

# OIT ACCESS



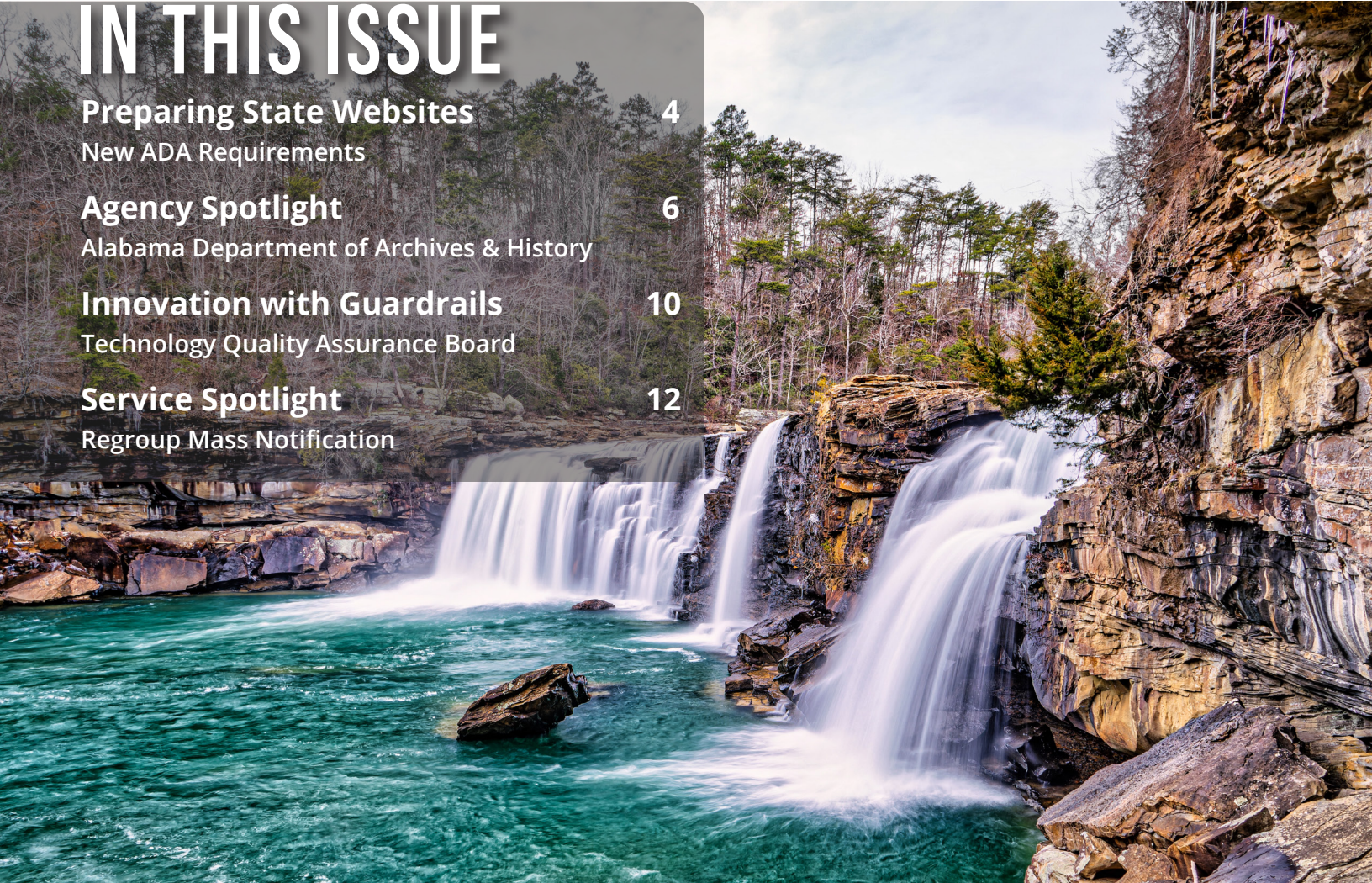
**STATE OF ALABAMA**

## **OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

STREAMLINING IT IN ALABAMA STATE GOVERNMENT

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*Stock Cover Photo: Little River Falls in Little River Canyon National Preserve*



Welcome to *OIT Access*, the Office of Information Technology's quarterly newsletter. This publication is intended to be a resource for the numerous Alabama state agencies that rely on OIT and its services to help carry out their important missions and more effectively serve the citizens of our great state.

