

IRS, DOL, OSHA, INS, and GSA) and seven states (*i.e.*, Illinois, Georgia, Washington, Missouri, Iowa, New Jersey and Texas). We have also enlisted the partnership of several associations to represent the business customer and provide us a true reality check, *e.g.*, NGA, NFIB, NASCIO, ATA, etc. BCOS delivers these capabilities through an Internet portal (*BusinessLaw.gov*) providing content specific to particular industries as well as help for business in general.

#### BCOS Focus

During its first year the BCOS effort focused on compliance assistance in the areas of environment, workplace health and safety, taxes and employment. For its second and third years, while continuing to make it easy to find, understand, and comply with governmental regulations, with the primary focus on creating compliance assistance tools, the BCOS initiative will place a greater emphasis on reducing the paperwork reduction, *i.e.*, the regulatory burden that emanates from having to comply with government requests for information. OMB estimates that the total federal paperwork burden is 7.7 billion hours annually of which 6.6 billion hours stem from the Department of Treasury. Evaluations of modern forms management systems which include interactive, electronic forms as well as streamlining collection processes and harmonizing data requirements across agencies have the potential to reduce by 50 percent agency costs and the small business burden.

This paperwork reduction emphasis emanates from the Small Business Paperwork Relief Task Force recommendations to reduce the burden using the following three strategies:

4. Reduce the information required through analyzing if information is needed, if definitions in different forms and forms in different agencies can be harmonized to reduce overlap;

5. Increase the effectiveness of data collection processes by collecting once and sharing data among programs and agencies;

6. Reduce the work of submitting data by using interactive, electronic, forms that aid the user.

To get faster results, the BCOS initiative will concentrate on highly regulated industries such as trucking, health care, food, and chemicals. To achieve this, the BCOS will look to a Governance Board made up of senior staff from the key regulatory agencies that can be a decision-making body. Through the guidance from the BCOS project management, the Board will ratify key development teams led by individual regulatory agencies. For instance, DOT will take the lead on reviewing the over 40 Information Collection Reports (ICRs) from 11 federal agencies and the 4 state transactions to determine where E-forms should be applied and including streamlining and harmonizing the data capture processes. Financing for these efforts will be made available by OMB or the regulatory agencies. SBA as the general manager of the BCOS will function as a secretariat for the Governance Board or Steering committee, work with associations

and small businesses to analyze the regulatory information burden, hold focus sessions, create the project plans and develop proposals for harmonizing and streamlining information requirements across government as well as providing interactive, electronic forms and suggesting how collection processes can be streamlined. We will also take the lead in building the portal and functioning prototypes or proof of concepts for the burden reduction applications.

#### BCOS Results

One of the most important outcomes of BCOS is the demonstration that Federal and state agencies can work together to reduce the regulatory burden through a variety of means. It has shown that compliance assistance is possible and effective. The following describes some of the results achieved:

#### BusinessLaw Portal

BCOS uses BusinessLaw.gov as its foundation and framework. This portal provides nearly 20,000 links to federal and state legal and regulatory information on 39 different topics, where to go to complete transactions such as licenses and permits, and a host of information on rulemaking, compliance assistance, and regulatory fairness. The portal also offers useful information on where to get help, how to contact Congress and associations, and principal considerations in choosing legal help. In concert with the goals of the BCOS team, the site is adding new navigation aids, additional digital guides or expert tools, and user-friendly transactions. Estimated savings: \$56 million annually.

#### Compliance Assistance Guides

- Alien Employee Visa Classification eTool
- Employment Eligibility Verification tool
- OSHA emergency building evacuation procedures e-Tool
- Coal Mining Report Harmonization
- Integrated State Registration and Federal EIN Web Services Application
- Choosing a Legal Structure
- Auto Dismantler & Recycler Environmental Audit Advisor
- Motor Vehicle (Class V) Waste Disposal Wells Advisor

Estimated savings from a total of 30 expert tools: \$300 million annually to businesses and \$12 million to agencies.

#### Coal Mining Report Harmonization

This project is an excellent example of agencies working together to reduce the information burden on nearly 1,000 coal miners who submit reports to DOI, DOE, EPA, DOL, IRS, and State EPAs. Eighty percent of the data in these reports are identical and require about 50,000 hours annually. A tool developed by DOI provides a one-stop submission of data that is then distributed to participating agencies. Data metrics using different definitions is automatically changed to the metric required by each agency and results in an estimated 25,000 hours saved. As the project has been progressing, agencies have begun to look at streamlining definitions, reporting periods and the need for the information in the first

place. Estimated savings: \$1 million annually.

#### Integrated State Registration and Federal Employer Identification Number Application

This example demonstrates that significant savings can ensue when state and Federal processes are integrated and offered as a single web services. State business registration requires many of the same data elements as the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) submission. This tool permits the user to apply on-line for a state registration and then elect to apply for a FEIN, which is pre-populated with data from the state application. For additional information, the application asks for additional data in an interview format. IRS estimates that more than 2.4 million businesses acquire EINs annually. Estimated savings: \$96 million annually.

#### Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services I-9 Interactive, Electronic Tool

All U.S. employers are responsible for completion and retention of Form I-9s for each individual they hire to certify work eligibility in the United States. This includes citizens and non-citizens. On the form, the employer must verify the employment eligibility and identity documents presented by the employee and record the document information on the Form I-9. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS), maintains the form. This tool developed by BCOS in cooperation with BCIS, guides the employer using an Intuit-type approach through a set of questions at the end of which the form is completed. Throughout the tool, educational material is provided in terms of instructions and answers to frequently asked questions. Estimated savings: \$12 million annually with a substantial increase in the quality of the completed form.

#### Trucking One-Stop Portal

Trucking is an important industry, contributing to 1 out of every 12 jobs and local economies. A large part of the 900,000 plus trucking firms works interstate and needs to comply with information from the Federal and state governments. The Integrated Truck One-Stop is an example of how using harmonized data capture, electronic forms and transactions and offering web services for both federal and state requirements can work for a specific industry. The planning phase is being completed for this project.

We have developed the data reference model for both federal and state regulatory requirements. With this understanding, we can develop web services that let truckers submit data to a common front end portal that then processes the requests, distributes the data to the participating user states and Federal agencies, and returns credentials, licenses, permits and payment schedules. Additionally the trucking one-stop portal will provide compliance assistance information and tools to reduce the regulatory burden. The development of a trucking one-stop portal with E-forms and streamlining and harmonization of data collection will yield an estimated savings of \$400 million annually.