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Monday, December 26th, 2016

Policy & Technology. News & Analysis

Federal Policy & Business

Trump Aide Changes His Mind, Won't Serve As Communications Director

NPR: One of President-elect Donald Trump's top aides unexpectedly announced over the holiday weekend that he will not accept a position at the White House.

Trump rounded out his White House communications team last week — installing several trusted campaign advisers to senior West Wing positions.

Among them was Jason Miller who was named director of communications.

But on Saturday, Miller issued a personal statement saying he wouldn't be joining the Trump team as announced — adding he wanted to spend more time with his family.

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Trump's 100-Day Plan For Federal Employees and Agencies

Government Executive: While it's an arbitrary timeline, the first 100 days of an American president's term are viewed as a harbinger of accomplishments and failures to come. But since the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who coined the term, we've judged every new commander-in-chief by his successes and setbacks between January 20 (Inauguration Day) and April 29. In that regard, the incoming administration of Donald J. Trump will be no different.

As a candidate and now president-elect, Trump has promised to do a lot of things within his first 100 days to "make America great again," from withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership to enacting ethics reforms to "drain the swamp" in Washington. Many of his promises would require legislative action, and it remains to be seen what kind of relationship his administration will have with Congress. As with most new presidents, Trump soon will discover the limits of his power over a vast federal government with three distinct branches, two of which are beyond his purview—Congress and the judiciary. He'll have to contend with 535 overseers, approximately two

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million federal civilian workers, another roughly two million military service members, countless laws and regulations, and of course, a lot of politics.

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DOJ helps shut down international ‘Department of Bribery’

Federal Times: Odebrecht S.A., a global construction conglomerate based in Brazil, and Braskem S.A., a Brazilian petrochemical company, have pleaded guilty to using the global financial system — including the United States banking system — to disguise and disburse bribes around the world.

Odebrecht and Braskem have agreed to pay at least \$2.6 billion and up to \$4.5 billion in global penalties after being found to have “a hidden but fully functioning Odebrecht business unit — a ‘Department of Bribery,’ so to speak — that systematically paid hundreds of millions of dollars to corrupt government officials in countries on three continents,” said Deputy Assistant Attorney General Sung-Hee Suh of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division.

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[Five Steps to Creating Your Hybrid Integration Strategy](#)

[The 2016 Public Sector Guide to Social Media Strategy & Policy](#)

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Federal Government IT

Congressional report: We shouldn’t bother with encryption backdoors

Fedscoop: A new report from House lawmakers rejected the notion of Congress inserting backdoors into encryption, asserting that weakening encryption runs contrary to national interest.

While lawmakers acknowledged that popular encryption impacts law enforcement and intelligence work, the group emphasized encryption’s importance for national defense, individual privacy, freedom of speech, human rights and protection against government intrusion abroad and at home.

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TechHire Initiative helps build tech knowledge, growth of cybersecurity economy

Federal Times: President Barack Obama’s TechHire Initiative is one of several programs helping address the tech talent gap, according to a blog post on WhiteHouse.gov.

There are more than half a million open technology jobs, many concentrating on cybersecurity, and TechHire is using public-private collaborations to help fast-track training programs and place people into tech jobs, explain Bruce Andrews, deputy secretary of Commerce, and Matthew Colangelo, deputy director of the National Economic Council and deputy assistant to the president for economic policy.

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Low Code, Not Open Source, is Key to Federal IT Agility

Nextgov: The federal government is striving to increase the agility of the IT systems that underpin mission-attainment and service-delivery. Taking a cue from the private sector, federal agencies are seeking faster time-to-delivery for new capabilities and a rapid response in the face of changing conditions. To that end, U.S. Chief Information Officer Tony Scott recently announced a new government website, Code.gov, promoting a shared-services approach to open-source software under the new Federal Source Code Policy.

Unfortunately for the feds, open source is not the answer to the agility challenge. The reason why is right there in the name of the site and the policy: code.