In addition to sharing the latest OIT news and announcements, each issue will help to keep readers informed about the wide range of information

technology (IT) products and services available to agencies through OIT's Service Catalog. *OIT Access* also aims to be a platform for sharing news about several of the exciting IT projects, initiatives, and programs taking place at agencies across Alabama state government.

OIT is firmly committed to meeting the continuously evolving IT demands of the agencies we serve. If we are successful in this effort, it is the people of Alabama who are the true beneficiaries. OIT thanks you for your partnership in this vital work and we hope you enjoy this issue of *OIT Access*!

## Leadership

### **Daniel Urquhart**

Secretary  
State Chief Information Officer

### **Willie Fields**

Deputy Secretary

### **Chadwick Smith**

Chief Information Security Officer

### **Mark Craymer**

Executive Director of Shared Services

### **Roger Bowman**

Executive Director of Support Services

### **Brooke Covington**

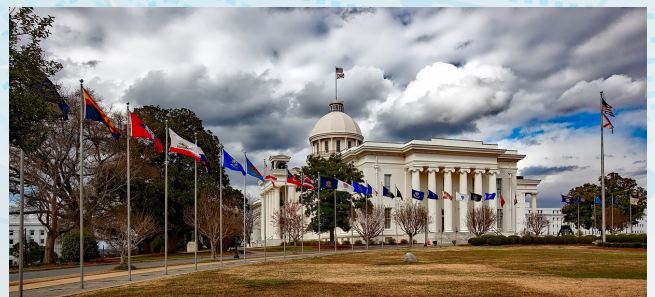
Executive Director of Finance and Procurement

### **Keith Cousins**

Executive Director of Business Execution

## Our Mission

Lead the strategic IT management of Alabama executive branch digital assets by centralizing agency telecommunications, data, and cybersecurity services with comprehensive governance, cost-effective infrastructure, and enforcement of rigorous policy and standards that enable compatibility, security, and operational excellence.



# Ensuring Equal Access



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## *Preparing State Websites for New ADA Requirements*

Every day, citizens across Alabama rely on state websites to find answers, access services, and seek help from state agencies, yet many encounter barriers — not because information is unavailable, but because website content, documents, and applications are not accessible to everyone.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires individuals with disabilities to have equal access to the programs, services, and goods offered by public entities. In 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) issued the final rule under Title II of the ADA: “Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability; Accessibility of Web Information and Services of State and Local Government Entities” (28 CFR Part 35, Subpart H).

This rule requires covered state and local government web content and mobile applications to conform to WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards, with full implementation required by April 24, 2026. The new federal requirements ensure that individuals who use assistive technologies — such as screen readers, alternative input devices, or captions — and individuals with low vision, color blindness, or hearing impairments can fully access public-facing websites and digital content.

### **RESPONSIBILITY OF STATE AGENCIES**

All Alabama state agencies are responsible for ensuring the accessibility of their public-facing websites and digital content. This includes meeting WCAG 2.1 AA standards for web pages, documents, applications, and media.

Agencies should work with their web developers and other resources to identify accessibility issues and begin remediation. As a best practice:

**1. Make source documents accessible first.**

Use the built-in accessibility checkers in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint to correct issues before exporting.

**2. Re-export documents properly.**

When creating PDFs, always use “Save as PDF” or “Export to PDF” to preserve accessibility tags. Avoid using print-to-PDF methods, which often remove required accessibility structures.

