



An employee publication of the  
Texas Department of Criminal Justice

July/August 2011

Volume 18 Issue 6

## Agency News



### Thin Client computer systems carry weight

A little black box called a “Thin Client” carries a lot of weight with TDCJ. That’s because for its small size, this unassuming gadget takes a big bite out of computer costs.

The Thin Client is a downsized desktop computer tower without all the usual components; there’s no hard drive, no CD burner, no moving parts or stored data of any kind. Instead, users access freeware such as Open Office rather than the more expensive Microsoft Office, Firefox for Internet Explorer, and a program known as “3270” to serve as Host-On-Demand. These “open-source” programs get the job done and are available at no cost to the agency. There are no licensing fees and, because there are no security threats to the computer’s programming, anti-spyware is not needed. Should a Thin Client fail, it is simply replaced, so there are no ongoing maintenance costs.

Information Technology Division Deputy Director Melvin Neely said storing data on

a server not only eliminates the risk of losing documents to a computer hard drive failure but also enhances security.

“One of the great things about this, from a security perspective, is that your data remains on the server,” Neely said. “It’s not on an individual’s local PC. Also, at the end of the day, you can’t take data home with you because you can’t download information to a CD.”

Many of the Thin Client systems will go to departments within the Correctional Institutions Division that are either without computer technology or in need of upgrades. “Every unit will eventually have Thin Client technology of some type,” Neely said.

“We’re deploying these where they’ve never had anything before or where they had the old mainframe terminals. For them, it’s a step up.”

The units have already been installed in more than 50 law libraries throughout the state, and about 50 more have been set

up in offender grievance offices. Eventually, Thin Client systems will be installed in the offices of all TDCJ food service captains and on every main food serving line to track and count meals.

Neely believes the Thin Client systems will continue to help control costs as the agency moves to meet its future computer needs. ●