



Spotlight

Association of Illinois

Introduction

Developing and implementing a website for a new organization with no seed money can be a daunting task. The CERT Association of Illinois Executive Board thought it would be good to explain how the site came about, key players and their kind sponsorship of the website. We had the opportunity to speak to William H. Byerley III, Vice President of PageDesk, the website host. The following is from our interview.

- Michael Moos, CERT Association of Illinois, Interim Board Member

The Interview

CERT Bill thank you for meeting with us. I think our readers would be interested in your background, especially with CERT. Could you tell us a little about yourself and your interest with CERT?

Bill Byerley (BB) - Hello! Thank you so much for giving PageDesk and me this opportunity. In July of 2009, Dan Martin, who was with the New Lenox Police Department at the time published an article in our local newspaper regarding a CERT class beginning to form. I emailed Dan because at the time I was president of the New Lenox Lions Club and wanted to have our members participate in the class. On July 16, 2009, I attended the informational session and was officially in class number 2 from October 20-December 5, 2009. Communications was my primary interest.

In November of 2009, I received my amateur radio license. I formed an organization called the Illinois Radio League dedicated to the education and promotion of amateur radio. We integrated a division of the organization for mobile deployments where we would assist New Lenox CERT with communications.

During the winter of 2009, I assisted with a warming shelter and was introduced to New Lenox Emergency Services and Disaster Agency. On January 5, 2010, I attended my first meeting and became an ESDA officer. Throughout the years, I assisted CERT with many deployments and currently hold the position of Assistant Director with New Lenox ESDA.

CERT How did the idea of creating and hosting a CERT website get started?

BB - On July 9, 2019, Dan Martin emailed me to have a conversation regarding the website. We met at length concerning the goals and intentions for the site. The domain name <https://www.certillinois.com> was registered. The premise was that the content needing to be posted was too large for just a Facebook page. A website would accommodate the needs for the group. Since the CERT association was just beginning, our firm decided to defer all costs for the website design, hosting, and maintenance until funds could be secured. PageDesk is dedicated to assisting organizations in need within our community.

CERT How long have you been hosting the site?

BB - We have hosted the website since July 9, 2019.

CERT *What was the initial goal of setting up a CERT website? What are you trying to accomplish?*

BB - The initial goal of creating the CERT website was for making sure all agencies involved with the CERT association are able to receive all the meeting agendas and minutes. It would also allow for all agencies to stay up to date and for new agencies to contact the association and join. It has a flexible design so we can change it as the organization grows.

CERT *What has changed since you started?*

BB - Technology changes almost daily. When we first began, HTML was primarily the only language needed to design a website. It quickly changed to where you need well over 5 different programming technologies to complete any website. As for how the websites are designed, the user interaction, or the purpose of the websites tend to be more interactive rather than just informational.

As for computers and IT, the premise is generally the same, but the computers are getting smaller and more compact, and the viruses are getting a lot more intricate. This makes our jobs more complex and time consuming.

With new cell phones developed every year, screens and internal technologies change drastically which require our technicians to be trained constantly.

CERT *How has the pandemic, affected your operations?*

BB - The pandemic has affected many aspects of our business. It was important for us to operate safely for our employees and customers. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we ceased all visitors from coming into our office. We offer a drop off and pick up window for all transactions. In addition, we have temporarily suspended all in home service calls. Overall, we are able to conduct business the best we can, and our customers have been very accepting of our changes. We may jinx ourselves here, however, up until now, our office has remained COVID free.

CERT *How can other CERT members/teams suggest topics for your program?*

BB – We welcome keeping the website up current with topics of interest. One of the best means to do so is for the membership to bring items to the Associations attention. Just use the email il.cert.assoc@gmail.com. Don't forget to include pictures with your information!

CERT *What is PageDesk and what do you offer as a business?*

BB - PageDesk Incorporated was founded in 1999. We started the business specializing in custom website design, hosting, and maintenance. Shortly thereafter, we started our on and off site computer repair and IT division. We have since added cell phone and tablet repair.

CERT What is PageDesk's website and contact info?



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Hours: Monday through Friday from 10am until 6pm.
Computer repair, IT, and technical support hours are 24/7.

CERT Thanks again to William H. Byerley and his staff at PageDesk for providing such excellent service. We look forward to our future endeavors together.