**3. Use trusted PDF remediation tools, such as:**

- Adobe Acrobat Pro accessibility tools
- Third-party tools like CommonLook PDF from Allyant for advanced document remediation

A brief overview of Adobe Acrobat Pro and CommonLook PDF tools can be found here: [youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ifjHdyuMM](https://youtube.com/watch?v=_ifjHdyuMM)

## Website Accessibility Session

To support agencies in meeting these federal requirements, OIT hosted a Website Accessibility Session in the Gordon Persons Auditorium in early March. The collaborative presentation and Q&A addressed:

- **DOJ ruling:** Pre- and post-deadline responsibilities and exceptions
- **Website accessibility:** Status of OIT-maintained websites, tools available to agencies, and demonstrations
- **Document accessibility:** Required document types, best practices, toolsets, and remediation demonstrations

The session concluded with an FAQ segment, giving agency representatives an opportunity to ask questions and raise issues not previously discussed.

While OIT has actively assisted agencies throughout this process, the legal responsibility for compliance with the DOJ's Title II accessibility rule rests with each agency that owns the content and delivers public services.

Examples of content that must be accessible include (but are not limited to):

- Webpages
- Online applications
- Reports
- Payment portals
- Videos
- Excel spreadsheets
- PowerPoint presentations

## Benefit to All Alabamians

Equal access to the State of Alabama's information, forms, programs, and services is a legal right — and ensuring compliance with federal accessibility standards is essential.

Beyond legal obligations, accessibility improves user experience for everyone, enhances content searchability, strengthens trust, and elevates the State's reputation for delivering timely, efficient, and inclusive public services.

*\*Note: This article was written in late March, before the Department of Justice announced an extension of the compliance deadline. The new deadline will be April 26, 2027.*

# Agency Spotlight

## Alabama DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY



A recent partnership between OIT and the Alabama Department of Archives & History (ADAH) is enabling the state history museum's visitors to engage more meaningfully with Alabama's stories.

Since 2024 OIT has worked closely with the ADAH on a major capital project to update and enhance galleries at the Museum of Alabama. Changes include new display systems, upgraded lighting, and enhancements to the building's lobbies and exteriors. The partnership with OIT focused on content delivery and system control for thirty new audiovisual programs and nearly two dozen existing ones.

Three new or renovated spaces opened in November 2025. They include a new *Children's Gallery*, designed for visitors ages two to ten, and a new rotating exhibit space called *Alabama Military Stories*, featuring compelling human stories about military service members, veterans, their families, and their communities. Significant updates were made to *Alabama Voices*, a permanent exhibition that first opened in 2014.

In addition to its work with ADAH, OIT interfaced with exhibit designers at The PRD Group, exhibit fabricators and network installers at 1220 Exhibits, and media content producers at Monadnock Media. The collaboration assisted OIT in gaining awareness of the performance requirements for the networked audiovisual systems and vendor-supplied remote support.

"OIT played an essential role in making this project a success," said ADAH director Steve Murray. "From beginning to end, their team asked the questions that needed to be addressed and worked steadily to deliver solutions that assured system performance while also safeguarding network security."





