CLOUD & COMPUTING

State of the States 2020: Broadband Is Critical Infrastructure

The nation's governors are delving into their varied policy priorities for the coming year, but a new shared reality is emerging: Governors are committed to ensuring that everyone has access to the Internet.

BY NEWS STAFF / FEBRUARY 3, 2020

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The tradition in most states is for governors to begin the year with the broadest agenda-

setting speech they will deliver: the State of the State address. For the past several years, the *Government Technology* editorial team has picked apart these speeches, looking for clues about new initiatives and areas of focus that will touch technology. These references can be broad, like a mention of a need to "modernize" an agency, which will likely include a tech overhaul, or they can be specific, such as a discussion about the need for more cybersecurity funding to protect citizen data. Over the years, topics like digital service delivery, cybersecurity and broadband have come up more frequently, indicating that these issues are on the minds of policymakers and the citizens they serve more than ever before.

Increasingly, governors are using their platforms to underscore the importance of making sure all residents, regardless of where they live, have options to get online. Internet access has profound impacts on opportunities in education, jobs, health care and nearly every other facet of modern life. The language used to describe getting connected has been slowly shifting: In 2020, broadband is now viewed as critical infrastructure, governors are prioritizing it as such, and it's not a partisan issue.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves, delivering his first address following his election last November, identified broadband access as a priority, while many others outlined specific budget requests for broadband: Maine Gov. Janet Mills asked for $15 million, South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem spoke of a recently secured $25 million investment and Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam asked lawmakers for $35 million for broadband. "Broadband has become an economic necessity for business, for education, for health care, and for everyday life," Northam said.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo put broadband in the win column for his administration, citing its availability statewide thanks to past investments. But Cuomo's claim is somewhat controversial, as many states have noted the tendency of FCC broadband coverage maps to overstate the reality of Internet access. Complicating this further is the fact that just because service is available doesn't mean it's affordable and that residents are satisfied with their options. Clearly, this is an issue that will continue to require further study and substantial investment nationwide.

As of this story's publish date, about two-thirds of governors have delivered these speeches. See our map and analysis for clues about what 2020 will likely bring. We rate each speech on a scale of 0 to 5, with 0 representing zero technology mentions and 5

awarded to states where a packed tech agenda is laid out. As additional addresses are given, we'll add them to this story.

— *Noelle Knell*

ALABAMA

Address date: TBA

ALASKA

Address date: Jan. 27, 2020

Stars: 0

To sum it up: Gov. Mike Dunleavy focused heavily on the state's financial picture in his Jan. 27 address, as Alaska continues to feel the impacts of a big drop in oil prices. Among his belt-tightening ideas was for the state to create a lottery — a practice embraced by 45 other states, generating billions in revenue for government services. Dunleavy didn't make any specific reference to technology in his speech, though he did propose a new Inspector General office to help encourage government to operate more efficiently, as well as charged the Department of Administration with looking for opportunities to modernize and root out waste, fraud and abuse. Some of this work may fall to interim CIO John Boucher, who has held the position since February 2019.

Read the governor's speech here.

ARIZONA

Address date: Jan. 13, 2020

Stars: 3

To sum it up: Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey hit many of the mainstay talking points during his State of the State address Jan. 13, but he also gave a nod to technology for its capacity to improve the government and state overall. He mentioned bolstering STEM workforce development and training, especially at the community college level. Ducey called for more high-speed Internet in rural parts of the state and highlighted the need to triple investments in that area. He cited a $50 million investment in the Smart Highway Corridor program, which leverages the highway system as a route for broadband infrastructure. Regarding drug trafficking, Ducey highlighted increased surveillance

technology along Arizona's southern border with Mexico and improvements to law enforcement radio systems. The need for body cameras on every state trooper also got a nod when the governor mentioned that the budget includes funding to do just that.

Read the governor's speech here.

