



February 2020 Edition

# Plate Talk

Official Publication of the Minnesota Deputy Registrar's Association

Board of Directors

## PRESIDENT

NENG LOR  
REGION 9

## VICE PRESIDENT

KEN MOHR  
REGION 6

## SECRETARY

MIKE HINTZ  
REGION 3

## TREASURER

JOHN LENARZ  
REGION 7

## COMMUNICATIONS

JOE HEIDER  
REGION 5

RAMONA STROLBERG  
REGION 8

COLTON SEISLER  
REGION 4

MARY FILZEN  
REGION 1

LAURA LAUDENBACH  
REGION 2

## From the President's desk...

Greetings Members of MDRA,

In the last 3 years we've been working tirelessly to make operations make sense; service the public without having to take out loans, dip into savings, ask for a subsidy, and have service pay for itself. We all know the history with MNLARS and Real ID and the challenges it brought. I am not here to share my experience. I am here to encourage you to join me and the association in pushing for legislative changes, specifically on filing fees and support for the bills introduced by the MDRA during the 2019 session; HF 1008 (Elkins) and SF 1124 (Senjem).

I write to you as we are desperate in the legislative year. Desperate as our wait time and customer frustrations are high, and cost of doing business depletes our capacity to provide quality service. In the last 3 years we've been pushing for fee increases to make sense of our business. We are in the most desperate time as Deputy Registrars. As mentioned, MDRA is focusing on what impacts us the most, and that is filing fees.

In 2019, our achievements were made because of your phone calls, office visits, emails and letters to your legislators. We need you to push it again. Connect with your local law maker, contact them regularly, and encourage them to visit your office. If your customer is upset, have them share their experience with their legislators.

Meaningful filing fee increases are desperately needed and we need them immediately. Deputies can then make front end investments. Deputies are finding they need to make upgrades; add staff, add hours, add space, and maybe even increase wages to retain current staff. With additional income, we can focus on making the experience less painful for our residents.

**Call to Action: Contact your Legislature!**

All MDRA members are needed to help push the message to legislators. Call the legislators representing the area where you work and where you live.  
(continued on next page)



President - Neng Lor  
[Neng.lor@hennepin.us](mailto:Neng.lor@hennepin.us)

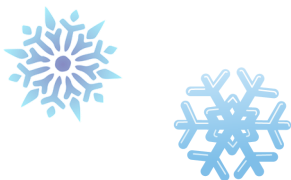
## In this issue

President's Message

Legislative Update

Day on the Hill

MNDRIVE Update



# President's Message cont'd

Below are some talking points to help start your conversations. These are only some of the things the Deputy Registrar community is experiencing. Please share your personal experiences with them also.

- Costs more to provide service; digging into savings/ taking out loans, and tax subsidies
- Exhausted team members; difficulties in retaining employees
- Irrate and frustrated customers
- No financial means to increase staff level
- Cannot go any faster, add more size to office, add more people to help, make office upgrades
- More than 40% of DVS responsibilities shifted to Deputy Registrars
- MDRA time and motion study indicate increased processing time



We are overwhelmed. We have hit a plateau and do not have the capacity to do more. We want to provide valuable service. We cannot do that without proper fee increases.

## Where to direct customer frustrations...

The customer's frustrations do not have to stop at our office. In fact, customers can make a real difference by sharing their experience with their local legislators...

- Long wait time, multiple trips, and running around
- Frustrating process
- Confusing requirements
- Difficulties to obtain documents and multiple visits



Law makers needs to hear from their constituents to understand the impact. If a customer would like to address their complaint, have them contact the law makers below.

- Governor Tim Walz
- Senate Transportation Committee: Chairman Scott Newman, Vice Chair John Jasinski, Ranking Minority Member Scott Dibble
- House Transportation Committee: Chairman Frank Hornstein, Vice Chair Brad Tabke, Republican Lead Paul Torkleson



For your local legislator, please visit: <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/>



## MDRA Legislative Agenda

The MDRA legislative committee presented recommendations to the MDRA Board of Directors, which involved amending bills carried over from 2019. The MDRA Board of Directors adopted the legislative committee's recommendation to pursue amendments to MDRAs introduced bills HF 1008 (Elkins) and SF 1124 (Senjem), again, carried over from 2019. The MDRA Board of Directors also agreed with the legislative committee that our focus will be on filing fees. Online services, kiosks and permanent revocation however, is in our radar.

