily be seen by Tripwire's scoring system. After a vulnerability scan has been run by the Tripwire appliance, it will provide a network vulnerability score. The higher the score, the worse the network will be. This is an amazing tool that is extremely easy for an IT professional to use, and it is somewhat exciting when you can see your score go from 50,000 to 5,000 in only a couple of weeks. It has been very beneficial to Marion County and will continue to be used on a weekly basis for us as new updates and patches are constantly coming out.

If your county has a Tripwire system from the OCIO, but you have never seen a report and are interested in seeing one, contact your IT professional to have them generate you a report. If your county doesn't currently have a Tripwire system and are interested in getting one in your county, you may contact me or the OCIO to get you started.



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Feature - Tripwire

Threat Detection

As a member of the Iowa Counties Information Technology Organization (ICIT) Security Committee, I get the opportunity to meet with members of the Iowa Chief Information Officer's Office (CIOO) three to four times per year to discuss cybersecurity issues, programs, or initiatives we can help each other with.

Ryan Eaton

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Some of the state's projects are funded by federal grants and are shared down to counties and public schools. This has included vulnerability scanning devices, cybersecurity training, and national security group memberships.

At the state's Network Operations Center (NOC), they monitor state agencies' offices for known and new attacks, viruses, and malware. All IT departments do this with antivirus and malware detection software but not at this scale.

The most vulnerable period of time for IT is the gap between a new threat coming out, a fix or prevention being issued, and when it is finally being applied (usually 24 to 48 hours).

One of the CIOO's projects very near and dear to my heart is the FireEye threat detection system. FireEye monitors worldwide for activity that is suspicious or indicative of malware or viruses and uploads that information to operation centers with their product's devices. If network activity matches one of the newly discovered viruses, NOC gets alerted, and they can shut it down. They can then determine if there is a fix, or they can keep that machine offline until there is.

County IT staffs have been able to install client software that reports back to the State's FireEye and they can issue alerts or contact IT staff by phone depending on severity of a potential infection.

Two years ago I was the recipient of one of those phone calls you never want to get.

I was presenting to the Board of Supervisors and had my phone on silent. I felt it vibrating, but had to wait until I was done. I first checked my email and saw I had a request to call NOC then, I saw two missed calls from Michael Chesmore, with the CIOO's office, and the panic set in.

They were showing traffic going out to Middle-Eastern countries from one of the sheriff's servers. They immediately shut it down and gave me a quick analysis. Being a two-person IT department, we did not have the resources to properly handle this situation, and with being connected to law enforcement, there were additional concerns.

Jeff Franklin, also from CIOO, and Michael jumped right in and made the calls to the FBI, DCI, and the Multi-state Information Sharing and Analysis Center. I spent the day on the phone giving interviews with all the agencies listed and more to determine what info they had access to. Fortunately, the CIOO's staff were able to provide for how long they had access and to where.

Again, we have tools to prevent and detect vulnerabilities at the county, but we did not see the traffic on our firewall. It actually was sending out over secured connections to toughbooks in patrol cars and then out over their Verizon mobile hotspots.

Without FireEye we had no way of knowing it was happening and how long it would have gone on.

When it was all pieced together, it was found to be a malware that had snuck into the server and sat dormant for months. When it activated, it was a spambot sending out using the server but not specifically targeting law enforcement.

Servers were rebuilt and laptops cleaned. More controls and monitoring internally were implemented, but we continue to install the Fireeye client on every desktop, server, and laptop in the county.



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Cybersecurity Coverage

What is cybersecurity coverage? Does your county need it? Does it really matter? Let's talk.

If you use a smart phone or tablet; make use of a credit card, have ever applied for a loan, utilize online banking, file your taxes electronically, or even just live in modern society, **you are at risk!** If you work for a county or organization that processes online payments, collects personal information from residents, handles property appraisals and/or taxes, or utilizes any other resident information, **you are at risk. Your entity is at risk!** And it's time you protect yourselves.

For individuals and counties alike, our information is "out there." We utilize, save, and store information that is confidential in nature, and, as we become increasingly more reliant upon technology and electronic communication, we make it more readily available to individuals that can do us harm. In fact, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) states, "the opportunity for 'bad actors' to compromise such information and cause difficulties for businesses and the public is exploding." (www.naic.org)

But what happens when that information is compromised? We – our person, our entity, and our residents – are put at the mercy of hackers who can steal identities, open fraudulent lines of credit, commit financial crimes, and more. It is downright scary to think about what can happen in such instances, especially now, on the heels of what was arguably the largest data breach in history: the Equifax breach. This breach was – and remains – a huge deal, if, for no other reason, than the sheer number of people who were affected. Even worse is the fact Equifax isn't alone. Such breaches occur regularly and on varying scales for corporations, non-profits, public entities, and individuals alike, and they are not the only cyber threat we need to be aware of. Other causes for concern include some of those listed in this magazine and more: spyware/malware; ransomware; phishing; trojans; botnets; wiper attacks; drive-by downloads; malvertising; and rogue software..

