

SECRETARY COREY STAPLETON



state of the
SECRETARY OF STATE

2019



*The transformation of the Montana
Office of the Secretary of State*



Contents...

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Office of the Secretary of State is to promote democracy, help commerce thrive, and record history for future generations.

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Corey Stapleton
MONTANA SECRETARY OF STATE

Growth is Intentional...

Welcome to the third annual State of the Secretary of State report. The highlight of this year's edition is our agency's transformation. A caterpillar doesn't just change to a butterfly—it transforms. There is no going back!

"In any organization, change is inevitable. But growth is intentional."

Two years ago, the Montana Office of the Secretary of State made a courageous decision to modernize all divisions across the entire enterprise. We went fully digital in our Business Services Division, and in doing so, set into motion efficiencies and improvements which are remarkable and unprecedented. The culture of tolerating 50,000+ errors each year on customer business filing renewals dissipated like snow in a chinook wind. Our process now is error-free.

Similarly, we've modernized the way we store records, increased the security of elections, facilitated upgrades in voting equipment for the disability community, and reduced our operating costs by millions. We reduced the number of locations we pay rent in Helena from four to one!

Perhaps our proudest accomplishment this year, though, was highlighted in our employee survey. Every single employee at our office enjoys their work, feels appreciated, and knows the work they do matters. I believe we have transformed into the best-run agency in state government.

On behalf of our executive staff, I am proud of the amazing work that all our employees conduct on behalf of Montana voters and business owners. Oh yeah—Montana also improved to ranking third in the nation for increasing voter turnout over the past four years! Thanks to our staff and the 56 county elections administrators across Montana, we are prepared for a great election cycle in 2020.

Sincerely,

Corey Stapleton





I am proud of the **amazing work**
that all our employees conduct
on behalf of Montana voters and
business owners.

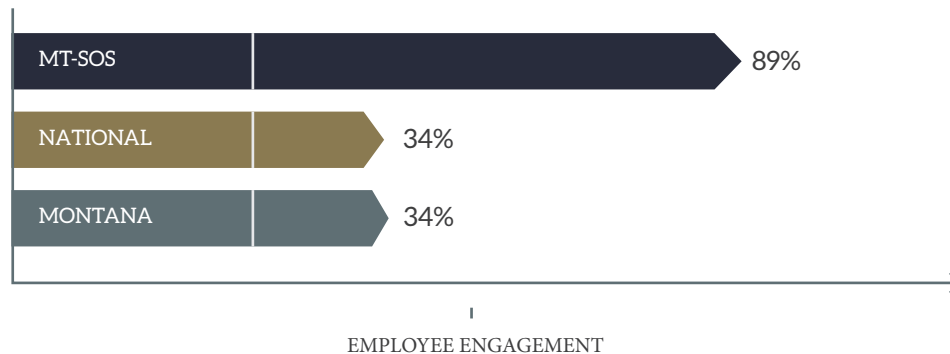
BEST RUN STATE AGENCY

Operations

This administration was the first to measure employee engagement at the Secretary of State's Office. **In 2019, 89% of our staff reported being highly engaged**, which means they are intentionally giving effort to excel at their job.

The Montana average is 34%, and the national average is 34%. **The Secretary of State's Office has 55% more highly engaged employees** than the Montana and national averages. **We love our team!**

PERCENT OF HIGHLY ENGAGED EMPLOYEES



Employee Level of Engagement



75%

2017
SOS staff are highly engaged

89%

2018
SOS staff are highly engaged

89%

2019
SOS staff are highly engaged

Staff Training 2019

55% INCREASE: The level of engagement from the staff of the Secretary of State's Office is 55% higher than the Montana and national averages.

The Office of the Secretary of State increased efficiencies, improved response times to customers, and reduced the size of the office by 34%, allowing our customers to "operate at the speed of business."

100%

Increased Speed and Accuracy: Backed by 100% error free filing!

22%

Increased Businesses Served: 22% over three years!

34%

Reduced Government: A 34% reduction in the size of the office!

Business Services

The Business Services Division is providing immaculate customer service by modernizing software and making it easier than ever for customers to file their business documents with a new digital platform. By improving the website and online lien filings, notary applications, and business filings, Montanans across the state are seeing quicker turnarounds and error-free filings!