Why focus on filing fees? As a standalone item, it makes the most impact. Filing fees is most critical for Deputy Registrars. Meaningful filing fee increases is the victory that we need. It is also a non-budget year, a short session, and an election year. A lot of work has moved to our office from DVS, and we can expect more of that. We do more than just "filing." Please read the Legislative Committee report found later in this issue for a complete breakdown of our proposed increases.

# President's Message cont'd

## MDRA Day on the Hill

Thank you, all, that came out to support the MDRA at the capital. Our Day on the Hill is only as successful as you make it. A great crowd of people came through and many came from far corners of the state. This is serious and your attendance demonstrated that.

Senator Newman has been a champion for Deputy Registrars. This year he was presented with the much coveted MDRA license plate, recognizing him for his work.

Representative Elkins attended and joined us for lunch. He is understanding and emphatic to Deputy Registrars and we can count on his support.

## Authorized Record Access? Don't Do It!

Do not look up records without a business need. Want to pull up a record from an amber alert? **STOP!** Want to pull up a celebrity's record? **STOP!** Heard the news and want to pull the record of the person of interest? **STOP!**

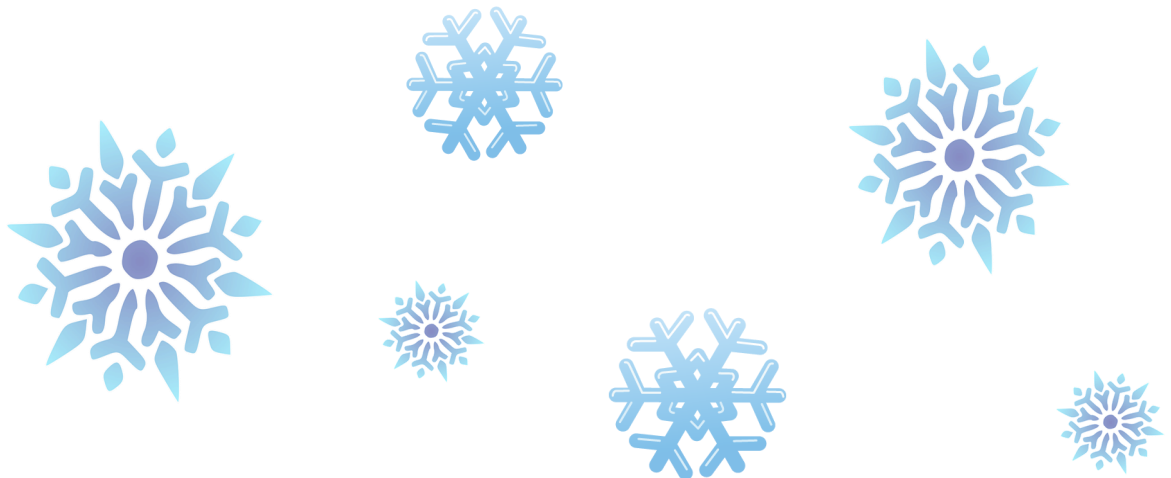
Refrain from looking up your own record, records of family or friends, and records that are not for business purposes. Do not process transactions that are for yourself, family, or friends. We understand that there are times that you might need to process a transaction for a family member or friend and we encourage you to connect with DPS directly for those instances.

Access was given to a user to perform a job function. Access that cannot be justified could result in **permanent** access revocation. While we understand that the consequence is severe, please protect yourself and your team by reminding each other - do not access records unnecessarily. In the meantime, MDRA will continue to press on with the concern of permanent revocation.

Finally, I'd like to make a correction from my message in the last issue of Plate Talk. John Nordby did not retire from the DNR, but rather he took a new position there.

