TribalHub is making cybersecurity the topic of this month's Industry Insights Report in hopes that more tribes will be able to make security a higher priority and to provide an awareness that there are resources available to tribes and steps that can be taken now, to improve their security preparedness. Attempting to handle security completely alone has not proven to be a winning strategy for most tribes or tribal enterprises. Collaboration, information sharing, access to best practices and security resources are available to every tribe that seeks them.

TribalHub supports the recently launched Tribal-ISAC, which is the security information sharing and collaboration network for Native American and Alaska Native tribes and their enterprises across the United States (www.tribalisac.org). This non-profit organization was created to support security preparedness for tribes and as a safe place to share security information and peer support, while protecting the sovereignty of tribes. Members can join the Tribal-ISAC today if you are employed directly by a tribe or tribal enterprise, and I’d recommend this to every tribe. Access to more resources, timely information and relevant threat information will undoubtedly give you and your tribe or tribal enterprise an edge in security preparedness that you cannot achieve alone. Meanwhile, the Tribal-ISAC is always seeking to establish, manage and improve secure and effective collaboration with other resources that tribes can benefit from including the Multi-State ISAC, CISA, DHS and the Center for Internet Security.

The tribes with the best security posture are most likely to be those that have begun to embrace collaboration and outsourcing over those that have chosen isolation or a reliance on a very limited number of their own internal resources. The Tribal-ISAC is an example of great collaboration and information sharing, but additionally, more and more tribes are looking at outsourcing some part(s) of their security to third parties that specialize in the service and have the resources and expertise to better protect their tribe or tribal enterprise.

The point I am addressing here is that it is not taboo to consider outsourcing all or part of a tribe's cybersecurity program, rather it is a smart and rational business consideration that should be considered when (more) effective. If it is a cost effective solution, the only real question is who can provide the security services better?

Effective cybersecurity is difficult to achieve, maintain, enforce and manage. Tribal governments, tribal health and tribal gaming have been targets of cyber threats. We don’t expect this to end any time soon. As we continually read news about massive commercial enterprises, State governments and even the United States government falling victim to cyber attacks, it makes us all wonder how we can have any hope in securing tribes or tribal enterprises given the comparably limited amount of resources. The best advice that I can provide at this time is simply to not work in isolation. You are not best served or prepared than you and your organization.
Keeping Your Tribe Safe
On Behalf Of:
The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is excited to announce the launch of the Tribal Emergency Communications Program (TECP) webpage now available on CISA.gov for tribal communities seeking to develop and strengthen their emergency communications infrastructure.

Our Mission:
The CISA TECP supports Native American and Alaska Native tribes through consultative engagement, outreach, advocacy, technical assistance, and inter- and intra-agency coordination to ensure strengthened public safety operable and interoperable communications. Each tribe is the critical part of the public safety community’s nationwide infrastructure and CISA strives to tailor solutions based on the unique needs of each tribe. Visit cisa.gov/tribal-emergency-communications-program or contact cisatribalaffairs@cisa.gov to learn more about CISA’s service offerings available at no cost to your tribe!

CISA Offers Assistance With:
- Land Mobile Radio (LMR)
- Wireless Broadband and Landline Communications
- Alerts, Warnings, and Notifications Technology
- Priority Telecommunications Services
- Communications Infrastructure Assessment and Testing
- Planning and Process Documentation
- Coordination and Agreement Support
- Exercise Planning and Execution
- Operational, Engineering, and Tactical Communications Support

Hear From Your Peers:
James Schaeffer, IT Director, Shoalwater Bay Tribe

With over 400 tribal members and 1,100 acres of land, the Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe occupies a reservation on the north side of Willapa Bay (formerly Shoalwater Bay) on the Washington coast. Enterprises include the Shoalwater Bay Casino and the Shoalwater Bay Medical Center. The Shoalwater Bay Tribe has separate IT departments for their government and gaming facilities and their government IT department supports their health facility. Mr. Schaeffer oversees IT for the tribal government and health facility.

Shoalwater does not currently outsource any part of its security services. However, they will be looking to add either a full-time security person or utilize a Managed Security Service for 2022. Currently, some of his biggest challenges from a cybersecurity perspective has been responding to threats (like Microsoft Exchange exploits), ensuring that systems are fully protected and patched, and proactively monitoring systems for indicators of compromise.

We asked Mr. Schaeffer "What makes cybersecurity a particularly large challenge for tribal organizations?". He stated "It is challenging because we have a lack of time, expertise and resources. Threat hunting is a full-time job and even if/when we have the tools to detect/monitor/protect the organization, we don’t have a dedicated person/service with the time to analyze the data and the expertise to interpret the results and/or mitigate any threat identified."