Montana's Active Businesses

Year	LLCs	Corps	Non-Profits	Assumed Business Names	Partnerships	TOTALS
2017	87,806	46,306	13,033	41,713	3,646	192,504
2018	105,595	49,470	13,840	50,929	4,070	223,904
2019	114,647	49,650	14,068	52,657	4,107	235,129



New Lien Filing System

On September 30th, a new lien filing system was launched. The new UCC system is customer friendly, easy to use, and available 24/7.

Customer Feedback

"I talk to a lot of government agencies and MT SOS's help line has the most wonderful people. You make Montana government look good and I am proud of you and thankful. You are a refreshing breed of state workers."

-Celia C

"Today I had the fortunate experience of being helped by your staff with our annual report for our LLC. Her confidence, knowledge and courtesy were duly appreciated. Please pass on my thanks to her for her excellent customer service."

-Barb S

"By the way, you guys have fantastic customer service. Your team has been extremely helpful and responsive."

-Mike S

"I was so thrilled to call the MT Secretary of State and someone picked up right away. Your staff was kind, professional and fun to talk with. There are other states who should take lessons from Montana."

-Kathryn R

Online Resources

Helpful and friendly online tutorials have been created on the website for customers to view prior to using the new platform, and we've included a list of Frequently Asked Questions.

One-Stop-Shop

As part of that one-stop-shop model, we can assist notaries and businesses in a single call, delivering immaculate and immediate customer service.

Records & Information Management

This was a year of sweeping change for the Records and Information Management Division (RIM). The Montana Secretary of State's Office invested a great deal of time and resources to explore alternate strategies and opportunities to make the state's Records Management program a more efficient and viable entity. This included the release of a Request For Proposal (RFP) to discover options the private sector provides in the field of records management. It was within this process that the Secretary of State's Office identified a solution for the storing and servicing of the State of Montana's records. This opportunity provided the state's various agencies consistent pricing for paper and microfilm records storage and servicing over the next decade. This steady rate allows state agencies time to explore avenues of modern records management and to reduce their physical footprint through digital records.

The off-campus RIM employees joined their co-workers at the State Capitol Building, and the records were migrated to a new state-of-the-art facility. With employees at the Capitol and records safely and securely moved, we shuttered the old and antiquated building forever. These changes are, for the first time in decades, allowing RIM to operate more efficiently while saving all state agencies storage and servicing costs and keeping their records in a more conducive environment for long-term storage. Over the next year, we will work to train and educate other state agencies on the newest technology and move the state toward the national standards. Montana will continue to lead the way in records storage and management.

Fun facts to “store away”

- In just 80 days we moved 30,000 boxes - 400 boxes a day.
- These 30,000 boxes represent every agency in the state.
- If you laid out these boxes end to end, they would stretch nearly six miles!

Administrative Rules of Montana

Through cross-training, we're ensuring that even during high-volume periods, the office maintains high standards.

FUN ARM FACTS TO "KEEP HANDY"

2017

2475 Pages in
the Register

3296 Replacement
Pages for ARM

1145 Rules
Published

2018

2582 Pages in
the Register

3698 Replacement
Pages for ARM

1357 Rules
Published

2019*

2074 Pages in
the Register

1864 Replacement
Pages for ARM

800 Rules
Published

*For calendar year 2019, numbers represent first three-quarters of the year.

STATE OF THE
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NOTORIOUS FOR ITS ACTS

Notary and Certifications

Montana Notary and Certifications began this year with focus on the future. Secretary Stapleton partnered with Rep. Becky Beard (R-Elliston) on House Bill 370 to modernize Montana's notary laws. The bill was the culmination of months of dedicated work by both the private sector, led by the Montana Land Title Association, and the Office of the Secretary of State.



R.O.N. Symposium attracted over 200 attendees

The primary focus of the bill was to expand technology-based notarization, including Remote Online Notarization (RON), Remote Notarization, and In-Person Electronic Notarization (IPEN) to benefit Montana's consumers and businesses. RON specifically offers the ability to have documents securely and legally notarized using a computer, tablet, and even a phone any time day or night from anywhere in the world.

