



# **Illinois State Treasurer's Office Tech Team Rated Among Best In World In Recent Competition**

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SPRINGFIELD— The tech team at Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs' office is one of the world's best, a recent cybersecurity competition showed.



A three-person Information Technology team from the state treasurer's office reached the semi-final round in the International Cyber League 2022 competition. The team finished 15<sup>th</sup> out of 500 that entered. Just 200 teams escaped the qualifying round, and the Illinois treasurer contingent was the only government team to do so. The treasurer team performed better than counterparts from some Fortune 100 companies and a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

“We take cybersecurity very seriously, as the results of this competition illustrate,” Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs said. “We are very proud of our Information Technology group for its problem-solving skills and top-notch teamwork.”

The treasurer’s team was led by Joe Daniels, the office’s chief information officer and a sergeant in the Illinois National Guard who has deployed for cybersecurity missions.



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embers of the team each had to qualify and were given individual challenges simulating an online attack on a computer network. Working from the office's security operations center in the Marine Bank building in downtown Springfield, each member had three hours to fend off the would-be computer network intruders.

One of the simulated scenarios involved a data leak from a computer network. The challenge was to locate the leak, identify the bad actor, and quickly fix the problem. Those who finished sooner rather than later scored more points.

Daniels, who is more experienced, got a tougher task --- a "golden ticket" scenario. An infiltrator snuck inside a network and granted themselves top-level administrative powers. Critical-thinking and puzzle-solving skills come into play, Daniels said. Solving the training exercise during a simulated crisis helps the technology specialists do a better job of safeguarding information.