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Public Sector Text Messaging Scandals and 3 Major Tips to Avoid Them

Being in the public eye is difficult. Just ask any celebrity. Everything they do or say can cause quite the stir, and anything they do serve as fodder for the court of public opinion. Similar rules and judgment—befalls employees of local and state government agencies. The only difference is their public notoriety often comes on the back of an embarrassing scandal. Download this guide to examine 3 recent government text message scandals, and proactive ways to avoid them.

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Five Steps to Creating Your Hybrid Integration Strategy

Enterprise organizations are adopting cloud-based SaaS applications at increasing rates. And many are simultaneously moving existing applications and systems to public and/or private cloud infrastructures. These trends are making hybrid IT environments the “new normal.”

Gartner refers to the integration tools and technologies required for hybrid environments as Hybrid Integration Platforms (HIPs) and predicts:

“By 2018, more than 40% of organizations will use integration infrastructure that they assemble from HIP-enabling technologies.”
(Gartner, Market Guide for Hybrid Integration Platform-Enabling Technologies Published: 17 July 2015 Analyst(s): Jess Thompson, Eric Thoo, Benoit J. Lheureux)

Are you considering a hybrid integration platform? Then you need a hybrid integration strategy. There are many things to consider as you design your strategy—such as your integration “center of gravity,” the amount of control you want to maintain, an accurate picture of your users and a plan for keeping up with project demands.

This white paper helps you better understand the important integration challenges of evolving to a hybrid IT environment, especially with the increased need to integrate with cloud-based applications and systems. In fact, as you design your hybrid integration strategy, we invite you to consider these five essential steps.

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Defense / Intelligence / Homeland Security

Army Appeals Court Decision To Stop Lakota Helo Buy

Defense News: WASHINGTON – The US Army appealed Tuesday a US Court of Federal Claims ruling to stop the service's procurement of 16 LUH-72A Lakota helicopters arguing the court overstepped its authority, misinterpreted government procurement terms and requirements, and improperly supplemented the record with outside information not relevant to making a decision.

At issue is an Army decision, stemming from major budget cuts under sequestration, to restructure its aviation assets. In 2013 the service came up with the Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI) that retired the OH-58 Kiowa Warrior helicopter and the Army's TH-67 single-engine basic rotary wing training helicopter. As part of ARI, the Army decided to take dual-engine Lakotas already in the inventory and repurpose them as the new designated trainer.

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FBI Thwarts Virginia Man for Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIS in Criminal Complaint

Homeland Security Today: Lionel Nelson Williams, 26, of Suffolk, Virginia was arrested in Suffolk Thursday and charged with attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or the Islamic State (IS), after appearing to have become self-radicalized after viewing online jihadist materials and videos, including videos made by former Los Cruces, New Mexico born Anwar Al Awlaki, who became a principal recruiter for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

According to the redacted affidavit in support of the criminal complaint against Williams, in October and November 2016 he sent money to a person he believed was collecting money for IS to purchase weapons and ammunition for IS fighters. Williams also posted content on social media indicating his support for IS and attacks targeting police officers, military and armed civilians, the kind of attack IS – and Al Qaeda – have repeatedly called for, as Homeland Security Today has reported.

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Families of Americans taken hostage see some progress in interaction with U.S. government

The Washington Post: Inside the White House, it is known as “the tragic summer of 2014.” Islamic State forces were rampaging across Iraq and Syria, erasing borders and massacring opponents and minority groups.

President Obama and his national security team knew they had to stop the advance, and they knew that any military action would put at risk the lives of at least four Americans being held by the group in Syria. One after another the American hostages — James Foley, Steven Sotloff and Peter Kassig — were murdered. The fourth, Kayla Mueller, was killed in 2015.

In the tense months before and after their deaths, Lisa Monaco, the senior counterterrorism adviser to the president, was meeting with the grief-stricken families.

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Government Healthcare - Policy & IT

The shift to healthcare value in a post-Trump America, via PwC

Healthcare IT News: In President Donald Trump’s preliminary thoughts about healthcare in America, the landscape would feature a mix of tax credits, health savings accounts, high-risk pool, state Medicaid block grants, and regulatory control shifting from the Federal government to the states, according to PwC’s forecast for the new year, Top health industry issues of 2017.