ARKANSAS

Address date: TBA

CALIFORNIA

Address date: TBA

COLORADO

Address date: Jan. 9, 2020

Stars: 0

To sum it up: Jared Polis' second State of the State address efficiently ripped through past achievements and forthcoming goals, policy announcements and metaphors, personal stories and grandiose statements about the collective identity of Coloradans. The governor used his platform to tout bipartisan efforts to lower health-care costs, increase investment in higher education and put more money toward transportation infrastructure. He spent most of the speech talking about the economy, education and health care, and laid out an array of goals: Helping fossil fuel workers transition to jobs in renewable energy, broadening the tax base, introducing a public option for health care and expanding access to pre-school while encouraging college savings. While Polis mentioned that emerging transportation tech companies need to pay their fair share in taxes, his State of the State address otherwise gave technology a wide berth. However, Colorado is one of the nation's leaders in developing a digital ID, Denver is rolling out 5G communications, the state is playing host to ambitious connected vehicle experiments and it has studied blockchain as well. It is also a standout location for public use of drones.

Read the governor's speech here.

CONNECTICUT

Address date: Feb. 5, 2020

DELAWARE

Address date: Jan. 23, 2020

Stars: 4

To sum it up: Delaware Gov. John Carney took the opportunity during his final State of the State address to look back on the achievements of his administration, and to point to areas where the state is working hard to better the lives of its residents. Technology was a consistent theme throughout. He touted the state's efforts to widen rural broadband access, citing two anecdotes of Delawareans, one business owner and one teacher, whose work was changed remarkably for the better after the state brought Internet access to their areas. He also lauded the launch of Delaware OneStop, an online platform where small businesses can do all that they need to be licensed to operate in the state.

Delaware CIO James Collins got a shoutout from the governor in this year's address, when he asked his IT chief "to lead a new effort to connect state government with Delawareans through technology" and look into the development of a Delaware OneStop platform for citizens to interact with the state. The governor hopes that it will be a "game changer" for residents.

Carney also credited the growth of small businesses for the strength of the state's economy, pointing to the new Encouraging Development, Growth and Expansion (EDGE) grant program that has awarded $1.5 million to 20 small businesses since its launch last spring. Among those businesses is W7energy, which makes electric vehicle battery technology.

And on an interesting side note, the governor stated that this spring, the USS Delaware, a brand-new Virginia class nuclear submarine and the first U.S. Navy vessel to be named after the state, will be commissioned at the Port of Wilmington.

Read the governor's speech here.

FLORIDA

Address date: Jan. 14, 2020

Stars: 1

To sum it up: Gov. Ron DeSantis gave little attention to technology and modernization in Florida's 2020 state of the state address, focusing predominantly on taxes, education and the economy. His biggest mentions of technology were largely retrospective, and he gave little lip service to how his administration planned to advance its IT footprint in the coming year. The biggest mention came amidst his comments on the economy, when he noted that the state was well positioned to expand its aerospace industry--a reality borne out by reports of companies migrating to the state and anticipation that the newly minted Space Command may set up shop there. He also called the expansion of citizen access to telehealth through passage of HB23 in 2019, a "major reform" legislatively, while also making reference to E-Verify, the background check software e has encouraged businesses to use in a bid to end an illegal workforce. DeSantis also noted that we were living in an "increasingly mobile and interconnected time," but otherwise shied away from saying directly how his administration planned to take advantage of it.

Read the governor's speech here.

GEORGIA

Address date: Jan. 16, 2020

Stars: 0

To sum it up: Technology received virtually no attention in the second State of the State address from Gov. Brian Kemp. The speech's main topics were the economy, education, health care and crime, and Kemp continually employed a metaphor that characterized Georgia as a house being built on a strong foundation. Georgia's record unemployment rate (3.3 percent) was highlighted, as was the "historic" pay raise that Georgian teachers received in 2019. Kent admitted health-care reform is difficult, but he promoted various measures that aim to help families, including future legislation that would "reduce surprise medical billing." The governor came down hard on gang violence and sex trafficking, pointing out that criminals "use Atlanta as a hub, trading human life like it's a commodity." Tech got only one reference from Kemp, who said technology would play a role in an initiative for Parkinson's disease research.

Read the governor's speech here.

HAWAII

Address date: Jan. 21, 2020

Stars: 2

To sum it up: Gov. David Ige began his State of the State address acknowledging the breakneck pace of technological advances over the past 20 years and used it to segue into how the issues plaguing Hawaiian residents, such as a living wage, education and housing, haven't changed in that same timeframe.

The governor's speech focused on a package of bills that aim to better the lives of working families by gradually increasing minimum wage over time and through targeted tax relief. He continued by explaining how the proposals will expand affordable child care, which closes the gap for about 20,000 toddlers without access to child care or preschool programs by repurposing empty classrooms, underused facilities and offering services near parents.