These – the many exposures and cyber threats – we face on a daily basis – are why cybersecurity coverage is essential for public entities. If you are reading this, pay attention: hackers are targeting your county! Now, more than ever before, counties are at risk of a breach. We must all take steps to protect our county and our residents, and we must also ensure we have adequate cyber security coverage in place.

For members of the Pool, ICAP makes this easy. ICAP automatically offers its member Cyber Liability and Cyber Breach coverage so member counties are provided for in the event of an eligible loss. Cyber Liability coverage is a casualty coverage provided to a member for protection against third party claims alleging the member committed certain types of negligence regarding computer systems or networks. Cyber Breach coverage is synonymous with "Data Breach coverage" which provides coverage in the event of an unintentional release or disclosure of private or confidential information to an untrusted party.

Cyber Liability coverage is provided to ICAP members at their full Wrongful Acts limit, whereas Cyber Breach coverage is available to members at \$250,000 per occurrence/aggregate limits. In addition, ICAP also offers members Electronic Data coverage at a \$100,000 limit when electronic data is endorsed on the policy. Together, these coverages work to "mitigate losses from a variety of cyber incidents, including data breach, business interruption, and network damage." (www.dhs.gov)

Each covers a specific category of loss, and helps ensure our member counties are provided for in the event of an eligible breach or other act of cyber theft. Similarly, the Pool offers its members exclusive resources to help them mitigate the potential for such an act. Through partnership with NetDiligence, ICAP provides its membership access to the Cyber eRiskHub, an invaluable resource through which members can learn about breach response, incident response planning, state notification requirements, and more.

Member and non-member counties alike can learn more about the Pool's exclusive coverage and service offerings, including the eRisk Hub, by visiting the ICAP website (www.icapiowa.com) or by contacting Kasi Koehler at kasi@icapiowa.com.

Kasi Kohler

Iowa Communities Assurance Pool (ICAP)

kasi@icapiowa.org

ISAC Annual Conference

Summary of Minutes - Welcome General Session

ISAC President Peggy Rice called the General Session to order and led the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance. Bill Peterson gave conference announcements.

Ana Lair, Henry County Treasurer, recognized Dorothy Lewis as the 2017 ISAC Excellence in Action Awards winner. Renee Twedt and Lori McDonald accepted the award on her behalf.

Daniel Chadwick, Idaho Association of Counties Executive Director, and Senator Joni Ernst discussed what it takes to be a United States Senator.

President Rice adjourned the session.



ISAC Annual Conference

Summary of Minutes - Closing General Session

President Rice called the meeting to order and introduced the ISAC Executive Committee, Bill Peterson, and the ISAC Board of Directors.

Bill gave a background on the ISAC Golden Eagle. Rick Sanders, Story County Supervisor, honored and introduced Wayne Clinton, former Story County Supervisor, as the 2017 ISAC Golden Eagle. Wayne addressed the General Session.

President Rice shared her thoughts on her year as ISAC president.

Alex Sheen, founder of Because I Said I Would, gave the keynote address.

President Rice adjourned the Session.



NACo News

2017 NACo Annual Conference

“Art, freedom, and creativity will change society faster than politics.”

- Victor Pinchuk

Melvyn Houser

ISAC NACo Board Representative
Pottawattamie County Auditor

melvyn.houser@pottcounty-ia.gov

When I first took this role as ISAC’s representative to the NACo Board of Directors, my predecessor, Grant Veeder, suggested that, when writing these articles, I should pick one subject from the conference and just write about that. Naturally, I ignored his suggestion. There is usually so much going on at a NACo conference that it is difficult to pick just one subject. Writing these, I’ve been trying to find a couple of themes and trying to tie them together in some sort of clever conclusion. Readers probably don’t notice, because I’m not very good at it. But, really, everything is connected. So, I’m trying to connect arts and culture with childhood poverty, toxic stress, and brain development. Mr. Pinchuk’s quote is the best I could find. Victor Pinchuk is not a famous thinker or philosopher, but a wealthy Ukrainian businessman. Probably not a lot of credibility there, but it is a nice quote anyway.

