

State Representative  
Kim Thatcher  
House District 25



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***Oregon Receives National Award for Public Meetings  
Notices Project Spearheaded by Rep Thatcher***

(Salem) Oregon received a [prestigious award](#) this week for making [public meeting notices](#) for state agencies more accessible as a result of [legislation](#) sponsored by [State Representative Kim Thatcher](#) (R-Keizer, Newberg and St. Paul). The [National Association for State Chief Information Officers](#) (NASCIO) presented the Oregon [Department of Administrative Services](#) (DAS) with the [2014 Award in the Open Government Initiatives category](#) at their national conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

“A couple years ago a citizen mentioned to me how frustrating it was to search the internet for information about meetings held by state agencies in Oregon,” explained Representative Thatcher. “Now this new calendar clearinghouse gives the general public easy and transparent access to all public meeting notices by hundreds of state agencies, boards, commissions and other entities.” The new program is called the [Centralized Public Meeting Notices](#) system. (<http://www.oregon.gov/transparency/Pages/PublicMeetingNotices.aspx>)

“When Oregonians participate in our discussions, our decisions are more informed and more likely to effect the change we desire,” said **Chief Operating Officer and DAS Director Michael Jordan**. “Key to participation is the knowledge of who’s meeting where. By centralizing meeting notices across all state agencies we have made it easier for Oregonians to join important conversations and contribute to better outcomes.”

[House Bill 2788](#) was passed into law by the Oregon Legislature in 2011 requiring DAS to “post on the Oregon transparency website notices of public meetings.” Representative Thatcher [helped create](#) the Oregon Transparency Website ([www.oregon.gov/transparency](http://www.oregon.gov/transparency)) in 2009. In keeping with the original transparency legislation, HB 2788 required the meeting notices to be “accessible without cost and be easy to use.”

“Before this new Centralized Public Meeting Notices system was developed not only was it often difficult to find meeting information but the data lacked consistency and quality,” added Thatcher. “State agencies have also saved money. The new system has drastically reduced the time and cost associated with posting information about public meetings on a variety of agency websites. Now information is made available quickly, easily and efficiently.”

“Oregon has made considerable progress in making its spending and operations more open and transparent, said [Dave Rosenfeld](#), **executive director of the consumer group Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG)** “This is due in no small part to the efforts of lawmakers like Representative Thatcher and of thousands of Oregonians who have demanded a more open government.”

After passage of HB 2788 and Senate Bill 250, DAS only had a few months to implement the calendar function at minimal cost to taxpayers. Thankfully DAS was able to leverage a platform called “[data.oregon.gov](#)” saving the state potentially \$500,000 to develop new software.

Two and a half years later, since the new program launched (January 2012), well over 4,600 (and growing) public meeting notices have been added to the calendar, and more than 120 customized views of that meeting data have been created by state staff or citizens to organize, and filter data in meaningful ways for specific users.

NASCIO represents state chief information officers and information technology executives from the across the country. Each year the group gives awards in several categories for various IT projects. As part of the entry for the meeting notice system, DAS submitted a clever video to NASCIO <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14839AvJL8>.

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