DIR Names Nancy Rainosek as New Texas CISO

The Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) is pleased to announce that Nancy Rainosek has been named the state Chief Information Security Officer (CISO).

“Texas is a large state with enormous importance placed on information security and Nancy is beyond suited to lead the way for DIR and its customers as well as ensuring citizen data is secure, ensuring trust in government services,” said Stacey Napier, DIR executive director.

As state CISO, Rainosek will act as Texas’ lead strategy expert in information security services targeted to Texas state agencies and educational entities. Additionally, she will serve to assure the integrity, availability and confidentiality of critical state assets under the state Chief Information Officer, Todd Kimbriel.

“Nancy is a forward thinker who is always ready to accept bigger challenges,” said Todd Kimbriel, Texas’ CIO. “Her experience in the InfoSec world along with her background in state government has prepared her to fully engage on this mission.”

Ms. Rainosek has been with DIR in the role of Governance Risk and Compliance Program Manager for the State of Texas since 2013. She was previously Deputy CISO and Enterprise Security Manager at the Health and Human Services Commission and audit manager and Information Resource Manager for the State Auditor’s Office. She’s certified in risk and information control. She is a graduate of Texas State University.

She will assume the duties of CISO immediately.

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EVENTS

Save the Date
• State of Cloud Security 2017: Monday, February 13
• TASSCC TEC 2017: Friday, March 31
• Information Security Forum: April 11-12, 2017, Palmer Events Center, Austin, TX
ISF 2017 Call for Presentations: Ideas with Impact

The right story, presentation or workgroup can provide the tools to command a positive and necessary change in any IT program. The Department of Information Resources Information Security Forum (ISF) has consistently provided its audience with notable speakers discussing a variety of topics, sharing insights and lessons learned related to information security.

The 2017 ISF is quickly approaching. This is your chance to affect change in IT security programs across the state. Submit a presentation for an opportunity to share your knowledge with peers. The ISF planning team would like the presentations to align with the functional areas of the Texas Cybersecurity Framework. Those functional areas are Identify, Detect, Protect, Respond and Recover. Learn more about the Texas Cybersecurity Framework and specific security controls. All presentation submissions are due in by close of business on Friday, Feb. 10. Please see the ISF website for additional information and to submit your presentation.

This year’s event will be a one and a half-day event scheduled for Tuesday – Wednesday, April 11-12, at the Palmer Events Center in Austin, and will be open to state and local government employees.

If you have any questions, please contact Erin Heath. Thank you for your support, and we look forward to working with you!

Legislative Update

DIR is tracking legislation for you! Throughout the 85th Texas Legislative Session (2017), DIR will be tracking technology-related legislation, some with directives specific to DIR and some with broad implications to the state in general. You may view complete information about each bill at the Texas Legislature Online.

See a list of bills filed for the 85th Legislative Session.

For additional information on any legislation or about participating in a workgroup for a bill that includes stakeholder engagement, please contact:

Robert Armstrong, Director of Public Affairs

(512) 936-9851 | robert.armstrong@dir.texas.gov

SANS Securing the Human Update

DIR has renewed the SANS Securing the Human Training Program. The release seats period began Jan. 17, and ends Feb. 17. During this period, you should remove any users no longer with your organization. This will archive the user and their previous training and allow you to regain that seat license.

If you have seats remaining that your organization will not use, please let us know so we can allocate these seats to other organizations that will use them.

If you have further questions, please send an email to dirsecurity@dir.texas.gov
InfoSec Academy Update

The current InfoSec Academy contract expires on Apr. 27, 2017. DIR has issued an RFO for DIR University (to include security education). There may be a small gap in service between the expiration of the current contract and the beginning of DIR University, so now is the time to take a course! The Texas Security Policy and Assurance course is available in an online anytime format. Once you have completed this course, you can register for one of the following certification prep courses:

- Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)
- Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)
- Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control (CRISC)
- CompTIA Security+
- Certified Ethical Hacker

In addition, the InfoSec Academy offers Online Anytime courses in all things information security, as well as soft skills courses.

Visit the Texas InfoSec Academy

If you have taken a certification prep course and have not completed a survey, please do so. We want to get your feedback on the courses and your plans for certification.

Texas InfoSec Academy Survey (Please complete the survey one time for each certification prep course you have completed.)

SPECTRIM

SPECTRIM changes are coming soon! In March, we will be upgrading to Archer 6.1 which is designed to offer an enhanced user experience with a simpler but more powerful user interface and advanced workflow capabilities. We will not be changing any functionality with this upgrade. We will upgrade our development and test environments on Feb. 27, and will be providing screen shots and instructions about the changes during the following three-week period. Production will be upgraded on March 20, 2017. Please plan for SPECTRIM to be unavailable on this day.