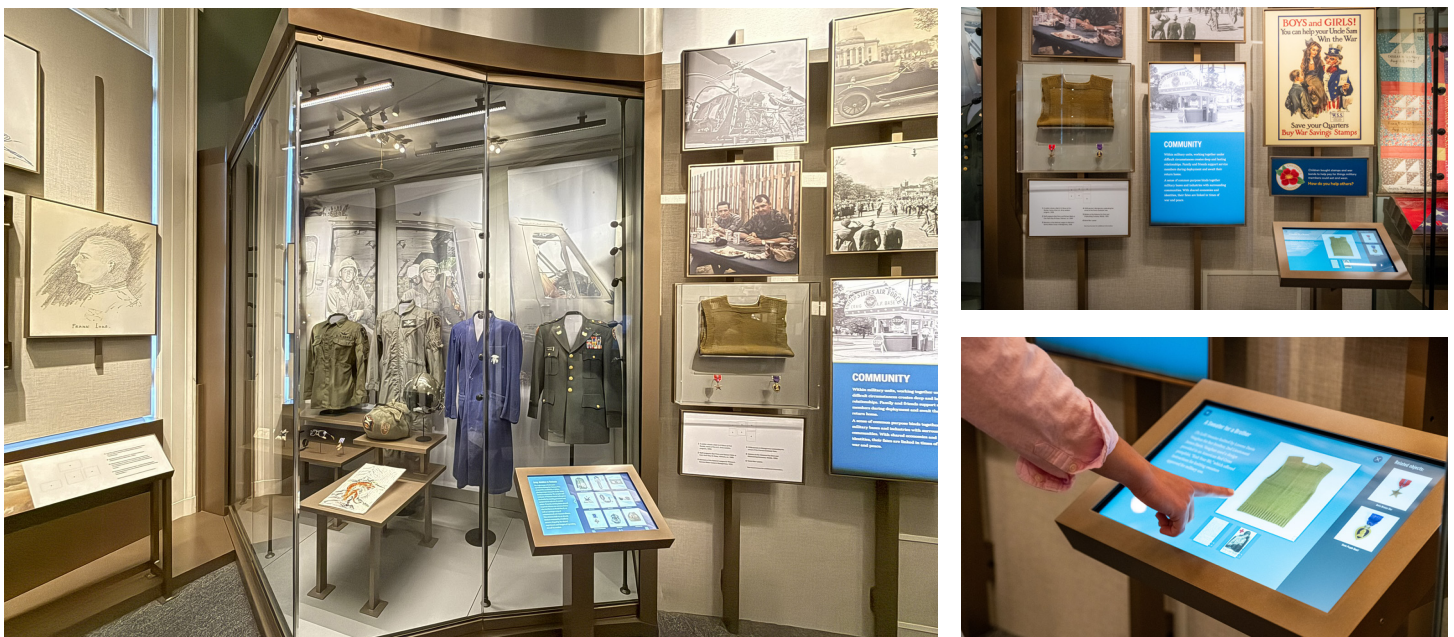
The audiovisual programs include a variety of formats ranging from looping playback of audio files to motion-activated videos. More complex programs include touch-screen interactives supported by a content management system (CMS) and featuring multi-layered digital maps. All programs rely on networked control for daily initiation routines and performance monitoring.

“Our goal for introducing technology in a museum setting is to enhance the visitor experience without introducing a cause for frustration,” said Murray. “I think we hit the mark, especially with the CMS-driven digital labels added in numerous locations.”



# Agency Spotlight

## Alabama DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY



The digital labels facilitate deeper visitor interaction with artifacts by making it possible to enlarge images of the objects and to view additional related materials. In the digital label for a World War II sweater knitted for a soldier by his sister, for example, visitors can read the letter in which the brother provided his measurements and sent other news to his family. Other digital labels provide interactive guides to dioramas depicting a Native American town and household in the 18th century.



Elsewhere, the network supports a touchscreen map of Alabama that uses census data to show changes in demographics, agriculture, household income, and access to higher education between 1950 and 2020. Another program features a motion-activated animation of the development of Alabama's borders from the early colonial era through statehood. In the *Children's Gallery*, a looping ambient audio program delivers the sounds of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects to convey the richness of the state's wildlife.



Similar audiovisual programs will be featured in a final gallery, *First Peoples of Alabama*, scheduled to be completed in late 2026. Content there will include original interviews with members of federally recognized tribes whose homelands are in Alabama, an interactive guide to a diorama of a Mississippian village, and a touchscreen map of Alabama place names with Native origins.

“The public response to the changes has been wonderful, and we look forward to more Alabamians visiting soon to explore their state history museum,” said Murray.

The Museum of Alabama is located on the second floor of the State Archives building at 624 Washington Avenue, just across the street from the Capitol. Hours are 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Saturday, and admission is always free.



# Innovation with Guardrails

## *Alabama's Technology Quality Assurance Board*

**T**echnology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, offering opportunities to improve efficiency across state government – but also requiring careful oversight to ensure security, privacy, and ethical safeguards remain at the forefront. Alabama state agencies have a responsibility to use emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), in ways that benefit state operations and the citizens they serve.