The hard work and dedication of the office has made Montana a national leader on this subject, and as a result, Montana's legislation is now the model for other states. Additionally, its passage has opened the door for national companies to set up shop in Montana. These companies have created new jobs, employing not only notaries but other highly-skilled Montana graduates.

To ensure that technology-based notarizations became a reality for Montanans, in September, our office hosted the first-ever RON Symposium in the country and introduced these concepts to over 200 Montanans and attendees from a dozen other states. Industry leaders spoke during the event about the new law and technologies available to Montana notaries. Several Montana notaries took advantage of the opportunity to sign up on the spot with companies that offer various technology-based notarization services.

HIGHLIGHTS...

- Published updated educational materials
- Published Quick Guides with law updates and made them available to all of Montana's 16,000 notaries

2019 Notary of the Year Bill Gowen



Elections & Voter Services

The Montana Secretary of State is the Chief Elections Officer for Montana and is responsible for interpreting state election laws under Title 13. The Elections & Voter Services Division works to ensure that laws are implemented by county election officials uniformly throughout the state.

"It was so much easier than what we used to have to do. I appreciate all of your help."

— COUNTY ELECTIONS STAFF

"We are very excited with the system! So many features, streamlining processes, and so user friendly. We cannot wait to start using this."

— COUNTY ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR

"Wow! Talk about ON TOP OF IT!! I don't think we have ever had the calendar this early. Thanks!"

— COUNTY ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR

"Montana has a great and easy to navigate [Web]site!"

— 2020 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN STAFFER

HIGHLIGHTS...

Just a few highlights of the progress our Elections & Voter Services Division made throughout the year.

Accessibility

Certified new voting devices to ensure that disabled voters have the same access as all voters.

Usability

Identified new resources for voters and candidates to improve user experience.

Security

Introduced new and dynamic practices to safeguard Montana's elections.

Turnout

Increased voter participation and voter election integrity.

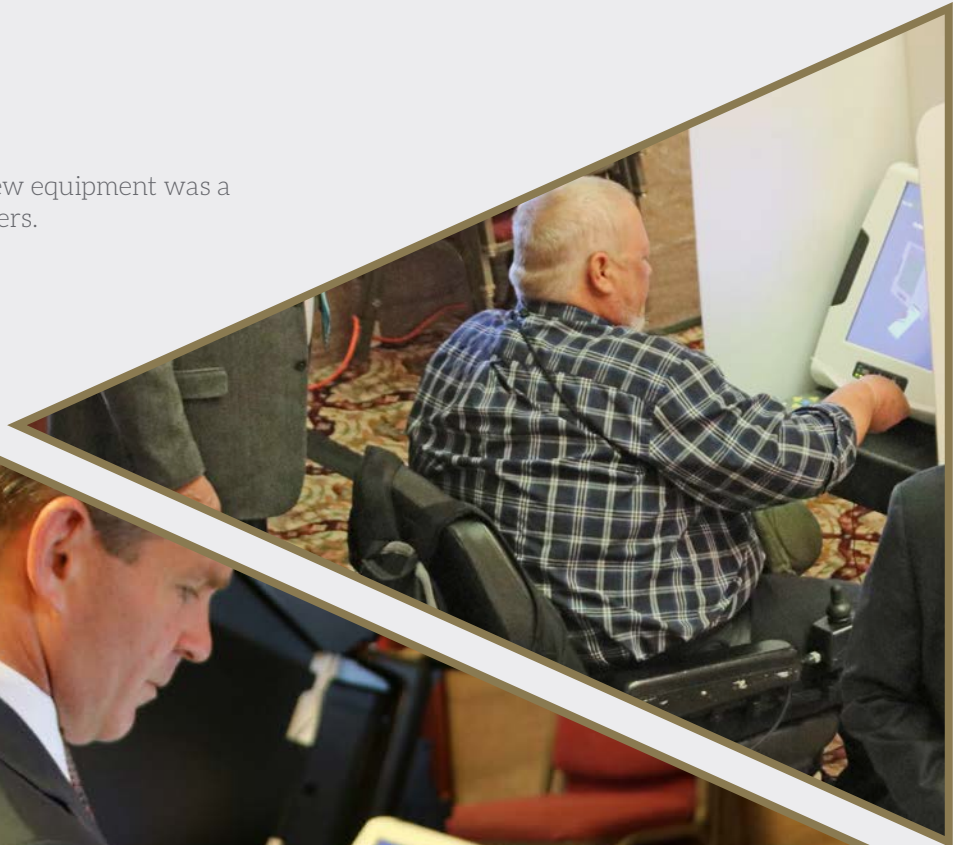
Montana Elections & Voter Services Division is building for the future.

