

## **Information Technology Strategy and Benefits Fiscal Year 2013**

The Railroad Retirement Board actively pursues automation and modernization of its various business processes in accordance with the principles identified in the agency's Strategic Plan, Strategic Information Resources Management Plan and Enterprise Architecture. Ongoing and planned projects will further increase and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our benefit payments and program administration. Automation initiatives in recent years have also significantly improved operations and allowed the agency to reduce staffing in certain areas.

Key capital initiatives for fiscal year 2013 are summarized below. Additional information concerning each capital element is provided on the following pages.

***Application Development Services*** - These investments represent innovation technology initiatives to automate manual work, modernize existing systems and improve operations which, in turn, generate long-term cost savings.

- ***Financial Management Integrated System*** (\$3,562,000)  
The RRB's legacy financial management system, the Federal Financial System (FFS), reached its end of life cycle in fiscal year 2003. While the FFS continues to meet the financial processing and reporting requirements of the RRB, conversion to a shared service provider hosted solution follows OMB Circular A-127 guidance, while removing the risk associated with dependence on a system that has reached its end of life cycle.
- ***E-Government*** (\$100,000)  
Initiatives in this category provide electronic services to the public, as outlined in the Government Paperwork Elimination Act of 1998, and other Federal directives/mandates. They also achieve our strategic objective of providing our customers with more flexible service delivery options. In fiscal year 2013, we will continue to use contactor assistance to supplement agency resources on the multi-year, multi-stage Employer Reporting System project to provide a web-based alternative to paper-based forms exchanged between rail employers and the agency.
- ***Enterprise Human Resources Integration*** (\$180,000)  
Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI) is one of five Office of Personnel Management (OPM) led e-Government initiatives. OPM, working with the Office of Management and Budget, has advised agencies that they will have to convert the Official Personnel Folders of their employees to an electronic format by December 2013. Funds for this initiative will be used for contractor services to assist RRB staff to develop the requirements for an electronic folder solution.

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- *Web Content Management System* (\$250,000)  
In alignment with the Administration's "Cloud First" strategy, we plan to use funds to move the RRB's website, www.rrb.gov, to a content management based web hosted service. A web-based content management system would replace the agency's use of a no longer supported web publishing tool to manage administration and publishing tasks on its web site, and redistribute work primarily accomplished by web administrators to other agency staff as content providers.
  
- *Electronic Records Content Management System* (\$100,000)  
Fiscal year 2013 is the first of a multi-year effort that will enable the RRB to manage its records electronically through an Electronic Records Management System (ERCM). Fiscal year 2013 will focus on obtaining consultative expertise for designing the ERCM system. Additional resources will be needed in the following years for installation of software and hardware, training, and development of associated policies and procedures

***IT Infrastructure*** - Information technology infrastructure investments are required to establish a firm foundation for the technology advances we have planned in accordance with the agency's target enterprise architecture and to maintain our operational readiness. The specific investments in fiscal year 2013 include:

- *Storage Area Network Upgrade* (\$175,000)  
Funding in fiscal year 2013 will be used for additional data storage on the agency's storage area network, and for obtaining services and tools to ensure that the storage is optimized.
  
- *Desktop Virtualization* (\$50,000)  
Desktop virtualization separates a personal computer desktop environment from a physical machine using the same type of hardware and software systems required to support a virtualized environment. This initiative funds consulting services to develop the requirements for a small proof of concept pilot project.
  
- *Infrastructure Replacement* (\$270,710)  
This item provides funding for the continued upgrading and scheduled replacement of a portion of the agency's IT infrastructure equipment and related software. The upgrades and replacements follow the RRB's *IT Equipment Replacement Policy* for modernizing and securing the agency's computer operations.
  
- *Emergency Business System/Application Restoration Services* (\$50,000)  
This non-capital element allows the RRB to quickly and efficiently purchase IT services, hardware and software for emergency needs. The funds will be used for expert IT professional services as necessary to facilitate the continuity of operations in emergency situations.

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### **Application Development Services**

Capital Element: **Financial Management Integrated System (FMIS)**

Fiscal Year 2013 Cost: \$3,562,000

The FMIS project provides for the migration to the cloud and/or shared service provider of the agency's financial management system. We envision a multi-phased project approach. The tasks will be divided between:

- Pre-migration planning stage
- Migration stage
- Post-migration stage

OMB Circular A-127 prescribes policies and standards for executive departments and agencies to follow when managing their financial management systems. The Circular defines requirements to adopt standard financial business practices. Small agencies are particularly encouraged to use cross-servicing to meet fundamental core financial and payroll/personnel processing and reporting requirements.

The RRB's legacy financial management system, Federal Financial System (FFS), reached the end of its life cycle in fiscal year 2003. While the FFS continues to meet the financial processing and reporting requirements of the RRB, conversion to a shared service provider hosted solution follows OMB Circular A-127 guidance while removing the risk associated with dependence on a system that has reached the end of its life cycle.

Advantages of a conversion include compliance with the business processes established by the Financial Systems Integration Office (FSIO), improved end-user reporting capabilities, a user-friendly interface, and the transfer of daily system operations to an outside service provider. The transfer of system operations relieves the RRB of activities such as supporting the financial management system application upgrades, configurations, maintenance and modifications.

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### **Application Development Services**

Capital Element: **E-Government**

Fiscal Year 2013 Cost: **\$100,000**

We plan to use contractor services to augment existing agency staff to expand the electronic services available to the railroad public via the RRB's website. This goal is consistent with the RRB's overall goal to address our customers' needs and expectations, providing them with a range of choices for conducting business with us, including more Internet options that are private and secure. The benefits of these initiatives will be realized in increased efficiency and accuracy of business transactions between rail employees/employers and the RRB.