NACo’s Annual Conference was held in Columbus, Ohio, home of Ohio State University. Columbus was never on my list of places to visit, but when I learned that it has a thriving art scene, I looked forward to going. The city is refurbishing the Short North District and incorporating public art pieces. At the entrance to the convention center is a bronze statue of Arnold Schwarzenegger. I couldn’t imagine a connection between Arnold and Columbus until I learned that this is where they have some sort of international body building competition. On the wall of one building was Grant Woods’ American Gothic. But it was upside down for some reason. Maybe it was a Buckeye statement on the Hawkeyes. I now think that Columbus is a pretty good place to visit.

The general sessions had a lot of good speakers. Among them were the new Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, and conservative commentator, Lou Dobbs, who painted a very rosy picture of the potential for America’s prosperity. We are on the cusp of a great increase in job creation and growth, he said. I didn’t much agree with what he had to say, but it was kind of fun. Secretary Perdue was just as dynamic in his presentation. He is optimistic about rural America. He and his staff are ready to address the issues of health care, opioid addiction, and broadband. He also wants to get rid of job killing regulations. Nobody likes over regulation. But we mustn’t let the pendulum swing too far the other way and have a lack of regulation harming our natural assets. Like Margaret Meade said, “We won’t have a society if we destroy the environment.”

Ann Hazlett is the new USDA assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development. She spoke to both the Ag and Rural Affairs steering committee and the Rural Action Caucus. Both Michael Meit and she from the Walsh Center for Rural Health Analysis spoke on rural poverty and diseases of despair, like suicide, chronic diseases, and substance abuse. According to the Center, this is mostly a rural issue. Poverty, rural or urban, has a profound affect on early childhood development, also. Any of you

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supervisors who are involved with your local Early Childhood Iowa programs are probably well aware of this. At the Healthy Counties Early Childhood Summit, Dr. Thompson from UC Davis said that if a child spends only one year in poverty, it increases their chance of chronic disease by tenfold. Not only that, but, these toxic stresses alter gene and brain development. Here is another quote. This one from Maria Montessori, "Early childhood education is the key to the betterment of society." But it is more than just educating the child. We all need to be educated on the importance of the issue. That is why NACo President Roy Brooks' initiative is addressing childhood poverty. I will probably write about this issue again after NACo's Childhood Poverty Symposium this December.

At the Board of Director's Forum there was quite a lot of discussion on state preemption. Some Iowa counties experienced this last legislative session when they overruled county ordinances on minimum wage and bans on plastic bags. This is happening all over the country. Local control is slipping away. Not only that, and you all know this, actions at the state level are impacting local finances. President Bryan Desloge says that the state legislators will look like heroes, while the locals will become the scapegoats when they have to raise taxes to provide the services that people expect. That is why we need to engage the public and educate them on county government's role. And one of our roles is to develop policy resolutions and proposals to the state and federal lawmakers. That is what we do at ISAC, and that is what we did at the NACo Board of Directors Resolutions meeting. All resolutions from all of the Steering Committees were approved and forwarded to the general membership.

I always like to let you know about some of the interesting people I meet at NACo. This time I will have to give a shout out to Iowa county Auditors. Besides Grant Veeder and I, ISAC President Peggy Rice from Humboldt, Pat Gill from Woodbury, Heidi Burhans from Madison, and Becky Belt, Pottawattamie finance officer also attended the conference. Heidi and Becky both said that many of the workshops were very applicable to their work back home. Auditors work so closely with supervisors that they need to be clued in to issues that they are dealing with, like transportation, mental health, community development, and, of course, taxes. So, auditors, it would be worth it to your county to attend a NACo conference and experience it firsthand. If the supervisors won't go, maybe you should, because we all are doing what we do in order improve our communities and society, whether it's through art and creativity, protecting the environment, or addressing childhood poverty.

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2017/2018 Calendar

October 2017

- 8-11 Assessors Annual Conference
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 17-19 Veterans Affairs Fall Conference
(Embassy Suites Downtown, Des Moines)
- 24 Iowa Stepping Up Summit
(HyVee Hall, Des Moines)

November 2017

- 16-17 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)

December 2017

- 3-6 ISSDA Winter School
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 5-7 ICEA Annual Conference
(Ames)

January 2018

- 17-18 ISAC University
(Sheraton West Des Moines)

February 2018

- 1 Statewide Supervisors Meeting
(Embassy Suites Des Moines Downtown)

If you have any questions about the meetings listed above or would like to add an affiliate meeting to the ISAC calendar, please contact Kelsey Sebern at ksebern@lowacounties.org.

