

## California Department of Conservation Explores Benefits of Big Data

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After seven months on the job as CIO of the California Department of Conservation (DOC), Catherine Kendall is hard at work learning the inner workings agency's Enterprise Technology Service Division (ETSD) and spearheading initiatives to help DOC's IT staff best support the common good.

Kendall's information technology career began in the 1990s, where she worked as analyst and programmer for Accenture (1994-1996) and business process re-

engineering and testing consultant at Deloitte (1996-1997). Shortly after working on her master's degree in 1998, she managed an internal project at IBM.

While the CIO position is Kendall's first in the public sector, her involvement in California IT dates back more than 16 years. In 2000, IBM offered her the position of application development project manager for Child Welfare Services (CWS) Case Management System (CWS/CMS).

"That's when I got my first taste of working in state government and the thing I loved about it was there was different sense of responsibility knowing that we were providing support to social workers and case workers in CWS," Kendall said in an interview with *TechWire*. "When a server was down, it was different than when a billing server was down. This felt more meaningful."

Kendall spent more than a decade in total at IBM in various roles supporting California's CWS/CMS, as well as New York's Project Office, before she moved to the position of director of IT consulting for the California Medicaid Management Information System at CGI, where she worked until 2011. Following that, she began doing side consulting jobs, one of which was with the DOC.

Kendall began her work as CIO in August 2016, replacing Terese Matchim. One of the first tasks she took on was creating a clear mission for how ETSD should operate.

"Our mission is 'Partnering with the business to deliver smart solutions,'" Kendall explained. "Our vision is 'Sustainable technologies for a sustainable California.'"

In January, she disseminated her personal vision for DOC, outlining goals, expectations and challenges for staff, referred to as the ETSD Chief Information Officer "What Am I Thinking" and "Where We Are Headed" document. Kendall said she plans to update and release the report on an annual basis.

Under Kendall's leadership, ETSD has been focusing on two main issues: bridging the gap between business and IT, and reducing technical debt by retiring systems that are no longer sustainable. To assist with these goals, Kendall recently appointed a legislative liaison on her team who meets with the Office of Governmental and Environmental Relations to help the division stay on top of future legislation that may require investment in technology.

ETSD is also exploring the power of big data and analytics, and has been talking with different vendors to demo solutions and building use cases to potentially purchase systems at a later date. While Kendall said she is unsure whether the division will go to bid for the project, she said they're mainly looking into software-as-a-service systems.

Gathering appropriate facts and figures will also support DOC in implementing the [WellSTAR project](#), a new statewide tracking and reporting system Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources. Kendall said first deployment of WellSTAR will take place in August, upon which her division will assume responsibility of the system.

"As a scientific and engineering organization, we have mounds a data," Kendall said. "The opportunity to harness and position that data, so we can not only draw insights

from it, but also position us to take advantage of more advanced technologies in the future.”

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<http://www.govtech.com/data/California-Department-of-Corrections-to-Procure-Online-Services-for-Project-Planning.html>