A key initiative in this area is the Employer Reporting System (ERS) project, a multi-year, multi-phased project to provide employers with web-based alternatives to all paper-based forms exchanged between employers and the RRB.

In fiscal year 2013, we plan to use contractor services to assist in the development of an automated referral process in ERS to notify employers of errors or the need for additional information and provide a means for correcting the data. With contractor support, we will also develop online processes for employers to respond electronically to requests for information which is needed to process some initial annuity applications. These include requests for verification of last date on the payroll and for information needed to support the payment of supplemental annuities.

Replacing these paper-based processes will improve customer service by speeding up initial annuity processing and enhance stewardship by securing and protecting personally identifiable information. Contractor support helps to accelerate each phase of the project beyond the rate that can be achieved using only agency staff.

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**Application Development Services**

Capital Element: *Enterprise Human Resources Integration*

Fiscal Year 2013 Cost: **\$180,000**

Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI) is one of five Office of Personnel Management (OPM) led e-Government initiatives. EHRI is designed to transform the way human resource specialists and managers access human resource information and the way employees access their personnel file information. As part of this initiative, OPM has advised agencies to convert employee official personnel folders to an electronic format by December 2013.

Funds for this initiative will be used to obtain consulting services for overall planning, including requirements, for an electronic official personnel folder system.

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### Application Development Services

Capital Element: *IT Tools and Systems*

Fiscal Year 2013 Cost: **\$350,000**

IT tools and systems allow programmers, system engineers, technicians, and system support staffs to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of agency operations. Specific characteristics include the ability to move development forward, improve the system development life cycle, and help business processes throughout the agency. Projected costs in this category for new or upgraded software tools and systems include customization, staff training, and knowledge transfer.

- Web Content Management (WCM) System (\$250,000)  
In fiscal year 2013, we plan to obtain and migrate to a content management based web hosted service to manage the agency's website, www.rrb.gov. This solution is in alignment with the Administration's "Cloud First" strategy. A web content management (WCM) system is an Internet-based content management system designed to simplify the publication of web content to web sites and mobile devices, in particular, allowing content creators to submit content without requiring technical knowledge of HTML or the uploading of files. A WCM platform empowers existing staff without needing to retain and/or retrain specialized skills. The WCM would replace the RRB's use of a no longer supported web publishing tool to manage administration and publishing tasks on its web site.
  
- Electronic Records Content Management (ERMC) System (\$100,000)  
Also in fiscal year 2013, consulting services will be used to assist RRB staff in determining overall system requirements for a pilot ERMC system. The goal of the ERMC system will be to identify, maintain, classify and dispose of RRB's electronic records, including e-mail, according to specified records disposition policies. The initiative is part of a multi-year effort consisting of consultative guidance, the installation of software, hardware, training, and associated policies and procedures that will enable the RRB to manage its records electronically.

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### **Information Technology Infrastructure**

Capital Element: **Network Operations**

Fiscal Year 2013 Cost: **\$225,000**

The RRB's computer network links headquarters with its field office systems. The heart of the network is a data center that runs the applications which handle the core business and operational data of the agency.

It is vitally important that a reliable network infrastructure be in place to minimize any chance of disruption. This capital item supports planned projects for improvements to the agency's mainframe and servers, as well as associated components, such as telecommunications and storage systems, software, backup power supplies, data communications connections, environmental controls (air conditioning, fire suppression), and special security devices. It also includes funding for mandatory or emergency replacement and upgrade of hardware and software. Contractual assistance is needed to augment agency staff to accomplish the initiatives.

- Storage Area Network (SAN) Upgrade (\$175,000)  
The agency's SAN provides the storage for its virtual server environment. It is also used for backup and archival storage. In fiscal year 2013, the RRB plans to add to the current SAN and obtain services and tools to ensure that current storage is optimized. As of fiscal year 2011, following the RRB's own established strategy and that of the Administration's Federal Data Center Consolidation Initiative to reduce the overall energy use within government data centers, the RRB virtualized 43 percent of its data center servers. At the current pace the RRB anticipates virtualization of 60 percent of the agency's servers by the end of fiscal year 2013.
  
- Desktop Virtualization (\$50,000)  
Desktop virtualization separates a personal computer desktop environment from a physical machine using the same type of hardware and software systems required to support a virtualized environment. This initiative funds consulting services to develop the requirements for a small proof of concept desktop virtualization pilot project. Such a pilot project will be used to assist us in determining if virtualizing desktops is a cost effective alternative to purchasing replacements of the desktop computers and associated peripheral equipment.

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### Information Technology Infrastructure

Capital Element: **Infrastructure Replacement**

Fiscal Year 2013 Cost: **\$270,710**

IT infrastructure is the critical foundation for business applications. Life cycle replacement of infrastructure equipment is a direct cost, but reduces indirect, hidden costs such as lost end-user productivity and downtime. Funding will be used for replacement of IT equipment based on the greatest need, as funds will not allow the replacement of all equipment scheduled for replacement based on our *IT Equipment Replacement Policy*. For fiscal year 2013 we will target the following for replacement:

- Routers/Switches (\$210,710)
- Servers (\$60,000)

Routine replacement of laptop and personal desktop computers throughout the agency is not currently planned for fiscal year 2013 due to funding constraints. The RRB desktop virtualization pilot project, will determine if a full rollout of desktop virtualization is feasible.

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Non-Capital Element: **Emergency Business System/Application Restoration Services**

Fiscal Year 2013 Cost: **\$50,000**

This initiative allows the agency to quickly and efficiently purchase IT services for computer programming, hardware, software, and other IT-related services. The funds will be used for expert IT professional services necessary in the event of resource availability shortages and restoration time constraints to facilitate the continuity of operations in an emergency situation.

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