### **From Task Force to Law**

The foundation of the Technology Quality Assurance Board (TQAB) began with a comprehensive statewide evaluation effort. In early 2024, Governor Kay Ivey signed Executive Order 738, which created the Alabama GenAI Task Force.

Chaired by Alabama's Secretary of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, Daniel Urquhart, the Task Force brought together leaders from the Alabama Legislature, the Governor's Cabinet, and higher education institutions across the State. Its mission: evaluate the opportunities and risks associated with GenAI and outline a roadmap for its ethical, effective, and secure use across executive-branch agencies.

After months of study and collaboration, the Task Force produced a final report with ten major recommendations. These included adopting the NIST AI Risk Management Framework and developing AI training opportunities for state employees. Central to their recommendations, however, was the suggested creation of a formal board to oversee the deployment and ongoing monitoring of advanced AI systems within state government.

This work led to a key legislative outcome: House Bill 207 (HB207), which established the TQAB in law and provided the framework for responsible AI governance across state operations, was passed into law as Act 2025-369 during the 2025 Legislative Session.

### **Formal Establishment and Executive Vision**

Continuing along the path set by the Task Force and HB207, Governor Ivey officially announced the formation of the TQAB in February 2026. The announcement underscored Alabama's commitment to leading with innovation while maintaining a security-first mindset.

In her announcement, Governor Ivey emphasized Alabama's responsibility to balance innovation with accountability:

"The TQAB is a critical step forward in ensuring Alabama's use of technology is not only innovative, but also secure, ethical, and aligned with the public interest. As these tools evolve, our commitment to protecting the data and privacy of Alabamians remains our top priority."

## Advancing Alabama's Technology Infrastructure



*Photo: Office of the Governor  
Governor Kay Ivey signing HB207 into law on May 13, 2025.*

The TQAB held its inaugural meeting in February 2026, marking the start of its role as a key advisory partner to the Office of Information Technology (OIT). As the agency tasked with legislative authority over State systems, OIT will rely on the TQAB to provide expert guidance, ensure consistency across executive-branch initiatives involving novel technologies, and promote responsible use of advanced tools.

The Board will assist Alabama in its evaluation and implementation of novel technologies from leading providers, ensuring they support State operations securely and responsibly. Its work will prioritize:

### Vetting, Governance, and Operational Integrity

Providing a structured review process and shared guidance – against the backdrop of State IT Policy – for AI tools used across the executive branch, including recommended standards for safety, auditability, and data management. The TQAB may identify vetted tools and common practices to support agencies, but does not replace agency-level procurement authority or operational responsibility.

### Compliance and Transparency

Supporting strong privacy and security practices while promoting visibility into how agencies meet technology and AI compliance requirements.

### Risk Mitigation

Encouraging the use of sandbox environments to test data security, validate outputs, and manage risks before new technologies are deployed in production.

## Looking Ahead

As the TQAB begins its long-term advisement, its influence will shape how Alabama procures, tests, and implements the digital tools of the next decade. By bridging high-level policy with technical execution, the Board will provide consistent, expert guidance that strengthens the State's technology posture.

Its mission directly supports OIT's commitment to ensuring Alabama's technology environment remains innovative, secure, resilient, and well-positioned for future advancements.

# OIT Service Spotlight

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## *Regroup Mass Notification*

**C**lear, timely communication is essential to Alabama's executive-branch agencies, whether delivering routine updates, coordinating operations, or sharing critical information during urgent events. As communication needs have expanded in recent years, so too has the need for a contemporary, flexible, and secure statewide messaging platform. To meet this need, OIT initiated a statewide effort to identify a modern solution capable of supporting both internal and external communication across multiple channels.

In 2025, OIT convened a cross-agency working group with representatives from twelve state agencies. Through a series of vendor demonstrations, technical evaluations, and security reviews, the group evaluated potential replacements for Campaign Intelligence, the email-based notification tool previously used by many agencies. After this comprehensive evaluation process, Regroup Mass Notification was selected as the State's new enterprise mass communication platform.

