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RALEIGH, (SGRToday.com) - Big kudos for North Carolina's Innovation Center, which has been named a State IT Program of the Year 2015. The award comes from State Scoop, a national publication that features leaders and innovators in government technology.

The iCenter, as its known, is designed to ensure the state purchases in the IT area are proven to work. Essentially, it is a "try before you buy" lab. "The iCenter has been a catalyst for change in the culture of state government," said Gov. Pat McCrory in a statement. "We're applying common sense business principles and investing our IT dollars more wisely by testing technology to make sure it will deliver as promised."

Chris Estes, North Carolina's State Chief Information Officer, accepted the award at the National Association of State Chief Information Officers' (NASCIO) conference. Estes is a member of NASCIO's Executive Committee and Chair of its National Innovation Community.

It's not the first honor for the Innovation Center. It was also recognized as a 2015 "Bright Idea" by the Ash Center at Harvard University earlier this year.