



**IOWA SECRETARY OF STATE
ANNUAL REPORT
2015**

INTRODUCTION



It is an honor to once again serve as Iowa's Secretary of State. When I returned to this office in January 2015, 20 years after my first term began, I established three main goals: I wanted to offer top-notch service to the citizens of Iowa, increase voter participation, and maintain the integrity of the vote. During the past year, we accomplished all three.

The workload of our Business Services Division continues to increase, but so does our level of customer service. We have reduced the processing time of New Corporate Filings from three weeks down to just one day. My staff continues to seek methods of increasing efficiency and providing service at the speed of business.

I was proud to join 33 other states in developing a Safe at Home program. Safe at Home is an address confidentiality program for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking and stalking. The Safe at Home Act received unanimous support in the Iowa Legislature and the program launches January 1, 2016.

Another major success for my Office this year was instituting the Caucus 101 curriculum in Iowa high schools and working with the Republican Party of Iowa and Iowa Democratic Party to create the first statewide Iowa Youth Caucus. More than 1,000 students across the state participated in this event. The goal of Caucus 101 and the Iowa Youth Caucus is to engage and excite young people about the civics process and educate them about Iowa's unique role as the First-in-the-Nation Caucus state.

As we enter this Presidential Election Year, my Elections Division is diligently working to insure Iowans have fair and open elections. We are proud to unveil electronic voter registration on January 1, 2016. This will provide another avenue for Iowans to easily participate in the process. Iowa remains one of the most accessible states in the nation when it comes to voter registration. I want all Iowans to participate in the electoral process. We can accomplish this without sacrificing the integrity of the vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul D. Pate". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul D. Pate
Iowa Secretary of State

2015 ACHIEVEMENTS

VOTING & ELECTIONS DIVISION

Safe at Home - Secretary Pate created Safe at Home, an address confidentiality program for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, trafficking and stalking. The program launches January 1, 2016.

Online Voter Registration - One of the Secretary's top goals it to increase voter participation. He worked with the Iowa Department of Transportation to develop an electronic voter registration system. This will make registering to vote simpler and easier for Iowans.

NVRA - Secretary Pate renewed efforts to make sure all state agencies are in compliance with the National Voting Registration Act and helping their constituents register to vote.

BUSINESS SERVICES

New Business Filings - When Paul Pate returned to the Secretary State's Office in January, there was a significant backlog in the processing time for New Corporation Filings. Through hard work and due diligence, we reduced that processing time from 20 days down to one day.

eCheck - A new e-Check filings system is being unveiled to provide customers the convenience to pay for their filings online.

Efficient Processing - The Secretary of State's Office processed more than 321,000 corporate documents in 2015.

GENERAL

Caucus 101/Iowa Youth Caucus – The Secretary developed an online curriculum for Iowa high school students, designed to involve students in civic engagement while educating them about Iowa's unique role in the political process. The curriculum included partnering with the Republican Party of Iowa and the Iowa Democratic Party to create the first statewide, bipartisan Iowa Youth Caucus.

Honor a Veteran with Your Vote - The Secretary expanded the Honor a Veteran with Your Vote program to pay tribute honor to those who served in the military that fought for our rights to choose our elected leaders.

State Fair Straw Poll – More than 30,000 people voted in the Secretary's State Fair Presidential Straw Poll.

VOTING & ELECTIONS DIVISION

Auditors Advisory Group

The Secretary appointed a bipartisan group of four Republican and four Democratic county auditors, with two from each congressional district, representing both large and small counties. The advisory group provides insight on election legislation, best practices and procedures, and trouble-shooting for elections challenges.

National Voter Registration Act

The Secretary conducted an extensive review of NVRA activities in Iowa. State agencies were invited to attend one of four training sessions to familiarize all state agencies with the NVRA and determine whether or not their agency activities defined them as an NVRA agency. Targeted training was conducted with agency supervisors to assist their training efforts as they informed their employees about the requirements under the statute.

Additionally, these sessions helped SOS to understand the business practices at agencies so that we are better informed about the current practices that the agencies have in place, and helped craft solutions that fit agencies' processes, while we explore more comprehensive solutions. Forms, guidebooks and additional resource materials were updated. New administrative rules will take effect in early January 2016 to provide the Secretary of State's office with authority to collect and report data from NVRA agencies in a manner that best fits each agency.

Accessible Voting

A 2015 review of accessibility aids for non-sighted voters included a review of braille materials for use at the polling place. The voter registration form was formatted as a fillable form and tagged specifically to make our current voter registration materials screen reader friendly.

Online Voter Registration

A collaboration with the Iowa DOT to develop online voter registration opportunities for Iowa voters was completed and deployed on January 1, 2016. This application is available to Iowa residents who have an Iowa driver's license or non-operators ID and wish to register to vote or to change their registration information.

State Election Administrators Training

The Secretary of State partners with the Iowa State Association of County Auditors (ISACA) to provide training to county election officials. SEAT is a certification process for Iowa election administrators:

- Thirty-four classroom hours of core certification classes - Fifty-four 2015 graduates.
- Four 8-hour sessions of continuing education classes were taught to Iowa County Auditors and election administration staff. Over four hundred attendees.
- Thirty 2015 administrators that were re-certified

IVoters updates

The SOS issued a new release in July that included improvements to the scanning module, security updates, Election Night Reporting application for new voting equipment, and improved reporting processes. The SOS renewed the IVoters maintenance contract and the Election Night Reporting contact with Arikkan, a third party vendor.