Regroup provides a unified solution for sending messages across email, SMS, voice calls, and optional mobile app alerts — offering greater flexibility and visibility than legacy systems. Its intuitive interface, simple message creation, automation capabilities, and detailed reporting tools make it easier for agencies to communicate quickly and consistently with employees, partners, and other designated audiences.

Regroup also aligns with the State's cybersecurity requirements, offering enterprise-class security controls, role-based permissions, audit logs, and strong administrative oversight. These features ensure agencies can manage their messaging responsibly, securely, and efficiently.

With procurement finalized, OIT has already begun the statewide implementation of Regroup. Agencies currently using Campaign Intelligence are now transitioning to the new platform with support from OIT and agency IT teams. Configuration work, onboarding, and migration activities are actively happening, with timelines tailored to agency needs to ensure a smooth transition and minimal disruption.



To help prepare agencies, OIT Communications hosted a series of Regroup user training sessions in February, providing hands-on instruction for communicators, administrators, and technical staff. These sessions focused on essential functions such as building messaging lists, creating alerts, using templates, managing distribution channels, and understanding reporting dashboards. Additional training opportunities will be offered as more agencies come on board.

As implementation progresses, agencies can expect guidance on migration from Campaign Intelligence, administrator and end-user training opportunities, configuration and onboarding support, best practices for internal and external communication use cases, and updates on new features and statewide communication standards.

Regroup Mass Notification marks a major step forward in strengthening Alabama's statewide communication capabilities. By providing a flexible, secure, multichannel platform, OIT is helping agencies deliver information more reliably and efficiently than ever before.

For more information about utilizing Regroup within your agency or to inquire about training material, please contact the **OIT Service Desk** at [service.desk@oit.alabama.gov](mailto:service.desk@oit.alabama.gov) or (334) 242-2222.



# Did You Know?

## 10-Digit Dialing



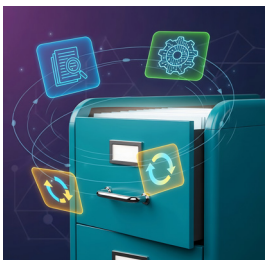
## 10-Digit Dialing

In March 2024, the Alabama Public Service Commission approved a new area code overlay for Alabama area code 334, which serves Selma, Montgomery, Prattville, Pike Road, Tuskegee, Auburn, Opelika, Phenix City, Eufaula, Dothan, Enterprise, Troy, Greenville, and much of central and southeast Alabama.

The introduction of a new 483 area code is intended to help ensure there is an adequate supply of telephone numbers to serve a growing list of incoming customers to the area.

As a result of this change, Alabama state agencies are no longer able to make local calls using a 7-digit telephone number.

Instead, users are required to dial the full 10-digit number (e.g., 334-XXX-XXXX) on all State phones and fax machines, even when calling locally. No changes were implemented when dialing 3-digit numbers such as 911.

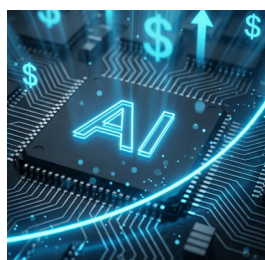


## System Logs Retention Period Change

During the January meeting of the Alabama Security Council, OIT Director of Information Security Frank Yarnell provided details regarding a planned modification of the logs retention period for non-Internal Revenue Service (IRS) entities.

Previously, the logs retention period for executive-branch agencies in the Alabama shared tenant was 7 years. With this change, system logs will now be retained for a period of 1 year (365 days) for agencies that are not subject to IRS Publication 1075. A 7-year retention period will remain in place for all agencies that are subject to IRS Publication 1075.

This change enables OIT to come into alignment with the digital retention policy outlined on pages 19 and 20 of the "Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority" document available online at [archives.alabama.gov/RDA?id=239](https://archives.alabama.gov/RDA?id=239).



## Memory Chip Supply Issues

In February, OIT notified agencies that memory chips are experiencing significant supply shortages, price increases, and delayed deliveries primarily driven by surging AI and data center infrastructure demand. Many OEM and suppliers have proactively informed OIT of anticipated negative impacts on our statewide IT contract users for the remainder of 2026.