Ige returned to the topic of technology to discuss its impacts on sustainability in Hawaii. He lauded technology's use in agriculture, allowing farms to produce higher yields and spurring multiple agricultural startups. He also noted that residential adoption of solar panels has helped the state achieve its goal of obtaining 30 percent of energy needs from renewable sources by 2020.

Read the governor's speech here.

IDAHO

Address date: Jan. 6, 2020

Stars: 3

To sum it up: Gov. Brad Little delivered Idaho's State of the State address on Jan. 6, 2020, and spoke of investing in education, reducing regulatory burdens, making health care more affordable and, in general, increasing prosperity and quality of life for Idahoans. As new presidents of each of the four-year universities settle in, Little advocated for an approach from universities and community colleges that boldly meets the needs of students and businesses by knocking down silos. His recommendation that cybersecurity programs be offered by local universities in conjunction with one another was a nod to technology in the speech. He further remarked that the state must do more to protect

citizen data, noting IT modernization projects that will help shore up cyberdefenses and bolster the public's confidence in government.

The governor also pitched a strategic investment in the people of Idaho in the form of improvements in the state's broadband infrastructure. That will begin with the establishment of a State Broadband Office, which will facilitate the use of existing resources and unite efforts to connect all areas of Idaho. The benefits of expanded broadband will include improved telehealth and pharmacy access in rural parts of the state, where some communities face long distances to a doctor or pharmacy. The governor also acknowledged how Americans' life expectancy has dropped for the first time in decades and touted progress with Idaho's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program database.

Read the governor's speech here.

ILLINOIS

Address date: Jan. 29, 2020
Stars: 4
To sum it up: Gov. J.B. Pritzker's second State of the State address focused mainly on helping Illinois recover from scandal and corruption. But he also reflected on the state's innovation, saying Illinois has given the country "four transformative presidents" as well as technology like the first cellphone and first Internet browser, Mosaic.

Pritzker hailed the increase in student applications to its public universities, adding that Illinois is one of the top producers of computer science degrees in the country, making up almost 10 percent of those awarded nationwide. The governor also praised a bipartisan infrastructure bill called Rebuild Illinois, which aims to create 500,000 jobs in areas like road and infrastructure repair, broadband expansion to "Internet deserts," and modernizations of facilities including hospitals and universities. Pritzker also discussed building a foundation for technology jobs by standing up new data centers and startup incubators, and investing $100 million in a partnership between the University of Illinois and University of Chicago to make the state "the quantum computing capital of the world."

And the governor encouraged more focus on clean energy, such as introducing legislation to reduce carbon emissions and create more electric transportation options.

Read the governor's speech here.

INDIANA

Address date: Jan. 14, 2020

Stars: 2

To sum it up: Gov. Eric Holcomb hit upon tech a few times in his fourth State of the State address. He announced that in April of this year, the state would host the first Indiana Global Economic Summit. At this gathering of local economic development partners, diplomats and decision-makers, topics to be discussed include cybersecurity, energy storage solutions and the future of mobility. The governor also stated that this year, Indiana will be investing in its physical defenses, developing "the future of warfare" including drones, radar, sonar and hypersonics.

Also in the field of tech, Holcomb called for state lawmakers to pass a "hands-free device driving law" as most other states have done. But in other areas, he encouraged more smartphone use, pointing to the Indiana Career Connect app that showed 92,000 open jobs in the state at the time of his address. He also called to raise the minimum purchasing age for e-cigarettes to 21.

Read the governor's speech here.

IOWA

Address date: Jan. 14, 2020

Stars: 2

To sum it up: In Gov. Kim Reynolds' third Condition of the State address, she reflected on how far Iowa has come in the last decade and how strong it has become, as well as emphasized the importance of planning for 10 and 20 years in the future. Broadband remains a priority, and while in 2019 the Empower Rural Iowa Act funded 17 rural broadband projects with $5 million, Reynolds asked for $15 million more so Iowa can continue to leverage federal and private funding to get broadband to every part of the state. She called high-speed broadband "critical infrastructure" that will enable a robust telehealth system to ensure every community receives the best health-care services possible. The governor also stressed the importance of computer science as a basic skill in 2020, and will push legislation that ensures the subject is taught in 100 percent of Iowa

classrooms. More generally, Reynolds' budget includes $103 million in new funds to improve state schools, $20 million for flood relief, a 31 percent increase in funding toward water quality and conservation, and a dedicated mental health fund.