The Elections Division also conducted annual and biennial voter list maintenance, including cross-state match, National Change of Address, and no activity. The voter registration system also provides a pool of prospective jurors to the Northern and Southern federal districts.

Safe At Home

The SOS worked closely with Representative Dean Fisher to draft and fine-tune legislation for a new program in Iowa: Safe at Home. SAH is an address confidentiality program to protect survivors of domestic abuse, sexual assault, trafficking, and stalking from being found by their abusers. The program provides a substitute address for all SAH participants to use instead of their actual residence address, receiving and then delivering all first-class mail to SAH participants. Additionally, the SOS houses a separate voter registration and absentee balloting system for SAH participants. In preparation for the program launching January 1, 2016, the Secretary and staff submitted articles for 5 statewide publications and have made over 25 presentations to state and local agencies and organizations.

BUSINESS SERVICES DIVISION

Business Entity Filings

The Business Services Division is the business portal for the state. Among its key responsibilities are the registration and authorization of domestic and foreign entities to transact business in Iowa, filing secured transaction lines under the Uniform Commercial Code, commissioning Iowa Notaries Public. Our Online Business Center allows business to be conducted 24-hours a day, seven days a week. It provides access to over three million filed documents and a complete array of forms, applications and searchable databases for businesses, lending institutions and interested citizens.

Each business day the customer service phone line receives over 200 telephone calls and emails with business services-related questions. The Office is continually seeking to improve its service delivery to citizens and the business community.

The Business Services Division houses more than 6.5 million stored electronic documents. This does not include old documents that are stored on microfilm. There are over 203,000 active business entities registered in the corporation database. Corporation filings include: articles of incorporation, articles of organization and amendments, miscellaneous filings, and statements of changes of registered agents. Most entities are also required to file a biennial report with the Office. In 2015, the Office processed more than 159,000 transactions against the corporation database. Of those, 111,735 were biennial reports, 93 percent of which were filed online. Annually, the Business Services Division issues over 14,000 certificates of good standing on Iowa registered entities and accepts more than 800 original notices for service of process on Iowa registered entities.

Online Filings

The Secretary of State's Office continues to move toward paperless filings, allowing immediate communication between the office and customers. The Secretary's goal is for the office to function at the speed of business.

2015 Filing Transactions

UCC Certified Lien Reports	203,426
Filings	126,605
Corporate Transactions	159,202
Original Notices	836
Certificates of Good Standing	14,393
Notary Renewals	13,998
New Notaries	6,701
Apostilles & Notary Certifications	6,801
TOTAL	531,962

Uniform Commercial Code (UCC)

The Business Services Division is responsible for filing and maintaining lien records under the Uniform Commercial Code. The Office currently maintains over 1,016,000 lien records in our UCC database. The UCC filing system supports commerce by giving lenders a central place to file notices regarding personal property pledges as collateral for loans.

Examples include liens on: farm equipment and machinery, personal property, manufacturing equipment, inventory, crops, and livestock. Additionally, the Office files federal tax liens and other federal liens.

In 2015, the Office filed 126,605 documents, provided 203,426 certified lien search reports, and supplied thousands of copies of filed documents to customers. Virtually all certified searches and 94 percent of UCC filings are done online by customers.

Notary Public Commissions

The Business Services Division is responsible for commissioning Iowa notaries. A notary is a person who serves the public as an impartial and unbiased witness by identifying persons who come before the notary. They are especially critical to the legal, business, financial and real estate communities of Iowa. The most common function of a notary is to witness and attest that a person signing a document is who they claim to be.

The Secretary of State's Office maintains a database of approximately 58,777 active notaries, which most often require renewal at three-year intervals. In 2015, the Office renewed 13,998 notaries (42% renewed online) and commissioned 6,701 new notaries.

The Division is responsible for issuing apostilles and notary certifications on documents destined for foreign countries that have been notarized by an Iowa notary. These certifications from the Secretary of State confirm that the notary is an Iowa Notary Public. The Office issued 6,801 of these in 2015.

Miscellaneous Filings

In addition to corporations, UCC's and notaries, the Office maintains the following:

- Agricultural Reports (9H & IOB)
- Athlete Agents (9A)
- Travel Agent & Agency Registrations (9D)
- Voluntary Annexations (368)
- Land Patents (9G)
- Oaths of Office (9.3)
- Transient Merchants Registrations (9C)
- Credit Service Organizations (538A)
- 28E Agreements (28E)

List of Cities Incorporated in Iowa (9.2)
Condemnation Filings (6B & 9.2A)
Acts of Resolutions of the General Assembly (9.1)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

The Secretary of State conducted a comprehensive review of its IT infrastructure, including an external assessment conducted by Martin Yarborough and Associates and an internal assessment conducted by the OCIO. The SOS is awaiting a read-out of both of those reports. Additionally, the OCIO issued two RFIs, on behalf of the SOS. One RFI was to explore the functionality and costs of a revised election and voter registration system and the second was for the business services systems.