Minnesota CIO Tom Baden Brings a New Level of Service

Steve Towns | August 24, 2015

Minnesota's Tom Baden may be new to the state CIO position, but he has deep experience in state government. Over a 32-year career in public service, Baden has held a number of high-level positions, including two years as Minnesota's enterprise architect and five years as CIO for the Department of Health and Human Services.

Baden takes the helm of the state's MN.IT Services almost five years after the organization was created by a legislatively mandated technology centralization plan. He says it's time for Minnesota's central IT department to evolve.

"It's time for us to move into the next level of maturity around the way we deliver services, the way we do our financials, the way we're organized, and just the spirit in which we deliver IT for the state," Baden said.

MN.IT will put new energy into working with state agencies to solve business problems, he said. "It's not so much a culture shift as it is a purposeful, intentional approach to working with our partners and being very focused on delivering solutions."

Although Minnesota will continue to operate traditional enterprise systems, Baden also predicts growing use of hosted development platforms like Salesforce and GovDelivery for certain state applications, as well as more activity around civic hacking. To make

greater use of community developed solutions, the state will create a framework and certification process for integrating these new apps into its existing technical environment.

"We want to have an integration model where we can certify the application as functional and clean, and build it into our own mobile app store," Baden said. "We can enable many people to build many applications: Our private industry partners, state developers and civic hackers — anyone who can help bring us a solution."

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