



# State of North Carolina

## Office of the State Controller

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

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#### **BEACON Personnel/Payroll Project Begins Transformation of NC Business Systems**

**RALEIGH**-North Carolina began an historic upgrade of its business systems Monday when about 15,000 employees at the Department of Transportation began using the new BEACON Personnel/Payroll system.

The \$76 million project, which has been in the planning and development phases for five years, will replace the State's personnel system and two payroll systems that have operated for more than 25 years. These systems went into service before the invention of the personal computer, the mouse or Windows software.

"Because of the efforts of hundreds of committed state employees, we are excited to go-live with our HR/Payroll system according to schedule," said State Controller Robert Powell, who chaired the steering committee that oversaw development of the new system. "The BEACON HR/Payroll System moves North Carolina into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, not only in technology but in updating and standardizing its business processes to conform with best practices used in the private sector."

Another 4,600 state employees from smaller agencies will be brought onto the new system on January 1, 2008. After three months of fine tuning, another 66,000 state employees in both large and small agencies will be brought into the system.

The project combines payroll functions and personnel information in a centralized system that will be operated by the Office of the State Controller. The new system replaces outdated technology that had become increasingly difficult to maintain, and provides basic payroll and personnel functions that previously had to be duplicated across state agencies.

The new system also allows state employees, for the first time, to update their personal and benefits information, check previous payroll data and record their working time from any computer with an Internet connection.

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The system uses a technology framework from SAP that ties agency information together in a single network. The SAP software also allows for future business operations to be added to the central system. The General Assembly already has approved funding to add electronic recruiting, which will keep track of state job applicants; and electronic training, which will handle a number of training-related functions, to the new system.

Planning has started on the next phase of the project, which will add budgeting, accounting and cash management functions. When completed, the BEACON system will provide centralized, coordinated business operations that can improve efficiency and provide timely, accurate information for decision-makers and the public.

In addition to planning, designing and building this new business system, the BEACON project also involves training for over 3,000 core users in agency business offices, more than 3,100 employees who will use reports and information generated by the new system and nearly 8,000 managers who will use the system for reports to track the work of their agencies. In addition there are web-based courses to educate the 80,000-plus employees who can use the Employee Self Service.

“This has been the most massive effort I have seen undertaken by state government in my 35 years as a North Carolina state employee,” Powell said. “The level of cooperation by agencies and employees is unprecedented. Our partners in this project – Information Technology Services, the Office of State Personnel, the Office of State Budget and Management, and DOT – have been strong participants. Together we have spent countless hours developing a system that will provide the next generation of business operations for the State.”

The State’s existing personnel and payroll systems will continue to operate until all agencies, including universities, have rolled off the system and all necessary historical data has been transferred.

Full details on the BEACON program are available on the Office of the State Controller website at:

<http://www.beacon.nc.gov/>.