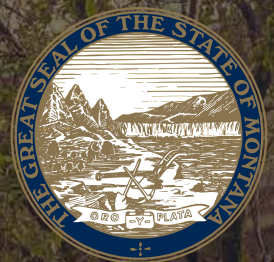




State of the Montana Secretary of State

Corey Stapleton, Montana Secretary of State

2020



The **Business Services Division** of the Secretary of State's Office continues to help commerce thrive and provide immaculate customer service.

CUSTOMER SERVICE & EFFICIENCIES

Business Services has made immaculate customer service a cornerstone of each day. Whether talking to customers, replying to emails, or working with other agency partners, timely, friendly, and knowledgeable information is the goal. The Secretary of State's Office has cross-trained staff so everyone can provide quality assistance. Performance goals are tracked daily, and the team thrives on reaching and beating those goals.

The Business Services Division has built partnerships with other agencies and states to assist citizens with easier and more efficient filings, as well as sharing expertise with Montana notaries and notaries from all over the United States. The Division has partnered with the Department of Labor and Industry to add a computer in their lobby so customers getting business licenses are able to register their name and finish the licensing process all in one stop.

SETTING THE BAR

The Montana Secretary of State's Office was the first in the nation to file an eApostille, which has long been thought to be out of reach, but the office sponsored legislation in 2019 that provided the framework to make such a significant stride possible. The 2020 COVID-19 closures provided the final catalyst that brought the need clearly into focus. On June 22, 2020, Montana became the first "Competent Authority" in the United States to issue an eApostille on remotely notarized documents.

PANDEMIC... NOT PANDEMONIUM

As a result of "Going Digital," the staff continued to serve our business community without any interruptions, while some of the team transitioned to work remotely. The staff enjoys remote work, and productivity has increased. The Business Services Division has continued to process filings and answer phones due to the ability to work remotely in an online system. The remote notarization law Montana passed in 2020 allowed business transactions to continue during the shutdown, and staff remained available to customers to accommodate those requests.

Immaculate Customer

Service: Focusing on the right results and training has allowed us to accomplish all these successes with less staff. How do we know? Valued Secretary of State customers could not be more complimentary about the customer service they regularly receive.

"I was needing assistance in registering my business as an LLC and the staff was patient, friendly, knowledgeable, eager to help, and an absolute delight to work with. Whatever you and your team are doing to foster that sort of service deserves a huge HOORAH."

"Thanks for the amazing job your department does for Montana businesses. I am a personal banker with First Security Bank in Missoula and help business customers every day to register their business with your department. They always say how fast and helpful everyone is if they need to call or use the website."

"One positive interaction generally credits the individual, but two positive interactions begin to speak of the leadership of the office."



Customer Testimonials



The **Elections Division** of the Secretary of State's Office continues to promote democracy by providing safe, secure, and accurate elections.

2020 PRIMARY ELECTION

The Secretary of State's Office Election Division administered a successful all mail ballot election for the 2020 Primary. Candidate filing was the busiest ever with four political parties being represented, as well as independent and non-partisan candidates filing for public office.

There was a significant move from in-person filing to online filing, which was easily facilitated with the office's improved online filing system. The Elections team provided resources for voters and county election staff across the state. New and improved customer service software was implemented to become even more responsive to the election community. Additional security enhancements were made to the Montana Voter Registration System, further protecting and improving the integrity of our election system.

INTEGRITY MATTERS

The Secretary of State's Office made certain that the integrity of Montana's elections met expectations. Ongoing training with county election clerks for signature verification was never more important than it was this past June and will be for Montana's November General Election.

ELECTION SECURITY

The office has maintained laser focus on election system security. Partnerships with the National Guard, Department of Justice, the State Information Technology Division, and Federal Government resources have increased awareness and provided confidence that Montana election systems are highly secure.

"I would like to let you know that your staff has been assisting in getting our new clerk all set up. It is always a pleasure working with them. Their professionalism, knowledge, kindness and above all patience is such a breath of fresh air." --County Election Deputy



Customer Testimonials

Thank you for your attention to the annual **State of the Secretary of State**

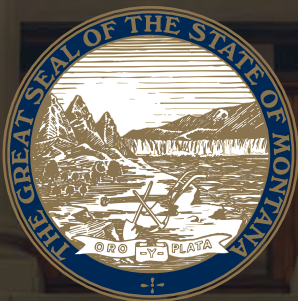
*Even a pandemic couldn't dampen the incredible results of dedicated employees at the Montana Office of the Secretary of State! In just four years, the office has racked up an impressive **Top 10 list of accomplishments:***

- 10.** Increased the integrity of mail ballots after the 2017 special federal election by conducting the 2017 Mail Ballot Improvement Project and reduced 'mismatched' ballot signatures by 30% the following 2018 Primary election.
- 9.** Led the nation in 2018 by going fully digital across the Business Services registry, reducing 50,000 annual errors from paper filings.
- 8.** Consolidated the property lease locations of the office from four to one, reducing square footage by 70% and reduced staffing by 30%, resulting in savings of millions of dollars.
- 7.** Through intentional and thoughtful leadership, completely revamped the employee experience of working in the State Capitol. Invested in training, empowerment, and support for every single employee. The Office of the Secretary of State last year boasted 100% actively engaged employees during the annual employee survey!
- 6.** Continued national leadership on remote notarization, providing critical business support during COVID-19.
- 5.** Reduced and kept customer fees near the lowest in the nation for Business Services and Election & Voter Services.
- 4.** Increased the cyber security across Elections, including implementing two-factor authentication for all 56 county election offices and across the various Secretary of State IT platforms.
- 3.** Completely modernized and added efficiency to the way Montana oversees Records Management, saving more than \$500,000 per year in overhead and outdated methods.
- 2.** Procured a new Montana Voter Registration system to be introduced in 2021.
- 1.** Authorized millions of dollars to local election offices and gave them the autonomy to determine how to best secure and improve elections at a local level.



Corey Stapleton
Montana Secretary of State

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



Contact Us

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