This has been a very long President's message and I touched on many things that will be covered in detail within this issue, but I am passionate about the issues we face and I know that together we can make these changes happen.

Sincerely,  
*Neng Lor*



# Legislative Committee

Jim Hirst~ Lobbyist  
John Lenarz~ Chair

The new 2020 legislative session began February 11 and features a “short session” this year that will adjourn by May 18. Last year the legislature enacted the current two-year state budget, so that will not dominate this year’s activity. However, a forecasted budget surplus will likely spur discussion on extra spending of a potential \$1.3 billion. If only deputy registrar offices had such a problem!

As we all know, despite a one-time distribution of \$13 million to deputy offices last year to compensate for the impact of MNLARS and a paltry \$1 increase in filing fees for MV transactions, we continue to struggle financially. We will be three years into MNLARS before its replacement becomes operational later this fall. If one applies the compensation received towards the first two years of MNLARS, it averaged about \$1 per MV transaction. With the \$1 fee increase enacted last year, it still doesn’t reflect the reality of extra time for more data entry to our front counters, which will only continue under the new replacement system.

Obviously, DL transactions (which received no filing fee increase last session) continues to have a woefully inadequate filing fee given the impact of growing Real ID applications. The current \$8 fee has not been increased in over 6 years, and the time involved to complete all DL applications (including standard) has grown exponentially for all agents.

Our legislative platform last year called for both MNLARS compensation AND meaningful filing fee increases going forward for all our MV and DL services. We return in 2020 to press for truly meaningful fee increases to be enacted for MV and DL.

MDRA with the help of members state-wide (thank you offices!) has just concluded and compiled its latest round of time and motion studies for MV and DL transactions. This most recent report largely confirms the trends that offices have been experiencing. When compared to just last year’s study it revealed the following:

Overall time to complete MV applications were up 22%  
No-fee transactions constituted 15% of all time  
Long app’s were up 22%  
Short app’s were down 20%

Overall time to complete DL applications were up 17%  
No-fee transactions constituted 15.7% of all time  
For Standard DL, time increased 20%  
For Real ID, time increased 37%  
For Enhanced DL, time increased 25%



Compounding the extra time that all offices face, other factors must also be included such as:

Inflationary considerations  
Increased wages and benefits  
Mandated equipment upgrades (scanners, laser jet printers)  
Office remodeling to accommodate new front and back office space needs



Based upon our latest study combined with these additional factors, and with an identified trend supported from past MDRA studies, we will be advocating for the following filing fee increases that reflects all these facts gathered to justify:

A doubling of the current DL fee of \$8  
An increase in MV long form fees of \$6  
An increase in MV short form fees of \$5



# Legislative Committee cont'd

We plan to amend last session's MDRA introduced bills HF 1008 (Elkins) and SF 1124 (Senjem) on filing fees to reflect these new recommended levels. These existing bills remain viable for action in 2020. We await transportation committee hearings in the Senate and House to move this forward.

Your lawmakers need to hear from you **NOW** for a well-timed message to support our collective efforts.

Call your State House and Senate members. Find your state lawmakers at [www.house.mn](http://www.house.mn) and follow the link on the bottom of that website page to find their phone number.

Leave word for them to call you if you can't reach them. Inform them that despite compensation and a small MV fee increase last year, your operation remains struggling due to stagnant filing fees that don't reflect your growing costs.

DL fees haven't been increased at all; time to process applications have skyrocketed and is compounded by public demand with the Real ID deadline. Another MNLARS type crisis is growing in our lobby and we don't have the resources to respond properly!

Processing times are increasing as data entry has shifted and will continue to do so after MNLARS is replaced. Mandated equipment investments must be budgeted for (scanners and laser printers will cost \$1000 each with a life span of 2-3 years, and more than one each will be needed).

Other supportive reasons that apply to your situation.

Cite House File 1008 and Senate File 1124 that must be heard, amended, and passed.

Call both transportation committee chairmen in the Senate and House with these arguments in addition to your state lawmakers.