2018 Conferences

- March 3-7 NACo Legislative Conference (Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.)
- March 15-16 ISAC Legislative Conference (Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center)
- July 13-18 NACo Annual Conference (Gaylord Opryland, Nashville, TN)
- August 22-24 ISAC Annual Conference (Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center)

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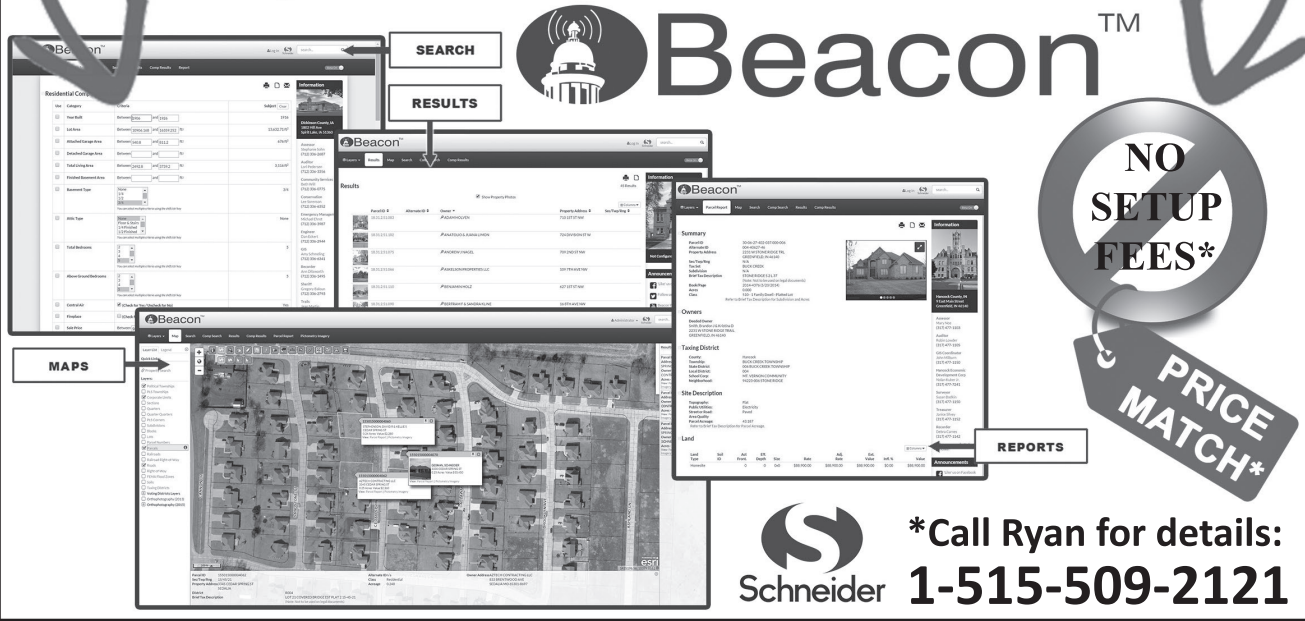
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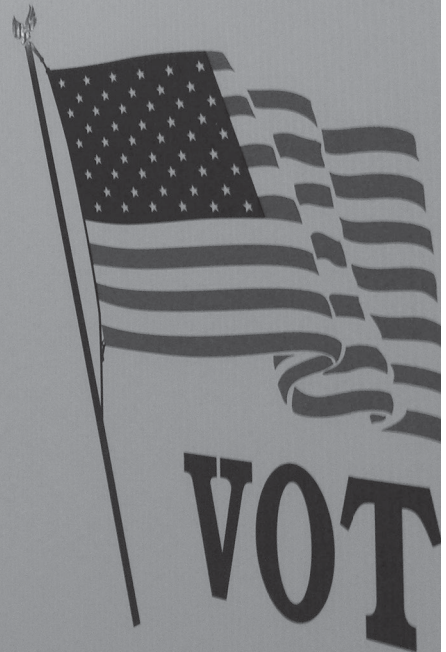
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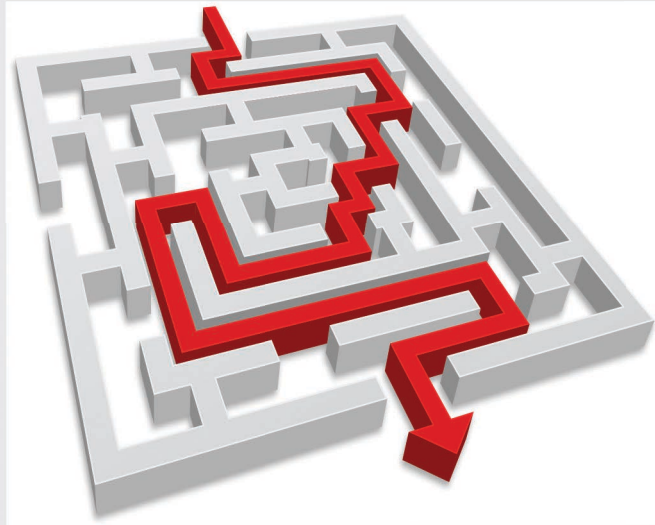
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