MINUTES

Technology Committee Teleconference Meeting
Tuesday, November 15, 2005
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Eastern

I. Welcome and Introductions

Tim Blevins (Kansas), Committee Chair, called the meeting to order. The following members participated in the call:

NAME	STATE/ORGANIZATION
Robert Johnston	Hawaii
Tim Blevins, Chair	Kansas
Sue Pifer	Michigan
Jane Gardner	Minnesota
Cynthia Mastalesz	New Jersey
Blane Braunberger	North Dakota
Terry Garber	South Carolina
Gordon Smead	Tennessee
Debbie Peterson, Vice-Chair	Texas
Joe Huddleston, Chris Lane, Susan Ribe, Antonio Soto	Multistate Tax Commission

II. Public Comment Period

III. MTC Technology Project Priorities – Results out of MTC Committee Meetings

Joe Huddleston informed on the recent Executive Committee discussion of MTC technology needs. He described an emphasis on secure communications and a web site redesign. Systems for the MTC Audit Program were tied to secure communication. He indicated that by spring the Executive Committee would need a technology budget that will allow them to decide whether there is money for a combined registration system.

- Secure Email Platform and Electronic Document Exchange

Mr. Blevins noted the need for secure email and document exchange especially for the audit program. He indicated it is one of the highest priorities. For informational purposes, he referred the committee to two documents, one which compares secure email vendors and a PowerPoint that describes the product of a specific vendor, Tumbleweed.

Terry Garber noted that South Carolina has been using a product from Tovaris for over one year. She was positive about the product but described issues around "rules" for determining which emails become secure. She described workarounds that were satisfactory.

Mr. Blevins indicated MTC would get a proposal for secure email from e.magination prior to January, to assist with presenting various options to the Executive Committee.

Ms. Peterson recommended promoting anything that would assist with administration of whatever secure email system is selected. Mr. Blevins added that ease on the client end is important and that no desktop software should be required.

Mr. Smead reported that Tennessee just finished a secure email project. He noted there was a large price differential across products. He wasn't sure which vendor was selected but thought it was Cybertrust.

- Combined Electronic Tax Registration (CETR)

Mr. Blevins indicated the need to compile all necessary information to make a decision on building the CETR system by January. Mr. Blevins suggested Debbie Peterson work with Sheldon Laskin or other MTC staff to lead this effort. He noted the most recent project plan provided by e.magination and indicated the timeline could be stretched to accommodate state staff availability. Prior to decision to build, commitment from states and state staff resources would be needed.

Ms. Peterson indicated the need to clearly communicate to the states what is in the scope statement for development, e.g., both New and Updates registration features.

Ms. Garber suggested looking at the project in light of Streamlined lessons.

Mr. Blevins expressed that important system expandability issues are a) ability for additional states to become participants and b) adding tax types beyond sales/use. The CETR system should be designed such that these changes can be made after the system is finalized without undo difficulty.

Next step for CETR is to pull together all documents needed for decision making, and to draft a "commitment letter" for state tax administrators to determine the interest of states in proceeding.

IV.   IT Project Development & Oversight

- Review of Vendor's MTC Web Site Redesign Proposal

    Mr. Blevins asked for comments about the web site redesign proposal from e.magination. Several participants (TX, MI, HI, TN) expressed their satisfaction with the proposal. Mr. Blevins noted an emailed response on the topic from Idaho expressing generally satisfaction with the proposal along with some specific issues. Mr. Blevins noted two issues to follow up on: 1) making sure accessibility standards are met and 2) including a usability study.

    Mr. Blevins emphasized the importance of content management in the proposal. He stated that the offered cost appears reasonable. He requested committee members email any additional comments or suggestions regarding the web site or the proposal to him and to Ms. Ribe.

V.   Streamlined Sales Tax Project Update
        Mr. Blevins provided an update on various aspects of the SSTP including registration, payments and returns, and CSPs.

VI.   Other Items Related to the Work of the Committee

VII.   Planning for Next Teleconference

The committee plans to hold three teleconferences prior to the next Executive Committee meeting. They are tentatively scheduled for Tuesday November 29th, Thursday December 15th, and Tuesday January 3rd, all at 2 PM Eastern.

VIII.   Adjournment