



Plate Talk

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In this issue

President's Message

Legislative Update

Todd's Corner

In Loving Memory

Save the Date

Thank you

Official Publication of the Minnesota Deputy Registrar's Association

From the President's desk...

Greetings Minnesota Deputy Registrar's and Staff!

The MDRA Board and Advisory Committee would like to thank the Minnesota Deputy Registrar Community for their patience and support during the 2023 Minnesota Legislative Session.

The 2023 "MDRA Day on the Hill" coordinated by MDRA Lobbyist James Hirst was well attended. Deputy Registrars had the opportunity to meet directly with Minnesota Lawmakers and extend our concerns and needs directly to them. Thanks to the MDRA Members who spent the day at the Capitol with our Lobbyist and lawmakers.



President- Jeff Orth
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The MDRA Board did have a meeting with DPS Commissioner Bob Jacobson on March 9, 2023. This meeting also included representatives of the DRBOA (Deputy Registrar's Business Owners Association). In this meeting, the critical role of the Minnesota Deputy Registrar's in the service delivery to citizens of both motor vehicle and drivers license was discussed. Additionally, the MDRA Legislative Goals for 2023 were outlined in detail with the Commissioner. The MDRA Board expressed gratitude for Drivers License Fee increases in the Governor's budget, but noted significant concerns over the absence of any motor vehicle fee increases. Within this discussion, the topic of Deputy Registrar staff safety was also reviewed as it pertains to citizen anger management issues at the Deputy Office front counter.

During the 2023 Legislative Session, two Minnesota Deputy Registrar offices Jordan and Maplewood closed. The unfortunate closing of both offices occurred on May 10, 2023. The Minnesota Deputy Registrar Community is deeply troubled that the offices closed. The closures were related to inadequate filing fees for operations. The MDRA Board and Lobbyist James Hirst shared the Deputy Office Closure concerns with both DPS Staff and Minnesota Lawmakers.

MDRA Lobbyist James Hirst has provided a final analysis of the 2023 Legislative Session by email to the MDRA Membership. Overall, the 2023 session will provide much needed help for the Deputy Registrar Community to sustain operations.

The fact that the Governor's budget included driver license fee increases was unusual but welcomed by MDRA leadership. The driver license fee increases as part of the budget was an acknowledgement that existing fees were inadequate.

The 2023 Legislative Session ended with very positive outcomes for the MDRA and Deputy Registrar Community. Thanks to MDRA Lobbyist James Hirst, MDRA Legislative Chair Michael Hintz, Julie Hanson of Scott County, Colleagues at DRBOA including Kristy Beaucage and DRBOA Lobbyist Todd Hill, and all those individuals that assisted in the 2023 Legislative efforts. Congratulations to all.

Looking to the future, MDRA continues to work collaboratively and professionally with the Department of Public Safety teams to make MNDRIVE a success for Minnesota Citizens. This high level of collaboration extends to current and future MDRA Legislative Initiatives with other Associations and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Orth
MDRA President

Legislative Committee

Jim Hirst~ Lobbyist
Mike Hintz~ Chair

The Minnesota Legislature has adjourned their regular session this year, but not before enacting an astounding array of new laws concerning multiple issues. Certainly, the 2023 session will be viewed as one of the most expansive and busiest in decades by lawmakers.

After last fall's general election, the DFL party captured majority control of the Senate (albeit by a single seat) while retaining control of the House as well as the Governor's office. This "trifecta" of single party control with the state's legislative and executive branches created an ideal political landscape for the DFL to pursue legislative initiatives previously thwarted by "split" legislative control when the GOP controlled the Senate. And a state budget surplus in excess of \$17 billion provided even more incentive for the DFL! Regardless of one's political leanings, the scope of the activity was amazing, if not historic.

Past stalemates at the legislature over the last few years have frustrated deputy registrars in our quest for increased filing fees and state compensation from unrealized revenue due to DVS online competition, even with a bipartisan Independent Expert Review (King Report) that recommended such. Other critical components of that report also languished last year. However, this year we were **SUCCESSFUL**, and many elements of the King Report were enacted as part of this year's omnibus transportation finance bill.