PwC frames the 2017 top healthcare issues under the overall strategic imperative of value, with three categories:

- Adapting for value
- Innovating for value
- Building for value.

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State Medical Boards Cite Telemedicine as Most Important Regulatory Topic

Healthcare Informatics: The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) announced last week that telemedicine is currently the most important medical regulatory topic to state medical boards.

The announcement comes after analyzing results from the Federation’s 2016 State Medical Board Survey, which was completed by 57 of the 70 state medical and osteopathic boards in the U.S., and identified important issue areas and topics impacting the work of board as they carry out their mission to protect the public.

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Will paying hospitals get more patients into cardiac rehab?

Modern Healthcare: After patients have a heart attack or heart surgery, interventional cardiologist Dr. Amit Keswani urges them to go into cardiac rehabilitation. The program of supervised exercise and counseling helps cardiac patients recover and lowers their risk of future heart attacks, chest pain, hospital admission and a slew of other medical problems.

But at most, only about half actually do it. “I wish that it would be more,” Keswani said. “I tell my patients: It’s better than any medicine.”

Some patients can’t afford the co-pays. Others live too far from the cardiac rehab facility that’s part of Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, where Keswani works.

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Knowledge Center: Webinars

Federal Data Center Optimization: Do's and Don'ts from the Experts

As federal agencies embrace the U.S. CIO's new Data Center Optimization Initiative and keep pace with growing demand for new services and applications, best practices will help guide them around potential pitfalls. In this i360Gov webinar, leading DoD and civilian IT experts will provide insights on optimization and how agencies can achieve a mandated 25% annual reduction in federal data center expenses by the end of fiscal 2018. Agency executives will gain concrete advice on the best steps to take to achieve more agile, optimized and secure IT operations.

Speakers include:

- **Michael Valivullah**, Chief Technology Officer, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), USDA
- **Fred Whiteside**, Program Manager, Data Center Consolidation Initiative, Systems Engineering Division, OASAM/OCIO, Department of Labor
- **Bill Lemons**, Director, Federal Systems Engineering, Juniper Networks
- **Stephen Crooks**, Enterprise Solutions Architect, Affigent, LLC

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Energy - Policy & Technology

The coming battle between economists and the Trump team over the true cost of climate change

The Washington Post: As we learn more and more about the tenor of the Trump transition, a key part of its regulatory rollback strategy on climate change is coming into focus.

It seems increasingly likely that the Trump administration would either alter, or attempt to stop using entirely, an Obama-era metric known as the "social cost of carbon" in its federal rule-making processes. And that could have have major effects on the way environmental policies are written (or unwritten) in the coming years.

A recent, highly controversial questionnaire the transition team sent to the Department of Energy requested a list of all "employees or contractors who have attended any Interagency Working Group on the Social Cost of Carbon meetings," as well as emails and other materials associated with those meetings. It also asked a variety of questions about the assumptions that went into calculating the social cost of carbon.

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On Climate Change, Obama Lays Down a Scientific Gauntlet for Trump Administration

Inside Climate News: As if parading its best evidence against an expected onslaught of climate denial, the Obama Administration released on Thursday an updated compendium of the accepted science about global warming.

The science review is intended to guide the preparation of the government's next National Climate Assessment, a periodic comprehensive report scheduled to be released in in 2018. The last assessment was published in 2014.

With the entire Obama climate agenda expected to come under assault by the Donald Trump regime, this report, released in draft form for comment by experts, lays down a marker for the climate consensus. It may well become a benchmark against which the next administration will be measured.

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How Utilities Can Bring Storage to Scale in Massachusetts

Renewable Energy World: In the same way that states have led the policy support for wind and solar technologies, they are now leading the way on energy storage. A model for states to look to when crafting energy storage policy is Massachusetts.

Over the past three years, the Commonwealth has committed tens of millions of dollars toward energy storage deployment, produced a landmark study documenting the benefits of energy storage on the state's electric grid, integrated storage into a myriad of state policies and programs, and is now considering implementation of a utility procurement mandate for energy storage.