Read the governor's speech here.

KANSAS

Address date: Jan. 16, 2020

Stars: 1

To sum it up: Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly's Jan. 16 address was equal parts retrospective and future-oriented, as she remarked upon the state's struggle to emerge from the economic downturn that gripped the country following the Great Recession. Her first address to citizens in 2019 was during a time when the state "was on life support" due to austere budget cuts to critical programs, coupled with record debt and high taxes. But in 2020, the state is in a much better place, according to Kelly, with low unemployment, record job creation and investments in critical services. The only economic dark spot Kelly referenced was the recent announcement by Boeing that production on the 737 Max is being suspended. Major Wichita-based supplier of the airplane Spirit Aerosystems announced layoffs as a result. There was no direct mention of technology in Kelly's future plans, though she did tout the creation of the Office of Rural Prosperity, supported by Lt. Gov. Lynn Rogers on a statewide listening tour. That initiative aims in part to expand access to rural broadband to support economic growth.

Read the governor's speech here.

KENTUCKY

Address date: Jan. 14, 2020

Stars: 1

To sum it up: Gov. Andy Beshear's first State of the Commonwealth address was about setting the tone for his administration and its goals over the next four years, with little specific focus on technology. Beshear outlined his agenda with the acronym WHERE, which stands for wages, healthcare, education, retirement and example.

Beshear acknowledged the importance of border-to-border high-speed internet access for

Kentuckians, which in turn would boost the state's economy. He remarked that Kentucky consistently appears in the bottom 10 of state surveys, such as 45th in the nation for adults with high school diplomas.

With plans to reinvigorate the Kentucky economy, Beshear said he hopes it will attract technology start-ups like AppHarvest, courted by the previous administration to build its 60-acre greenhouse for fresh produce in Morehead, Ky. Overall, Beshear's first address was a mix of policy reform and an entreaty for bi-partisan legislation designed to benefit both the state and its residents.

Read the governor's speech here.

LOUISIANA

Address date: March 9, 2020

MAINE

Address date: Jan. 21, 2020
Stars: 3
To sum it up: In Gov. Janet Mills' second annual speech before the state — and her first official State of the State — she covered a lot of ground. She recognized the 200th anniversary of Maine's statehood, spoke about its history and speculated on its future. She talked about her administration's accomplishments, including Medicaid expansion, enacting a new paid leave law and prescription drug pricing reform. And she called for many specific policies, such as restoring higher education funding and hiring more child welfare caseworkers. That didn't leave a lot of room for tech talk, but she didn't ignore the subject either; Mills called broadband "critical infrastructure" of particular importance to rural areas and proposed $15 million to expand high-speed Internet in the state. She also highlighted a company working on 5G technologies and spoke out in support of environmentally friendly technologies such as heat pumps, energy storage, electric vehicles and solar panels. She also pointed out that Maine is set to become the first state in the nation to demonstrate floating offshore wind turbines. Toward the end of the speech, Mills veered into futurism and painted a picture of a future Maine where data centers dot the landscape and robots deliver L.L. Bean boots.

Read the governor's speech here.

MARYLAND

Address date: Feb. 5, 2020

MASSACHUSETTS

Address date: Jan. 21, 2020

Stars: 2

To sum it up: In his State of the Commonwealth address, Gov. Charlie Baker praised the strides his state has made toward ensuring residents in western Massachusetts have high-speed Internet. He reported that all those communities now have broadband connectivity, or plans to achieve it. To expand on work around improving transportation, the governor said he would further increase funds to the T transit system by $135 million. Also in transportation, Baker announced plans to achieve "net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2015." To that end, Massachusetts officials plan to work with counterparts in other states toward goals set forward in the Regional Transportation and Climate Initiative, a plan to reduce greenhouse gasses (GHGs) by transforming the transportation sector, responsible for 40 percent of GHGs emitted in the Northeast. Baker acknowledged the challenge in this, but said the state has a responsibility to reduce transit emissions. He also cited two offshore wind projects awaiting federal approval that would help eliminate 5.7 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually.