The Office of Montana Secretary of State worked with legislators, led by Senate Majority Leader Fred Thomas [R-Stevensville], on a bill that **allows for a new voter interface device** for disabled electors at polling places.

The devices will ensure that **disabled voters have access** to voting technology and will allow electors to cast ballots independently, privately, and securely.

RIGHT

Firsthand testing of new equipment was a success for multiple users.



LEFT

Secretary Stapleton demonstrates the new ExpressVote system.

This new technology is the **first time since 2005** that any Secretary of State in Montana has provided **improvements to security and accessibility for voters with disabilities**.

The technology was certified and approved for use in Montana in September of 2019. A \$750,000 sub-grant using Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds was made available to counties that are utilizing matching funds to upgrade these systems.



LEFT

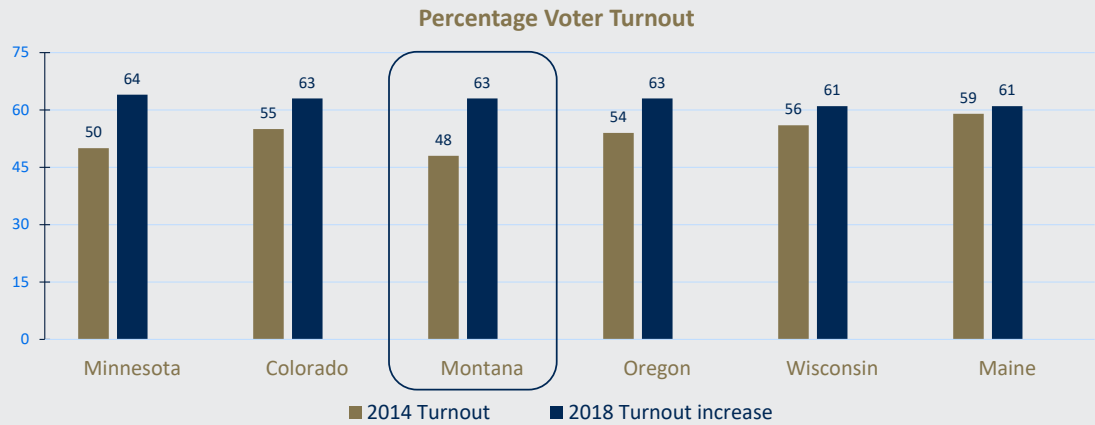
New election system will have upgraded features that enhance the user experience for candidates, election administrators, and voters.



