

## **Commonwealth Collaboration**

### **Peggy Ward, Virginia Information Technologies Agency**

#### **Abstract:**

As we work to strengthen the information security posture in the Commonwealth, the most valuable and least expensive asset that we have is not a product nor a service but rather the ideas, expertise and insights of our peers. Within the Commonwealth we have built multiple forums to facilitate this exchange of information and create channels for collaboration. We have a proactive approach to and embrace of best practices in information security center around a vision of a highly collaborative environment in which individual agencies, localities and employees assume front line roles in protecting citizen data and transactions. By creating and leading multiple communities of interest around the various facets of IT security, we are implementing our vision of a well-educated statewide center of excellence in which practitioners share tactics and lessons learned while keeping abreast of the ever-changing IT security landscape. This vision allows information security professionals to develop their skills and expertise together, regardless of the size of their agency or the depth of their staffs. It eliminates the haves/have nots dichotomy and propels the dissemination of knowledge throughout the state workforce.

One such forum is the Information Security Officer's Advisory Group (ISOAG), which spans all branches of state government and extends to local governments. The ISOAG is an active information security community of interest group in the Commonwealth with approximately 200 members. Members receive training opportunities, software security updates, briefings on new information security events and invitations to the monthly meetings. The ISOAG monthly meetings include Commonwealth and local government Information Security Officers and those persons with an interest in information security. The meetings help enhance knowledge and understanding of the threat environment, current operations and other information security topics of interest. At the July 2007 meeting, topics included e-discovery, an identity management roadmap, encryption, making security an executive management priority, small agency outreach, identity and access management, key logging malware, and updates on COV IT Security Policies, Standards and Guidelines. See the archive at <http://www.vita.virginia.gov/security/default.aspx?id=323>

Another forum is an Information Security Officer orientation session. These small group sessions provide concrete and practical information on IT Security resources available and steps to establishing and documenting an effective IT Security program as presented in the Commonwealth Policies, Standards and Guidelines.

These are but two examples of our Commonwealth Collaborations!

#### **Biography:**

##### **Peggy Ward**

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Peggy is a native of Louisville, Kentucky. She holds a degree in accounting from Virginia Commonwealth University and is a graduate of the Virginia Executive Institute.

Peggy's information security and audit experience spans 24 years, including 21 years at the Departments of General Services, Transportation and State Internal Auditor, as well as a year at Southern Bank and Trust Company.

As Chief Information Security Officer, she has developed and is implementing enhanced information security standards, policies and guidelines with expanding state agency scope; formed and sponsors an Information Security Officers Advisory Group of all Commonwealth entity persons interested in information security to share challenges and opportunities in government IT security as well as a Commonwealth Information Security Council of selected state agency representatives to strengthen the information security posture of the Commonwealth with focused initiatives.

Prior to her current role, Peggy served as the Freedom of Information Act Coordinator, managed the DGS Information Security Program and successfully chaired interdisciplinary teams such as the DGS Continuity of Operations Plan Team and the DGS Newborn Screening Cost Recovery Team. She has made presentations at the Virginia Public Procurement Forum on the Freedom of Information Act and Continuity of Operations Planning. She was selected by the Secretary of Finance to serve as Acting State Internal Auditor. Prior to her Commonwealth career, Peggy served in the U. S. Army as an air traffic controller and as a recruiter. Most recently, Peggy was recognized as a National Finalist for the Information Security Executive of the Year Award in the government category for 2007.

Peggy lives in Bon Air with her husband and their two miniature schnauzers. Peggy's daughter Cherie resides in Philadelphia.