In terms of his overall budget and investment for 2021 security spending only covers the costs of support/maintenance contracts for Firewall, Anti-virus, and Anti-spam solutions. Mr. Schaeffer is hopeful that will change in 2022.

Chad Dixson, MIS/Network Manager, Yavapai Prescott Indian Tribe & Current Tribal-ISAC member

The Yavapai Prescott Indian Tribe is located in central Arizona and currently has less than 200 tribal members. They own approximately 1400 acres of land and two gaming facilities, Bucky’s Casino and the Yavapai Casino. The Yavapai Prescott Indian Tribe has separate IT departments for their government and gaming facilities, Mr. Dixson is the MIS/Network Manager for the tribal government. Currently, they outsource Managed Detection & Response (MDR) services because the resource requirements to parse through this information are too great on a daily basis.

The biggest cyber security challenge in 2021 has been not having the time and resources to effectively complete projects which improve/bolster the overall security posture of his organization. Chad stated, "One thing that makes security a particularly large challenge for tribal organizations is that leadership within tribes are often not knowledgeable about the complexity of cybersecurity, and therefore may not fully understand the importance and necessity to spend/invest in organizational security. I think this is most prevalent for smaller Tribes."

At Yavapai Prescott Indian Tribe, they lack any dedicated resources/employees focused only on cybersecurity. Being a small tribe with a small IT team, each IT staff member must "wear multiple hats, with each having responsibilities related to cybersecurity. Other than payroll, cybersecurity products, systems and support are the top budget investment for 2021."
NIKK GILBERT, CISSP, CISM, Chief Information Security Officer, Cherokee Nation Businesses

Cherokee Nation Businesses (CNB) is the holding company that develops and manages the Cherokee Nation’s diverse group of businesses, including many businesses that are 8(a), HUBZone and MBE certified. CNB generates revenue for the Cherokee Nation by creating jobs, providing world-class entertainment, promoting Cherokee culture and performing award-winning work for commercial and government clients.

CNB owns companies in the gaming, hospitality, information technology, health care, personnel services, distribution, manufacturing, telecommunications, environmental services and security and defense industries.

CNB does not currently fully outsource any part of its security services however, they do partner with many companies for security support. The biggest security challenge in 2021 has been endpoint protection and Privileged Access Management (PAM). Based on Mr. Gilbert’s experience, one thing that makes security a particularly large challenge for tribal organizations is that cybersecurity is not simply a “one size fits all” solution for security products and processes. Keeping up with the current technology, legacy systems and software application changes can be cumbersome and presents its own set of challenges based on the organization’s needs.

Currently, CNB has highly trained dedicated resources that oversee the cybersecurity services for their organization. Wanting to understand more about their cybersecurity spend as a percent of the overall technology budget, Cherokee Nation Businesses has recently participated in Gartner’s IT Benchmarking Assessment and will be assessing the results to determine the next best opportunities for improvement and where to focus their spending to nurture growth.

The Tribal-ISAC Steering Committee invites you to join the Tribal-ISAC

“The Tribal-ISAC is a unique opportunity for the Tribal organizations to safely communicate with trusted resources about security related topics. The Analysts filter critical cyber events information down to deliver the most relevant news, threats and risks for the Tribal Communities. The Tribal-ISAC is a great value for anyone working in a Tribal organization trying to fight the cybersecurity issues alone. Sharing best practices and timely threat information safely amongst our peers will help us all fight the ever growing threat landscape together.”

Lee Edberg, IT Cybersecurity Manager, Mystic Lake Casino & Hotel, Tribal-ISAC Steering Committee & Tribal-ISAC Member

Are You A Tribal-ISAC Member?

Nearly 30 TribalHub member tribes have already joined the Tribal-ISAC. Click here to learn why your peers are working to improve their tribe’s security posture.

To learn more about how you can join the Tribal-ISAC reach out to tiffany@tribalhub.com or visit tribalisac.org today.

Click HERE to check out this podcast feature by Jennifer Lyn Walker, The Cybersecurity Evangelist, who sat down for a great discussion with two of the Steering Committee Members from Tribal-ISAC.

- Bill Travitz - Director, Office of Information Technology, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- Lee Edberg - IT Cybersecurity Manager for Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community

Both gentlemen bring great experience and insight to Tribal-ISAC and its members.

The Tribal-ISAC is open to membership for Native American and Alaskan Native tribal government, operations, and enterprises.