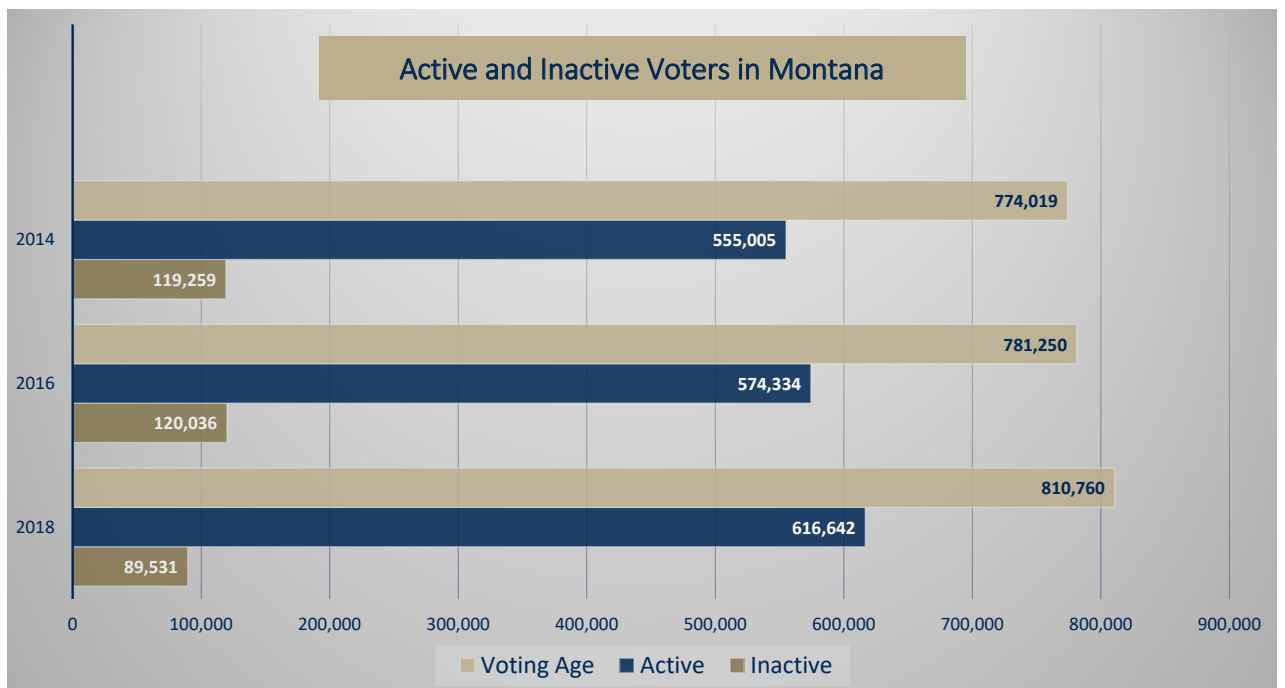
RIGHT

Elections Director Dana Corson oversees the initial launch and testing of the new system to obtain feedback.

Montana is one of the top three states that experienced turnout increases from the 2014 to 2018 elections.



Montana was among three states that saw the biggest increase!



Montana's voters increased and inactive voters decreased.

**STATE OF THE
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THE NUMBERS TELL THE STORY

More Votes & Increased Security



Montana's voter participation ranking increased from 17th to 3rd in the nation.

Things That Matter

One of our biggest commitments to transforming the Office of the Secretary of State over the last three years has been spending time with Montanans across the state. In 2019, we continued our Things That Matter Tour, hearing directly from Montanans from one corner of the state to the other. By holding business roundtables in numerous counties and touring too many businesses to count across the Treasure State, we received great feedback on ways our office can promote democracy and help commerce thrive.

Just as Ships Aren't Meant to Stay in Port, Elected Officials are Meant to be Accessible...

In 2019, we visited with thousands of Montanans across the state. We enjoyed a cup of coffee in Ekalaka, learned about small pharmacies in Conrad, and toured a sign shop in Winifred.



Our journey didn't stop with just these three places - we saw it all, from a feedlot in Sidney to a restaurant in Drummond that served burgers over 100 different ways! We toured a high-tech precision manufacturing company in Stevensville, an old-fashioned candy maker in Philipsburg, a science station in Big Fork and so many more. The most inspiring, and yet humbling, part of each stop was meeting Montanans dedicated to the idea that through a full day's work, we can live the Montana dream. Meeting these hard-working Montanans made the countless hours behind the windshield worth it. We saw what truly makes Montana the last best place.

Montana Land Board

Preserving Montana for the next generation is an instinct every Montanan is born with. The Montana Land Board has a unique challenge, managing the land for the benefit of the trusts that hold our lands. Schools, public buildings, universities and other state institutions are paid for with proceeds from the land the State holds.

Year	Ag & Grazing*	Forest Management*	Minerals*	Real Estate*	Totals*	Per Student
2017	\$27.9	\$10.9	\$16.3	\$5.8	\$86.2	\$295
2018	\$26.2	\$10.6	\$20.2	\$5.5	\$87.4	\$286
2019	\$30.2	\$10.4	\$24.4	\$7.1	\$99.2	\$311

*All numbers represent millions raised for the trusts



“I’m in love with Montana. For other states I have admiration, respect, recognition, even some affection. But with Montana it is love.” ~ *John Steinbeck*

STATE OF THE
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ENSURING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Our commitment
to you...



THANKS.

Our entire team considers the work we do **to be a privilege**. We look forward to serving you in the future by:

- Helping Commerce Thrive
- Promoting Democracy
- Recording History

Contact

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