Cybersecurity Champions

Select Survey Responses

"Communication with leadership has led to a trusting relationship with the IT department and their recommendations for security enhancements."

Gibb Cotton, IT Director, City of Griffin.

"Make sure you have insurance that covers attacks."

Betty Cason, Mayor, City of Carrollton

"Find a Cybersecurity Champion whether on council or not, listen and support your IT Department and make sure they have the tools, training, and equipment necessary to secure your city's crown jewels. Cybersecurity is not an afterthought but one that should be considered an annual budget line item to be funded."

Dr. Arlene Beckles, Councilmember, City of Norcross

"Do not wait. The hackers are out there and it is only a matter of time before they may hit your city."

Jesse Blackwell, Councilmember, City of Rincon

"Our education efforts are good. We have had staff successfully identify and test real attacks and avoided them."

Marty Allen, City Manager, City of Suwanee

MORE INSIGHTS

What Inspired You to Encourage Your City to Implement or Enhance Critical Cybersecurity Measures?

Top Responses – Awareness of attacks on other cities; Personal experiences

- "Witnessing attacks on other cities"

- "ransomware attacks reported in the news . . . specifically targeting smaller cities"

- "city email being used to select purchasing gift cards for fraudulent use"

- "My bank account was recently compromised due to online bill pay and I wouldn't want our citizens to experience anything like this when paying their water bill or gas bill online."

- "New requirements to obtain cyber coverage"

What Helped Your City Implement New and Enhanced Cybersecurity Measures?

Top Responses – Trusting Relationship with IT (either internal or external); Outside Assessment; Internal Training

- "Cybersecurity education from KnowBe4"

- "upgrading to Office 365 G3/P2 Azure has helped us to control access and reduce risks" **Maurice Pryce, IT Director, City of East Point**

- "third party risk assessment helped our city aim to further secure our information" **Gibb Cotton, IT Director, City of Griffin**

- "we educated our staff about avoiding scams, phishing, opening attachments" **JoAnne Taylor, Mayor, City of Dahlonega**

What Challenges Did You Face? How Did You Respond?

Top Responses – Lack of Awareness; Funding

- "Need for] dedicated staff or manage service partner. We are looking to get funding and find the people/partners that can work with us to improve our CyberSecurity posture." **Maurice Pryce, IT Director, City of East Point**

- "Primary challenges included a lack of understanding of cyber security in general. The initial cyber security initiatives were seen as too cumbersome and restrictive... Education and communication with leadership overcame these challenges." **Gibb Cotton, IT Director, City of Griffin**

- "The challenge can often time be funding and fellow council members are naive to the dangers of cybersecurity and the threats in the wild. Sometimes it's difficult to get other elected officials to see the urgent need for cybersecurity and then match that need with resources to get things done." **Dr. Arlene Beckles, Councilmember, City of Norcross**

What Advice Would You Give Other City Leaders?

Top Responses – Support and Fund Cybersecurity; Internal Training; Outside Evaluations; Be Proactive

- "Have an outside entity give you an assessment of your vulnerabilities and take steps to correct." **JoAnn Taylor, Mayor, City of Dahlonega**

- "Audit your systems, do regular penetration testing, keep up to date on patches and firmware, and set aside funding for CyberSecurity." **Maurice Pryce, IT Director, City of East Point**

- "It is important. You will be attacked. Not an if but when. Pay attention and invest in technology and training." **Marty Allen, City Manager, City of Suwanee**

What are you most proud of?

- "I'm proud that we were able to answer most of the carrier's questions positively. We are a little ways out of having all that is needed but we will be there soon."

- "The city has implemented Infosec phishing campaigns, enhanced password requirements, better policy controls, Duo MFA, Infosec security awareness training for end-users, and targeted security enhancements for specific "high-value" systems. In addition, [the city] now has a roadmap for more advanced security technologies and policy enhancements to implement. [The city] is now seeking a vulnerability scan from CISA (Cyber Security and Infrastructure Security Agency) that will be performed regularly to identify new threats or flaws" **Gibb Cotton, IT Director, City of Griffin**