Read the governor's speech here.

MICHIGAN

Address date: Jan. 29, 2020

Stars: 0

To sum it up: During her State of the State address this year, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer focused heavily on plans to advance Michigan's infrastructure, employment and education, but gave almost no comment to modernization, cybersecurity or technology-related efforts. In particular, Whitmer highlighted her plans to invest in the state's roads and bridges with her Rebuilding Michigan plan, a strategy that would use $3.5 billion in municipal bonds to tackle crumbling infrastructure. She also emphasized some of the

economic gains made during her tenure — including the opening of a new assembly plant in Detroit, the creation of 11,000 new jobs in the automotive industry, and billions in investment in stateside facilities and plants. At the same time, Whitmer spoke to her desire to invest in early literacy for children across Michigan, while also focusing on increasing equitable funding for lower-income school districts, as part of her vision for improving overall education.

Read the governor's speech here.

MINNESOTA

Address date: TBA

MISSISSIPPI

Address date: Jan. 27, 2020
Stars: 1
To sum it up: Gov. Tate Reeves outlined his vision for Mississippi under his new administration, which included an investment in education, children in foster care, and health care. As part of his dedication to the state's critical infrastructure, Reeves labeled Internet access as the next great generational issue. While he did not outline an action plan, the governor said the state will continue to develop innovative ways to connect Mississippians.The governor also expressed his desire to make health care more affordable for his constituents by creating incentives for investment in rural hospitals or telemedicine in underserved areas.

Aside from those issues, Reeves focused mostly on building a future for Mississippi's children, with proposals to continue education reform citing how changes to date have improved reading levels, test scores and grades; a significant increase in teacher pay allocated in the next budget; and the promotion of adoption to help children leave the state foster-care system.

Read the governor's speech here.

MISSOURI

Address date: Jan. 15, 2020

Stars: 0

To sum it up: In his 2020 State of the State address on Jan. 15, Missouri Gov. Mike Parson touted his workforce agenda and the state's growing economy, although technology was not highlighted in the speech. Gov. Parson said that through collaboration with employers, 42,000 Missourians have signed up for on-the-job training through the state's One Start program. The governor touted his state's 3.1 unemployment rate, which he said has been below the national unemployment rate for 40 consecutive months. He said the state ranks seventh in the nation for small business wage growth and added that workforce efforts have created more than 40,000 new jobs during his time as governor.

Education was another theme, and the governor said the state is proposing more access to virtual education for high school students and home school students. He reported that the Fast Track scholarship program has hundreds of applicants and is primarily used at the community college level where women make up about 61 percent of the total enrollment. Parson also said the state is dedicated to making state government better, as evidenced by the pay raise state workers received.

Read the governor's speech here.

MONTANA

No address given

NEBRASKA

Address date: Jan. 15, 2020

Stars: 1

To sum it up: Gov. Pete Ricketts gave his State of the State speech after a tough year of flooding in his state, which saw nearly 320 days under flood warning, watch or advisory in 2019. There was little mention of IT in his address, but among his four main plans to push Nebraska forward, Ricketts did briefly touch on the importance of education for tech-related jobs. Citing the importance of offering future-looking opportunities to keep young Nebraskans in-state as they enter the workforce, the governor proposed investing $16

million in scholarships for students to attend universities, state colleges and community colleges to help them get into careers including IT, engineering and health care. In addition to workforce efforts, Gov. Ricketts proposed $500 million in property tax relief over the next three years, $50 million toward helping communities recover from the historic flooding, and pledged to make concrete strides to retrain veterans and offer tax relief that will help them take advantage of retirement benefits.

Read the governor's speech here.

NEVADA

No address given

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Address date: Feb. 6, 2020

NEW JERSEY

Address date: Jan. 14, 2020

Stars: 2

To sum it up: New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy began with a message of unity in his second State of the State address, delivered five weeks after an anti-Semitic hate crime that claimed the lives of four citizens. He went on to enumerate investments in the middle class, reiterating support for the Affordable Care Act, which will soon be evidenced by a New Jersey Health Exchange, expected to be up and running later in 2020. That website will be complemented by other tech-driven efforts, like a new Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency that will help collect and publish actual health-care costs paid by residents. Murphy also touched on encouraging stats relative to the state's opioid fight, referencing its "targeted, evidence-based, and data-driven whole of government approach."