Last month MDRA provided members with a detailed review of those provisions within the omnibus transportation bill with various effective dates. To summarize, that new law will provide the following highlights for deputies: *(Please refer to the previous four-page review from last month for more detail!)*

- ◆ \$6 Million in compensation to ALL offices based on 2022 MV transaction counts
 - One time distribution commencing July 15, 2023
 - Individual office compensation would be approximately half that realized with MNLARS distribution from 2018
- ◆ \$1 filing fee increase for all MV transactions (tabs/titles/pro-rate) effective October 1, 2023
- ◆ Additional \$1 surcharge retained by deputies for all MV transactions effective January 1, 2024
- ◆ \$8 filing fee increase for all NEW DL application transactions effective October 1, 2023
- ◆ \$3 filing fee increase for all RENEWAL DL application transactions effective October 1, 2023
 - DVS proposal for online DL renewals was denied
- ◆ New service offering with \$10 filing fee for vehicle and accident reports effective January 1, 2024
 - Available for full-service DL agents only
- ◆ Appeals process for permanent revocation of access, various effective dates
 - Includes retroactive consideration for past cases
- ◆ Repeal of current ban on providing MV information over the phone to registered owner

Apart from the omnibus bill, separate legislation was enacted this session concerning the "DL for ALL" bill whereby undocumented aliens may apply for and be granted a driver license or ID. This would only be for a standard non-compliant card (NOT for Real ID or any Enhanced credentials). This will become effective October 1, 2023, and basically reverts back to the previous practice that allowed this prior to the 9/11 terror attacks, after which the current ban on providing these cards became law.

We wish to acknowledge and thank the many deputy members who actively participated in helping us achieve a very positive outcome with our legislative agenda this session! Our annual "Day on the Hill" drew close to 40 deputy members from around the state and its timeliness was very effective in getting our message out to lawmakers at a critical point in session. We very much appreciate your dedication in taking a day out of your busy schedule and joining us! Additionally, everyone's involvement aside from that event whether contacting your legislators or providing the MDRA with pertinent information to use in our lobbying efforts with lawmakers greatly contributed to our success as well! Thank you!!

MDRA will be honoring both Senator Scott Dibble and Representative Frank Hornstein this summer as this year's recipients of our annual "MDRA Legislator of the Year" award. They serve as the chairs of the Senate and House Transportation Committee respectively and both are DFL from Minneapolis. Unlike previous years, we will be asking members to make a charitable donation (**NOT** any campaign contribution) of our honoree's choosing. Details will be forthcoming soon regarding the date, time, and the charity chosen for the event!

As we begin preparing for the next regular session that will start February 12, 2024, we will likely focus on increasing our woefully inadequate DNR filing fees, which have not been adjusted for 20 years. We actually began laying the groundwork with it this past session. However, please forward any additional items for MDRA legislative committee consideration as well. Your input and suggestions in helping us craft next year's legislative agenda is important as we work to represent the interests of the entire MDRA membership!

The MDRA 2023 Annual Legislative Report will be forthcoming next week as a separate email to members. Please look for it in your inbox! In closing, I wish you all a wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing and visiting with you at the annual conference in September!

In Loving Memory of Becky Mechtel



In loving memory of Becky:

On April 10th, DVS lost a beloved family member – Becky Mechtel. Becky joined DVS in 1977 and was a walking encyclopedia on everything DVS. She was the communications specialist, and the position was perfect for her. Becky was an eloquent writer and a gifted orator. She could take the most complex DVS process and put it in plain language so anyone could understand what was needed. Becky always had a smile, and her laugh was infectious and would put everyone at ease.

Becky's family meant the world to her. She was a marvelous cook and would spoil her family with her wonderful meals. Her holiday meals were legendary, and she could make the simplest of meals taste phenomenal.

When I joined DVS in 2018, I was extremely fortunate to work directly with Becky. I would spend hours with her, learning about the challenges of MNLARS and how DVS operated. She was a critical member of the MNDRIVE team to ensure we effectively communicated with all the stakeholders on providing status updates on the MNDRIVE project and documenting what was in it for me. When I transitioned to my new position, I would be in contact with Becky almost daily, playing 20 questions with her about what DVS had done in the past and asking her to develop specific communication items.

After working for DVS for 47 years, Becky was planning her retirement for this summer. It's too bad that she was not able to enjoy her retirement.

I truly miss my good friend,
Tony Anderson

"In the short time I had the opportunity to work alongside Becky, I got to see first-hand the dedication and passion she had for the DVS mission. I'll remember her for her remarkable memory of all things DVS for the last 40 years, I can't recall a time that she didn't add valuable insight to any of our conversations. She was kind and she will be missed dearly by me and the entire DVS team."

