

## 2009 NASPE Communication Award Nomination

**Submission Title: The Georgia Statement**

<http://team.georgia.gov/portal/site/GeorgiaStatement>

**Submission Category:** Electronic – Online Newsletter

**State:** Georgia

**Contact Information:**

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**1. Please provide a brief description of the submission.** The Georgia Statement is a new online monthly publication where state employees can find news and resources relative to Georgia State Government. The newsletter features articles and information of importance to employees as they carry out their official roles and responsibilities, and as they interact with their co-workers, supervisors and managers. Content, which is based on government programs and initiatives, is written internally as well as provided through various agency submissions. Various ads, entertainment and social media and engagement tools are also featured in the publication. Additionally, monthly departments include:

- **A Government Spotlight** – Changing monthly to educate employees about the purpose of state entities, how they affects Georgians, and an in depth view of the agency’s leadership.
- **Workforce Tips** – Helpful tips in two categories—managers and all employees—to provide researched subject matter to help employees on their current job as well as strategies for upward mobility.
- **Wellness** – A healthy employee has been linked to increased worker productivity. Tips found here promote responsibility for health and wellness.
- **Technology Tip** – Leveraging technology is a best practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, oftentimes new gadgets and technological offerings can leave workers overwhelmed or confused. Tips provided here give a simplistic overview of various technological resources to enable employees to grow and succeed.
- **Vocabulary** – Who can’t benefit from an improved vocabulary? One of the most utilized resources of the online publication, vocabulary allows employees to test themselves on 10 challenging vocabulary words. The test is scored online with results immediately available.
- **Procurement** – This department is in collaboration with the Department of Administration Services and written by its commissioner, Brad Douglas, to inform employees about its services and programs.
- **Helping Others** – A department designed to promote service in the community. Each month, a new charity is featured with details on how state employees can get involved and give back in volunteerism or donations.
- **Money Matters** – Offers quick tips and insight to handling financial matters during challenging economic times.

- **Retirees** – Recognizes the contributions of long-tenured employee' commitment and service to the state of Georgia.
- **Let's Hear It**– A discussion forum where employees voice opinions on topics ranging from pay increases to retirement. The publication provides the first forum to allow open discussion and comments for state employees to be heard.

**2. How long has the submission been in existence?** The Georgia Statement, which was previously a quarterly print publication distributed to all state entities has been in existence for 11 years. The first web-based issue was published online in June 2008.

**3. Why was the submission created?** The Georgia Statement was created to foster employee engagement. This communication tool's primary focus is to connect employees with the state's strategic vision and direction, and keep them informed and abreast of activities and events occurring in state government. To improve efficiency, the publication was expanded as a monthly online communication tool to increase employee access to news, information and resources specific to state initiatives and Georgia leadership. The publication was developed as a resource to empower employees at all levels of an organization. Since cost would be reduced by publishing via the web, the newsletter would be developed monthly, instead of quarterly, affording more opportunity for timely communication and employee engagement.

**4. How does this submission support the goals and objectives of your agenda/department?** As a government entity responsible for human capital management, employee communication is intertwined with employee education, engagement and empowerment. Employee communication is a necessary resource of retention and development strategies aligned with the state's goal of becoming the best managed state in the nation. The Georgia Statement online serves as an effective business tool utilized by employees across the state to stay informed.

**5. Have you been able to measure the effectiveness of the submission? If so, how?** Effectiveness of the online publication has been measured in three areas: readership, agency participation, and cost savings. Overall readership of the Georgia Statement has consistently increased from when the newsletter was first published online to the end of 2008. Stats relative to site traffic and registrations show readership has more than quadrupled. Prior to the launch, the online subscription tool was promoted in two quarterly printed issues of the publication. This subscription tool allows distribution to employees and retirees desktops (work or home). By June 2008, we had only 2,000 online subscribers for the first online release. To sustain readership, email blasts were forwarded to agency HR directors to forward to their respective agency's employees. This allowed us to sustain readership while marketing the online subscription tool to employees. As of December 2008, we now have more than 75,000 online subscribers. We use Google Analytics to track readership of the various sections of the newsletter, which was developed on a Vignette portal platform. The Let's Hear It forum allows the site administrators to monitor employees' perceptions of issues and policies discussed in the articles. Agency submissions to inform or market their programs in the online publication have steadily increased. The cost saved on printing and mailing is estimated at more than \$60,000 annually.