In another brief tech mention, Murphy lauded efforts to date to expand student access to STEM education. Shared services came up as well, and while Murphy didn't tie the concept specifically to technology systems, he encouraged communities to look for opportunities to realize savings by developing partnerships. Further, Murphy announced

the Jobs NJ program, intended to develop a future-focused workforce and a resilient economy.

Read the governor's speech here.

NEW MEXICO

Address date: Jan. 21, 2020

Stars: 0

To sum it up: Technology was starkly absent from Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's second State of the State address. Issues around employment, the economy and education were most prominent in her remarks. While the argument could be made that these issues have tenuous ties to technology, there was no overt mention of those ties. In one example, the governor mentioned the substantial reduction in wait times for the child abuse hotline within the Department of Children, Youth and Families, but made no references to how improvements were made. Similarly, she referenced the Workforce Solutions Department's efforts to cut down on wage theft and bad actors gaming the system, but it's unclear whether technology played a part in these efforts.

Read the governor's speech here.

NEW YORK

Address date: Jan. 8, 2020

Stars: 1

To sum it up: In the wake of the late December 2019 attacks on Hasidic Jews in the hamlet of Monsey, N.Y., Gov. Andrew Cuomo's speech often focused on the notion of standing together as New Yorkers and on protecting citizens regardless of their ethnic or religious background. Cuomo proposed a very broad agenda for 2020, including a $3 billion bond act for natural restoration and resilience programs, a tax cut for middle-class families and small businesses, paid sick leave legislation, legalization of "adult use" marijuana, and record funding to address homelessness and affordable housing.

The speech featured several brief references to technology. Cuomo alluded to the increased importance of emergency management, including the need for the "right equipment," but no space was dedicated to the specific tech issues that make responding to emergencies an

evolving challenge. New York's offshore wind and drone programs also received brief mention. While Cuomo did say cellphone service needs to be expanded throughout the state, he also claimed that Internet is already available statewide, suggesting that broadband coverage is no longer an issue in New York. However, efforts to expand rural coverage are still underway.

Read the governor's speech here.

NORTH CAROLINA

No address given

NORTH DAKOTA

Address date: Jan. 29, 2020

Stars: 5

To sum it up: Gov. Doug Burgum began his State of the State address this year with a drone delivering him a clicker to advance his PowerPoint slides, and for good reason — his speech was not given in the capital city of Bismarck, but more than 200 miles east in Grand Forks, where the University of North Dakota plays host to one of seven federally approved drone test sites. He used the demo to talk about the state's push to attract drone research and businesses to the state, including inspecting infrastructure such as oil and gas pipelines, as well as its creation of a statewide air traffic control network for unmanned aircraft.

And that would hardly be the last time that Burgum, who led a tech company before becoming governor, would mention technology. Burgum called for a reinvention of government, praising the new state website, a common back-end platform he credits with saving money and streamlining digital services, and asking the Legislature for more cybersecurity funding in the process. He spoke about the floods the state suffered last year and the groundwater monitoring sensors North Dakota has deployed, and promoted two flood risk assessment tools, floodsmart.gov and the North Dakota Risk Assessment Map Service. While discussing the importance of oil and gas in the state's economy, he paid ample attention to efforts to develop better carbon-capture technology, including Project Tundra at a coal-burning power plant in Oliver County, and how such efforts could help North Dakota diversify its economy. Indeed, technology infused most of the governor's

speech, including his enthusiasm for the developing Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, the plans for which include online archives and an "immersive experience in a digital platform."

Read the governor's speech here.

OHIO

Address date: March 31, 2020

OKLAHOMA

Address date: Feb. 3, 2020

OREGON

Address date: TBA

PENNSYLVANIA

Address date: TBA

RHODE ISLAND

Address date: Jan. 14, 2020

Stars: 1

To sum it up: Well into her second term, Gov. Gina Raimondo covered a wide range of issues she aims to tackle in her State of the State address, noting that to maintain the momentum Rhode Island has built, innovation will need to play a key role in everything from job growth to government processes. Mentions of technology were light, but Raimondo imagined a day when the state tackles transportation and infrastructure the same way they have approached improving roads and bridges, work that would pave the way for high-speed commuter rail and solar-powered electric vehicles in the not-too-distant future. The governor touched on the state's efforts to increase clean energy production, and reported that Rhode Island is now the national leader in offshore wind energy production. She announced she would be signing an executive order to make

Rhode Island the first state powered by 100 percent renewable energy by the end of the next decade.