### **Unfavorable Conditions**

- Decreased product availability
- Increased prices
- Shortened quote validity periods (i.e., 1-7 days vs. 30 - 90 days)
- Lengthened delivery lead times

### **Recommended Agency Actions/Considerations**

- Monitor market and supplier signals
- Identify and prioritize critical needs
- Evaluate on-hand stock and consider early buy opportunities
- Optimize memory density
- Reconsider storage architectures to optimize capacity and cost
- Extend hardware refresh cycles
- Explore OIT catalog for cloud services and strategies

As a reminder, our statewide IT contracts for goods are awarded to multiple suppliers based on an evaluation of bid discounts off the OEM catalog pricing per commodity line. Agencies are encouraged to request quotes from multiple suppliers. Be aware of the delivery terms for each quote as those may vary and each are generally negotiable.



### **IT is Soaring in Alabama**

With an estimated 5.3% of the State's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2030, more than \$3.5 billion in foreign direct investment projects in 2025 alone, and the creation of thousands of new jobs, Alabama's technology sector is poised for unprecedented growth, driving a future defined by breakthrough advanced technologies.

In the Governor's most recent State of the State address, the advancement of world-class technologies in Alabama took center stage. She noted the State's rise to 24th in the nation for broadband connectivity and reaffirmed the commitment to providing internet access to 100 percent of Alabama.

Similarly, in the newly released 2025 New & Expanding Industry Announcements Report, Governor Ivey announced that capital investment in Alabama reached the highest annual total in State history – an impressive \$14.6 billion. She added, "We are open for business, ready to embrace new challenges and poised to welcome even more world-class companies, advanced technologies, and breakthrough products. They should look no further than Sweet Home Alabama, and we plan to get them here."

# Out & About with OIT



**Above — State Service Pins:** In March, OIT celebrated several deserving team members by presenting them with longevity service pins in recognition of their years of dedicated service to the State of Alabama. Front Row, Left to Right: Tracy Jackson, Candace Harden, Joshua Payne, Mike Holsenback, Lindsey McCullough, and Pam Cofield. Back Row, Left to Right: Daniel Urquhart, Brannon Evans, Austin Barrett, Elex “Chuck” Jordan, Logan Lett, Brandy Woodall, Johnathon Copeland, and Jeremy Aldridge.

**Right — University of South Alabama Students Visit the Fusion Center:** State CISO Chad Smith and OIT Director of Information Security Frank Yarnell speak with University of South Alabama students enrolled in the Scholarship for Service program during their visit to the Alabama Fusion Center in February.



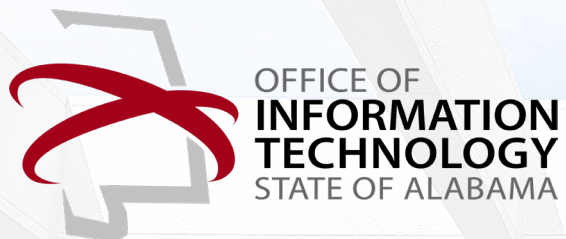
**Right and Below — American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC):** On Thursday, January 15, OIT was asked to present alongside the McCrary Institute for Cyber and Critical Infrastructure Security during an ACEC Leadership Development Series hosted by Auburn's Samuel Ginn College of Engineering.



**Right — Pi Day:** The OIT Client Support team served up a sweet celebration for Pi Day, transforming the department's conference room table into a showcase of various pies and ice cream. Although Pi Day officially fell on Saturday, March 14th this year, the team gathered on Friday the 13th to enjoy treats and highlight the mathematical constant 3.14 in a fun, community-building way.



**Left — Security Council Meeting:** The first Security Council meeting of 2026 was held on January 28 at the Department of Archives and History's Joseph M. Farley Auditorium. A comprehensive update on the State's current and future security priorities was provided to leaders from across Alabama's executive, legislative, and judicial branches, as well as local government partners.



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## Streamlining IT in Alabama State Government

# GET IN TOUCH

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