Senator Scott Newman (R-Hutchinson) at 651-296-4131  
Representative Frank Hornstein (D-Minneapolis) at 651-296-9281

With the beginning of session now upon us, please expect regular capitol updates from MDRA and kindly respond quickly should we request your timely engagement with targeted communications as the need arises. Please share back with us any pertinent responses from your lawmakers as well. Thank you, deputies for your serious attention to these requests which are critical to your immediate viability and long-term sustainability!



# Day on the Hill !!

## MDRA Day on the Hill

Nearly 40 deputy registrar members across the state from Fairmont to International Falls participated in our annual visit to the state capitol on February 19. This year's event was designed to meet with lawmakers in a focused effort to press for filing fee increases in the current "short" legislative session. This was the highest level of member involvement since MDRA began these targeted in-person events, which builds upon ongoing legislative relationships with our legislative agenda.

Deputy Suzanne Jensen of Blue Earth County had a timely stop at one of her legislator's office which happened to coincide when a constituent called with questions on Real ID. The lawmaker's assistant handed the phone over to Sue, who provided instant professional information to the caller—great job Sue! That's one "no-fee" transaction that paid in other ways!

All 201 legislator offices were contacted and provided with our updated legislative brochure along with a Real ID sheet from DVS encouraging citizens to apply for this card before the October deadline. Participants also engaged in a group meeting with Representative Frank Hornstein (chair of the House Transportation Committee) as well as a separate group meeting with Senator Scott Newman (chair of the Senate Transportation Committee). Both chairs acknowledged the need to address these fees this session. These committees that they chair are crucial in our quest to enact filing fee increase legislation.

Last year, MDRA introduced legislation (HF 1008-Elkins and SF 1124-Senjem) specific to fees. That bill remains in play this session before the transportation committees, however the proposed fee amounts last year must be amended upward in the bill. This is largely due to our most recent time and motion study that reflects even more time involved in accepting MV and DL applications. Furthermore, based on the recent draft contract document for deputies from DVS mandating new investments in scanners and upgraded printers, filing fee adjustments must address these future costs as well.

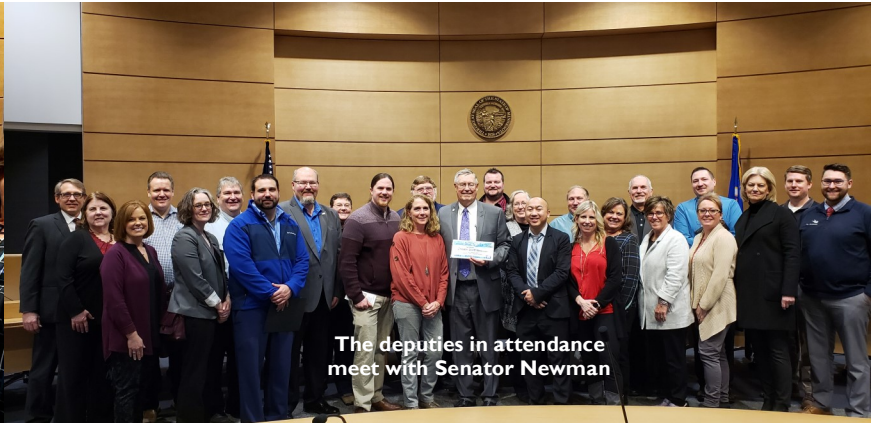
Representative Steve Elkins (author of HF 1008) joined the deputies at the monthly MDRA board meeting held after our Day on the Hill. He remains committed and motivated to seeing our filing fees raised this year and encouraged all deputies to keep up the fight with him to see this through! Thank you, Representative Elkins!

It should be noted that HF 1008 and SF 1124 are but one "vehicle" to accomplish our goal of realizing these increases. Other bills pertaining to VTRS and Real ID in response to legislative task force recommendations are expected and could also be considered for attaching fee increases as an alternative to our bills. If we can realize meaningful fee increases this session, we don't care what legislation is used to accomplish the goal!

The MDRA legislative committee strongly encourages you to call your lawmakers routinely and stress the need to increase these filing fees. In this "short" legislative session, repeated calls help prevent "short" legislator memories!