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State & Local Government - Policy & Technology

New York Slow to Embrace Approach That Streamlines Building Projects

The New York Times: The replacement of the Kosciuszko Bridge, a vital link between Brooklyn and Queens, with a new crossing has succeeded where many New York transportation projects have failed. It is on time and on budget.

The first of two side-by-side, cable-stayed bridges will open in the spring, just three years after state transportation officials awarded \$555 million to a project team. It was built using a contracting process that saves time and money by bundling together the design and construction phases of a project instead of carrying them out separately.

This integrated approach — known as “design-build” versus “design-bid-build” — eliminates the need for two separate contracts and bidding processes, reduces the lag time after a design is completed but construction has yet to begin, and ensures closer coordination among project owners, architects, engineers and construction workers from the start.

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Public Officials of the Year

Governing: In many ways, it's a brutal time to be a public official. The past year has seen an exhausting slog of political scandals, personal attacks, negative headlines and anti-government outrage. Government, we've been told from both sides of the aisle, is broken.

Which is why it's all the more vital to highlight the outstanding accomplishments of Governing's 2016 Public Officials of the Year. These eight remarkable men and women know that public service isn't about casting blame or pointing fingers. It's about forging real solutions to real problems.

For our eight honorees, it's about taking on issues of social inequality through new solutions for housing, public transit, early childhood development, and the health and wellness of an entire community. It's about seeing a nationwide opioid crisis and coming together to address it. It's about helping those struggling with mental illness, rather than locking them up in overcrowded jails. It's about ensuring that taxpayer dollars are managed well, and that state revenues are aligned with the reality of the 21st-century economy.

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If Cap-and-Trade Falters, What's Next for California's Bullet Train Funding?

Route Fifty: Where all of the money will ultimately come from to pay for an initial segment of California's planned high-speed passenger train line is for now uncertain.

Dan Richard, who chairs the board of directors for the state's High-Speed Rail Authority, acknowledges as much. “There are still some questions about whether the funding is all lined up,” he told Route Fifty by phone earlier this week.

The conversation with Richard focused mostly on a segment of the line that would connect the Bakersfield area, in California's agriculturally rich Central Valley, with San Jose and San Francisco, two cities where the tech-sector is booming.

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Education - Policy & Technology

Building an App Store for Learning Tools

Campus Technology: Matthew Rascoff has a name for the enterprise learning management system: a "Swiss Army Knife of mediocrity." As vice president of learning technology and innovation at the University of North Carolina General Administration, which oversees 17 university campuses with almost 225,000 students, Rascoff has observed that the most innovative faculty members at his institution use the LMS the least. Many professors working on experimental efforts hate the LMS and have sidestepped it, he noted.

Rather than rely on a single application to manage all aspects of teaching and learning, the UNC system has moved to an "app store" model it calls the Learning Technology Commons. "This gives faculty control over picking the tools they use and uses the crowd to decide which are the most effective, rather than one RFP committee," said Rascoff, speaking during a Dec. 16 Future Trends Forum video chat hosted by futurist Bryan Alexander.

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State authorization rule, long in the works, faces opposition in new Congress

Inside Higher Ed: The U.S. Department of Education, with a month to go until the transition of power, has finalized a rule that clarifies how colleges become authorized to offer online programs to students in other states -- an effort in the works since the first years of the Obama administration. But the rule is by all indications dead on arrival.

The final rule, released on Dec. 16, requires colleges that offer online education programs to follow each state's authorization process -- which often involves filling out an application and paying a fee to a local higher education agency -- and clarifies disclosure and student complaint procedures. It also recognizes that states can participate in reciprocity agreements.

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Study: Students With ADHD Not Helped by Common Test Accommodations

Education Week: Offering students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder extended testing time or frequent breaks does not appear to help them perform better on a standardized test than other students with ADHD who do not get such accommodations, says a new study published in Learning Disabilities, a Multidisciplinary Journal.

In the study Academic Testing Accommodations for ADHD: Do They Help? researchers examined the accommodations and test results of 96 Maryland students with ADHD in grades 3-8.

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