Read the governor's speech here.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Address date: Jan. 22, 2020

Stars: 0

To sum it up: There was very little relating to technology in Gov. Henry McMaster's 2020 State of the State address on Jan. 22. The governor accentuated the state's "vibrant" economy and praised South Carolina's efforts to reduce income taxes. He said the state returned $67 million to the taxpayers and gave that rebate partial credit for the good economic numbers. In the last three years, McMaster reported, the state has boasted nearly $10 billion in new capital investment and has created almost 35,000 jobs; unemployment is at a record low, and personal income growth at an all-time high.

But he also spoke of needed improvements, including making public universities and colleges, both technical and comprehensive, more accessible and affordable and is advocating providing a 5 percent funding increase for those colleges that don't raise tuition. The governor advocated for a transparent process for placing appropriations in the budget, offering a plan that would make state funds available publicly and all applications for such funds and rewards would be placed on agency websites within 15 days, allowing for public scrutiny.

Read the governor's speech here.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Address date: Jan. 14, 2020

Stars: 3

To sum it up: To align with a new directive of transparency in state government, South Dakota has leveraged technology to become more accountable and accessible, a fact that Gov. Kristi Noem touted in her State of the State address. Noem pointed out how some of the endeavors have improved taxpayers' lives but haven't cost them a dime because of free platforms like YouTube and Facebook Live to "bring information directly into the living

rooms of South Dakotans." Her administration is working with county and city governments to find ways to post meeting materials online in a way that mirrors state processes.

Noem outlined her goal to create a South Dakota that encourages the use of developing technology to bring a satisfactory level of broadband access to businesses and homes. With the enticement of federal grants and state dollars, South Dakota has secured a $25 million investment to bring high-speed Internet to underserved areas, which includes about 6,500 homes and 150 businesses.

Highlighted alongside the governor's economic development endeavors was $2.92 million matching local and federal investment in Dakota State University. The National Security Agency named the college a Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Operations, and Noem said she hopes the state can recruit its graduates to bolster the state's cyberdefenses and position it as a leader in cybersecurity.

Read the governor's speech here.

TENNESSEE

Address date: Feb. 3, 2020

TEXAS

Address date: TBA

UTAH

Address date: Jan. 29, 2020
Stars: 2
To sum it up: In his 11th and final State of the State address, Gov. Gary Herbert reflected on the strides made in the decade he has led Utah and looked toward how those successes have prepared the state for the future. Despite achieving an all-time unemployment rate of 2.3 percent, the challenge remains to ensure that the quarter of Utahans living in rural communities are employed. Herbert reported that they are on track to surpass a 2020 goal of creating 25,000 rural jobs, in large part due to commitments to expanding broadband

throughout the state. He cited the Utah Rural Online Initiative as giving constituents who live far from metropolitan areas job opportunities, as well as a state telecommuting program that allows state workers to live far from the capitol. Other tech mentions included a vision of making commute via public transit as easy as it is in a car. Herbert's proposed 2020 budget includes $66 million for fast electric vehicle charging stations and $34 million toward improvements in railroads and buses.

Herbert also praised Utah's progress toward improving K-12 schools, noting that this year's budget will bring total investment public education to $2.3 billion over the last nine years. Going forward, he hopes the state will work to create more affordable housing options, improve services for those experiencing homelessness and continue to reduce air pollution to help improve quality of life.

Read the governor's speech here.

VERMONT

Address date: Jan. 9, 2020

Stars: 0

To sum it up: If you are looking to Gov. Phil Scott's Jan. 9 address as evidence that technology is a front-and-center priority in the state, you would need to read between the lines to find it. While the governor hit all the major talking points — education, economy and workforce — information technology and the like were completely absent from his remarks. One could argue that his comments about workforce stagnation and the need to bring in new businesses and opportunity has some link to tech-oriented companies or that his calls to level the playing field for students across the state would come with a technology component, but it wasn't explicitly mentioned. The nearest direct reference to any state effort in the IT space was that of the creation of the Agency of Digital Services. Led by CIO John Quinn, the agency was created in 2017, but Scott did not elaborate on the agency's work in his speech.