Gartner Webinars

The next webinar will be held Feb. 13, at 10 a.m. CST, discussing the “State of Cloud Security 2017”. Hosted by Jay Heiserv, this webinar will address popular concerns such as, if the public cloud is secure, how to use IaaS securely and what you should be doing to govern your SaaS use. Sign up to attend the webinar.
A World without Antivirus

Written by Nathan Goggin

Antivirus software: an obstacle or a security necessity? As the complexity and invasiveness of viruses increases, it’s likely that antivirus software is still a security necessity. However, that question has been continuously raised by software vendors and information security leaders for some time. A simple Google search for “is antivirus necessary?” yielded a result from Emsisoft, which made a compelling and humorous list of, “40 Reasons Why You DON’T Need an Antivirus.” Though some of the reasons listed are completely facetious (like #8 and homeopathic medicine), the list does provide a very real and limiting scenario a user would be facing if they chose not to install some form of antivirus protection.

In a new article on Ars Technica, Robert O’Callahan, a former Firefox developer, believes antivirus software and its vendors are terrible for the computing industry. He encourages users not to buy antivirus software or, if they already have, to uninstall it. His sentiment is that non-MS AV products provide little to no benefit in terms of security. In fact, O’Callahan goes on to stress that these products leave computers open to further attack. He points to Google’s Project Zero (PZ) as an example. PZ is a team of security analysts employed by Google, whose main purpose is to find zero-day vulnerabilities and to post their findings online to inform both developers and users, alike.

Though PZ regularly posts a list of known bugs, it is strictly left to the discretion of AV developers to close off the attack vectors their products can open. O’Callahan feels that developers do not follow standard security policies. Just last year, Ars Technica reported that high-level bugs jeopardized as many as 25 Norton security products, eight of them being consumer and small business products. He suggests if users want to have an AV installed, they go with MS Defender, which is integrated into most Microsoft operating systems and is built to work with it. Keeping your OS and application software up-to-date is an absolute necessity to keep your PC environment safe.

Justin Schuh, Google Chrome’s Security Chief, another advocate for discontinuing the use of antivirus programs, tweeted in November 2016, that AV programs are, “my single biggest impediment to shipping a secure browser.” He went on to say that interfering AV software held up his team’s efforts to sandbox test Win32 Flash on the Chrome browser for more than a year. Schuh added that they also witnessed a stream TSL errors which broke elements of HTTPS because of antivirus’ man-in-the-middle nature. Nicholas Nethercote, from Mozilla, noted his own development problems in 2012, due to McAfee. While testing ways to reduce the memory footprint of Firefox, he noticed that McAfee add-ons were using an incredibly large amount of computing memory.

Although removing antivirus is probably not the best solution for current IT environments, the article does seem to encourage concepts of thinking outside of the box for alternative methods to combatting viruses. As hacking through viruses and malware becomes more sophisticated, the methods employed by information security personnel to battle these attacks must also evolve.
Information Security Officer Spotlight

Jordan M. Genung, CISSP
Information Security Officer
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs

About you
I graduated from the University of Texas at San Antonio with a degree in Computer Science and Information Security. I’m also a graduate of a software engineering immersive program called Hack Reactor. Prior to serving as the ISO for TDHCA, I was a Director and Security Engineer at Human Element and a Director of Security Program Management at Logical Security. I worked with Shon Harris, the author of the McGraw-Hill CISSP book, for several years as the Director of her security consulting and training company.

What agency do you work for? Tell us a little about it.
The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) administers federal and state housing programs. TDHCA is the state Department responsible for housing related and community service programs as well as the regulation of the state’s manufactured housing industry.

Tell us how information security has changed since you started in your role.
Since I started in the industry I have seen executive management taking information security more seriously.

Who are your users/customers, and what is one of the most challenging areas for you?
Our users are TDHCA employees and our customers are the citizens that we serve. I focus on protecting TDHCA and customer data. One of the struggles we are currently facing is ensuring we have the funding to implement necessary security measures.

What do you like best of your job?
I work with a great team of people who have been very welcoming and helpful since I started.

What other career would you have liked to pursue?
Pilot or CIA/FBI agent

Tell us about your most proud accomplishment.
One of my proudest accomplishments was passing my CISSP exam.

Top 3 life highlights.
- Snorkeling in Hawaii and Spain
- Drinking whiskey with my grandmother
- Passing my CISSP

What are your hobbies?
Spending time with my family and traveling.

People would be surprised to know that you...
Developed a CISSP training course.

Any favorite line from a movie?
"You’re out of your element.” –The Big Lebowski
“ That rug really tied the room together.” –The Big Lebowski

Favorite travel spot?
Most recently I traveled to Alicante, Spain but I enjoy traveling to new places. I took a trip to Hawaii a few years ago and would love to go back.

What was the last book you read?
The last book I read was How to Win Friends and Influence People. I highly recommend it.

What is the best advice you have received and that you have used?
Know thyself

What would be your advice for a new security professional?
Learn as much as you can and stay humble.