-Pong Xiong, Director of Driver and Vehicle Services

"Becky was always a bright spot in my day. Whenever I would reach out to her, she would answer with a smile - a smile that was powered by years of experience and understanding."

-Greg Loper, Motor Vehicle Program Manager

"I always thoroughly enjoyed talking with Becky, and she taught me so much! She or I would have a quick easy question for the other and we would end up talking for an hour. She truly loved working with Deputy Registrars, and we spent a lot of time talking about how we could work to improve communication and access to information."

-Todd Oseby, Trainer and Business Analyst

"I just remember Becky always being happy and cheerful in all of my interactions with her. Whenever I asked for help she would do her best to help out in any way."

-Jim Forsell, Deputy Support Supervisor

Todd's Corner

Howdy ya'all!! We made it through a long tough Minnesota winter and we are all still standing taller than Clint Eastwood facing down a bad guy in *A Fistful of Dollars*! Time to dust off the straw hat and enjoy a beautiful Minnesota summer!

I wanted to take some time to talk about the importance of viewing records. Whether we have a DL, disability or vehicle customer, often it is so important to take a look at the record before we begin. I can't even count the number of times I have taken calls from folks asking "How come the title hasn't been issued yet?"; "How come they can't renew?"; "Why isn't he enrolled in Ignition Interlock yet?" "How come I cannot put different plates on this vehicle?" Often, folks call or email because they don't want to look at the record. For a couple of years now, rumors have been swirling around like locust on Little House on the Prairie about getting into trouble from DVS and getting system access revoked for looking at records. I guarantee if you aren't looking at your own, a co-worker's, a household member's or a family member's information, or looking up a plate from an Amber Alert etc., and you have a business need to look, you will be as fine as a good country song playing on a porch at sunset with a trusty hound by your side.



Almost always, the answers are right on the record if we just go look. All the treasures in the world are located on the record. We can find a note, a letter, an indicator, or an open paper (deficiency) in a review case if we just explore a little. We can even see credits for mail-ins not processed because of a death. MNDRIVE has so much information and history, there is nothing we cannot find. The best part is, if you follow up your search by completing a service transaction, you don't have to log the reason for the search! Even if you cannot do a transaction because something on the record prevents you, it's ok! Log the search. "Customer asked where their title was, so case needed to be reviewed" is a perfectly reasonable reason for a search, and a clear business need to do so. I can tell you it is much quicker to type a few words logging a search than it is to call or e-mail DVS asking why a title hasn't been issued only to find that we wrote for additional sales tax, which is shown right there in the review case.

If you haven't gotten in the habit of using the Search manager, that's ok too. You can start your service session for your customer, for whatever transaction they need, and before you begin, just click the handy dandy View Account link and take a gander at the record that way. Once you find what you need, you can mosey on back to the service transaction in your sidebar and take care of business armed with the necessary information.

I look forward to seeing all of you in Time with Training over the summer! Before we know it, the State Fair will be here and then the MDRA conference. I plan on attending again this year and spending some quality time with all of you! To quote Woody from Toy Story, "You're my favorite deputy!"



Annual Conference Save the Date ...

✓ Mark your calendars!

The MDRA annual conference will be held on Friday September 22, 2023 in St. Cloud at the River's Edge Convention Center located at 10 4th Avenue South. Hospitality Night will be on Thursday, September 21 at the Kelly Inn which connects to the convention center.

We have a dynamic speaker this year that you won't want to miss! He is funny, informative and will have some great ideas for you and your office.

His name is Tim Gard, he is an efficiency expert and you can get a glimpse here.

<https://nationallyspeaking.com/cm-expert/tim-gard/>

Also, back by popular demand is Todd Oseby! It promises to be a great information filled day with plenty of networking time both Thursday evening and through out the day on Friday.



Thank you Sleepy Eye!

The June 15 MDRA meeting was hosted by the Sleepy Eye Deputy Registrar. On behalf of the entire board and attendees, THANK YOU! You and your staff went all out and we appreciate it so much. You have a beautiful city and the atmosphere at the Sleepy Eye Pix Coffee/Brewery was the best!



Sleepy Eye Mayor Wayne Pelzel with MDRA President Jeff Orth



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.

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Check us out!

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