Read the governor's speech here.

VIRGINIA

Address date: Jan. 8, 2020

Stars: 2

To sum it up: In his State of the Commonwealth address, Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam put an emphasis on a changing economy that requires moving not just people and goods, but information. To that end, he asked the Legislature to approve spending $35 million for broadband expansion and improvement, noting that high-speed Internet "has become an economic necessity" for living and doing business. Also part of an evolving economy, Northam said, is investing in ongoing learning and new skills for students, and 38 percent of the new spending his budget calls for is marked for education. Virginia plans to offer incentives for residents returning to school for training in high-demand areas like health care, public safety or IT. The governor proposes a $1,000 per semester stipend to help with transportation, child care or other costs.

The governor also pledged to make advances in clean technology related to energy production and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Northam aims to have the state generate 30 percent of its electricity from renewable sources in the next decade, and 100 percent by 2050. To aid this effort, Northam is proposing the development of a 2,500-megawatt offshore windfarm, capable of powering a million homes. He reports the state is on track to achieve its goals.

Read the governor's speech here.

WASHINGTON

Address date: Jan. 14, 2020

Stars: 1

To sum it up: Gov. Jay Inslee says one of his favorite parts of his job is "shining the light on how great Washington is," and that's what he spent most of his State of the State speech doing this year. That meant that tech talk was light — he praised the University of Washington for developing an app that monitors a person's breathing level in order to identify opioid overdoses, as well as a project in Klickitat County that scrubs methane from a landfill for reuse as truck fuel. Aside from that, his address spent much time on two policy goals Inslee hopes to address in the next year: reducing homelessness and enacting a clean fuel standard. Other aims of the governor's in 2020 include addressing vaping and tobacco use among young people, supporting workplace equity and diversity, passing gun safety laws, expanding early learning programs, and protecting marine wildlife.

Meanwhile, the state's IT department has earned plaudits in the Center for Digital Government's Digital States Survey for its emphasis on cybersecurity, its modernization efforts and its cloud strategy.

Read the governor's speech here.

WEST VIRGINIA

Address date: Jan. 8, 2020

Stars: 2

To sum it up: In his fourth State of the State address to West Virginia, Gov. Jim Justice was heavy on promotion and light on specifics, although he touched upon one potentially massive technology project. He said West Virginia University, in Morgantown, is a finalist to become the site of a new testing and research facility for Virgin Hyperloop One. Based in Los Angeles, Virgin Hyperloop One is a transportation technology company that wants to design and build a vacuum tube for moving people and goods at more than 600 miles per hour. Routes and project costs are undecided to date, but Justice said he spoke with WVU staff and he was confident they have the space and interest for the project, and he would support it however he could.

That was the only gov tech-related initiative Justice mentioned, although he said in the beginning of his speech that his Secretary of State Mac Warner had made it his mission to ensure the integrity of West Virginia's elections and protect them against cybersecurity threats, a nod at a major national issue.

Justice also said WVU is building a research facility that's developing a way to manufacture carbon fiber out of coal, although it's not clear whether that facility will be publicly funded. The rest of Justice's speech focused on jobs, Medicaid, taxes, infrastructure, drug addiction programs, education spending and veterans.

Read the governor's speech here.

WISCONSIN

Address date: Jan. 22, 2020

Stars: 1

To sum it up: Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers delivered his second State of the State address on Jan. 22, 2020, following the completion of his first full year as the state's leader. He mentioned tech and innovation work several times as part of points about other topics. One area of interest was telehealth, which is now covered by Medicare in Wisconsin, a move that stands to help residents of rural areas.

In addition, the governor went on to call for a special legislative session aimed at helping strengthen Wisconsin's farmers and rural communities, vital to Wisconsin's identity, as it is known as America's Dairyland. Part of this includes a joint effort between the governor and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. to create a new Office of Rural Prosperity for the state. Although the governor did not expressly state it, it seems likely that broadband access will be an ongoing concern for the new agency, and something to watch within the state's broader tech efforts moving forward.

Read the governor's speech here.

WYOMING

Address date: Feb. 10, 2020

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