# Pictures from Day on the Hill



# MNDRIVE

Colton Seisler- Deputy Registrar SME

Greetings Deputies,

This summary will give you a brief look into what we've been working on with the new **MNDRIVE** system, developed by **FAST Enterprises**, and will hopefully inform you about some of the changes you will face during rollout in November 2020. As you may or may not be aware, the state of MN has included stakeholder participation with the development of the new **MNDRIVE** system which is responsible for processing all vehicle service transactions. There are four deputy registrars, one **MADA** (Minnesota Auto Dealers Association) representative, representatives from **DVS /MNIT**, and several **FAST** developers working on the project. Joe Heider and I, Colton Seisler, are representing **MDRA** as **SME's** (subject matter experts) on the project.

The project is broken down into several teams and have **SME's** working alongside **FAST** in their respective areas of expertise. The teams include: Title/Registration, Financials, Testing/Training, Dealers/Inventory, Interfaces, and Conversion. As **SME's** we are assigned with many tasks, some of which include, testing transactions in a testing environment and making development suggestions on these transactions. We compare converted data and write test scenarios. We are also heavily involved in all types of meetings regarding the project and are given the opportunity to help shape this new system to best meet our needs. We appreciate the opportunity that **DPS** has given us to provide feedback and work so closely on the project. **MNDRIVE** affects a number of different stakeholders and we all have to work together to find a common ground to suit all of us.

There will be some changes coming in all of our offices which I'd like to identify. One of which is the implementation of scanning motor vehicle transactions. A decision has been made for scanning to be "memorialized." This means **DVS** is strongly encouraging certain transactions to be scanned directly into the system similar to what some offices currently do for driver's license transactions. This approach will be a hybrid model, which will accommodate offices that are unable to perform scanning. Technology is changing rapidly and it will impact all offices. You'll want to make sure your office stays up to date with the required technology. See **DVS's** Infohub for the desktop requirements to ensure your office is up to date.

**MNDRIVE** will change the way that offices process transactions. Currently **FAST DS** uses version 11 of **FAST's** software. **MNDRIVE** will be using **FAST's** upgraded version 12. We will be using version 12 for both driver and vehicle transactions. This means there will be changes for driver's transactions as well. Keeping up with training and testing will be very important for the success of your office using **MNDRIVE**. **DVS** has offered explore sessions, which is where deputies can come to town square and play in the system with a structured script. Sandbox will be opening up tentatively in August 2020. Sandbox is a staging environment that allows offices to perform real transactions without actually updating records. **FAST** has been doing office visits over the last couple months and has helped support 3 in-person demos. We will work with **FAST** to hopefully plan at least 1 more demo prior to classroom training.

In summary, Joe and I have been working very hard representing **MDRA** to help create a successful system for the deputy registrar's. We are passionate about the work that we do and take our work very seriously. Feel free to reach out to us at any time with questions or concerns regarding the project. Your feedback is valued and we are here to represent all of you.

Respectfully,

Colton Seisler  
MDRA board member



# MDRA MISSION STATEMENT

The Minnesota Deputy Registrars Association (MDRA) is a statewide membership organization promoting common interests of deputy registrars in providing professional licensing service to the public and liaison to the state.

SEP

10,000 lakes

20

## Advisory Committee Members

Dave Konshok - Lifetime Honorary Member

Jeff Lenarz

Kim Griffith

Bruce Jindra

Kathy Jensen

Susan Wagner

Jeff Orth

Suzanne Jensen

Meagan Weber

## Lobbyist

Jim Hirst

## Plate Talk Editors

Paula Anderson, and Joe Heider,

We're on Facebook



Check us out!

To get started, contact:

Laura Laudenbach

[Laura.laudenbach@co.stearns.mn.us](mailto:Laura.laudenbach@co.stearns.mn.us)

or

Sue Jensen

[Suzanne.jensen@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:Suzanne.jensen@blueearthcountymn.gov)



New Brighton  
Ice Castle 2020