



# Governor's Office of Customer Service **FASTER. FRIENDLIER. EASIER.**

March 2008

## Best Managed State: Georgia Makes The Grade



The Pew Center on the States and *Governing Magazine* ranked Georgia among the best managed states in the nation in the *Grading the States 2008 report*. Georgia received the highest grade of any state in the Southeast with a B+. Only three states ranked higher than Georgia with an A- as their overall grade.

Governor Sonny Perdue was invited to speak at the report launch. During his remarks he credited the work by the Commission for a New Georgia and the dedicated service of Georgia's state employees as important factors in the state achieving a high score.

## Child Support Services is Nationally Recognized

The Pew Center and *Governing Magazine* are not the only ones noticing Georgia become a nationally recognized leader in customer service.

A recent article published by the federal Health and Human Services agency (HHS) recognized Georgia's Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) as a leader in customer service. As a result, OCSS has been contacted by four states (Michigan, California, Mississippi, and Kentucky) and Canada to offer guidance to their OCSS offices.



### A steady climb to the top

The Pew report measures state performance based on four areas: *Money, People, Infrastructure and Information*. Georgia's overall grade has continued to improve over the years. Here is a look at the progression:

1999	2001	2005	2008
C+	B-	B	B+

The Pew report cites the Governor's Customer Service Initiative as a key feature in Georgia's continued success.

"Key among the Commission's accomplishments is an intense focus on customer service and on managing for results," said the report. "The new Governor's Office of Customer Service has collaborated with frontline state employees to create a more consistent - and productive - experience for citizens."

### Working to be the best

"We have made sensible, strategic reforms in Georgia to make government more efficient and more responsive to the needs of our citizens," said Governor Perdue. "We will continue to work to surpass every other state and become the best managed state in the nation."

To read the entire report visit <http://pewcenteronthestates.org/gpp>.

"The Department of Human Resources has made tremendous strides in improving service to citizens," said Commissioner B.J. Walker. "We have fully embraced the goal of becoming the best customer service state in the nation."

OCSS was able to make impressive reductions in their process times last year through Rapid Process Improvement activities. These efforts helped both OCSS and DHR earn top honors at the Governor's Annual Customer Service Awards celebration in 2007.

## Call to Action

### Share Your Stories!

All across Georgia, state employees, leaders and Customer Service Champions are talking about "the Voice of the Customer." Over the last two months, we've been focusing on two important steps:

- \* *Starting with the customer - looking at your agency from your customers' point of view*
- \* *Listening to the customer - asking customers what they want and collecting this feedback regularly*

You are in front of customers each day, so you are in the best position to understand your customers' needs and find the best ways to serve them. Here's your chance to share what you've learned with the rest of Team Georgia.

Share your tips, ideas and insights at:  
[www.surveymonkey.com/teamgeorgia](http://www.surveymonkey.com/teamgeorgia)

- \* *What have you learned about "the voice of your customer"?*
- \* *What have you been doing to listen and learn from your customers?*

Join the statewide conversation for Team Georgia, by Team Georgia. Hear what your fellow employees are saying about customer service. Selected responses from state employees are featured on the back. We will continue to feature employee insights in upcoming messages and on the Team Georgia Customer Service web site.



Thank you for sharing your stories!

## Moving Claims Faster on the Information Superhighway



*Pictured: Attorney Rodney McCulloch, Judge David Imahara and Legal Assistant Dee Ohlsson are the type of customers who frequently use the Integrated Claims Management System.*

The State Board of Workers' Compensation (SBWC) is offering faster service to its customers through the use of the Integrated Claims Management System (ICMS).

This service allows for immediate real-time and secure access to electronic files that can be viewed over the Internet. Previously, parties to a claim had access to paper files by request only.

### The benefits

- \* Attorneys are able to process and expedite cases easier.
- \* The ICMS reduces the cost of printing and shipping delays - saving the state money and resources.
- \* Injured parties' issues will be heard and resolved faster.

## Your Customer Service Heroes from DNR!

**Holly Holdsworth** (*pictured holding Beau the Snake*), Park Manager, Skidaway Island: "Holly and her staff are always trying to find ways to enhance the park for their visitors. Examples: Refurbished tent pads, pet-friendly trails (pooper-scooper bags), etc. Holly just knows what people are looking for even before they ask. She's always right there with the right answer."

**Robin Glass**, Interpretive Ranger, Dahlonega Gold Museum: "Robin deeply cares about the Dahlonega Gold Museum. Robin has a unique way of making history come alive for people of any age or interest level. That is a rare and unique talent."



### Impressive results

Since its introduction in 2005, the ICMS has been used to file more than two million pages into the system. The service has also helped increase telework by 15%, and last year the SBWC received and processed nearly 300,000 documents into the system.

Not surprised by the effectiveness of the ICMS, SBWC Chairman Carolyn C. Hall said, "This demonstrates our dedication to 'service in action,' a hallmark of the State Board of Workers' Compensation's commitment to making Georgia the best managed state."

### Taking the ICMS one step further

Currently, the SBWC is working on adding a new feature called the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). The new feature allows for web-based submission of documents as well as file review over the Internet for parties to a claim. The EDI will give customers the ability to submit and access files with little to no delay.

To improve service to customers who make contact by telephone, the SBWC is adopting the State Contact Center Solution. This Nortel-hosted system will allow the SBWC to measure and improve response times by compiling a knowledgebase of uniform data to address recurrent issues.

**Jerry Brown**, Lodge Manager, Unicoi State Park: "Jerry's ability to interact positively with the internal and external customer is second nature to him. His employees can always look to him for answers and find suggestions for improving their customer service abilities. He believes: 'The customer may not always be right, but they are the customer, and need to be treated as such.'"

Visit <http://team.georgia.gov> to read more about this month's Heroes, nominated by their peers from the Dept. of Natural Resources, the Georgia World Congress Center Authority and the Office of the Governor. You can nominate your own Hero today at [team.georgia.gov](http://team.georgia.gov).

## The Voice of the Customer

### In Your Words

Here are some of the tips and insights we've received from you so far. Visit <http://team.georgia.gov> > "Customer Service" to read additional responses.

### What have you learned about "the voice of your customer"?

"In my experience during my service as a peace officer, I have learned that if you listen close enough to the person you are dealing with and observe their body language, they will convey to you what is most important to them."

- TFC Jason Ellis, State Patrol, Cordele

"The customer is just like each of us, they want to feel important and to feel like they and their problem are important to us (as state employees)."

- Kathryn Knight, Dept. of Revenue

"I have learned that no matter how large or small the issue, good customer service starts with taking ownership of the problem until the customer is satisfied."

- Jeff Bleam, Georgia State Financing & Investment Commission

### What have you been doing to listen and learn from your customers?

"I have been letting them tell me the problem and asking: what would be a solution to this matter?"

- Sakethia Jones, DOT, Milledgeville

"I listen to evaluation results, emails, phone calls and face-to-face conversations to learn needs and expectations. This has resulted in process and product changes."

- Charlie Milstead, GTA

"I'm pausing to have conversations with people and I'm taking a little more time to try and hear their needs beyond the words coming out of their mouths. When I can anticipate someone's need, that makes my job very enjoyable."

- Bill Durham, GBA Landscaping

"They have taught me to first place myself in their shoes, with an open heart. The customers are a daily reminder of why I do this job: to help someone, no matter how small or big the task, if only to listen."

- Aleisha Golden, Child Support Services

## Governor's Office of Customer Service

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