

THE 2008 YEAR IN REVIEW

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE



Government for the people. This philosophy drives Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land as she leads the Michigan Department of State forward in the 21st century. Since taking office, Land has devoted herself and the department to serving the people of Michigan and achieving quality results.

In 2008, Land continued her focus on providing the highest level of customer service to residents despite unfavorable budgetary circumstances. To succeed, Land adhered to principles that are the foundation of her administration: using technology and innovation to operate more efficiently, demonstrating fiscal responsibility, entering into partnerships and seeking feedback from others.

“Land’s list of accomplishments in streamlining the Secretary of State offices while not only maintaining but improving services to the general public are commendable.”

The Oakland Press
editorial;
Oct. 2, 2008

“... Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land, who has a solid reputation as guardian of electoral integrity.”

George Weeks
Syndicated columnist;
October 2008

The department further streamlined its branch office system through consolidation by opening its 30th, 31st and 32nd regional PLUS offices. Along with six SUPER!Centers, these next-generation offices are providing enhanced services to a growing number of customers, such as the option of paying fees at the counter with MasterCard and Discover. More services are being provided on the department’s Web site as well, including online renewal of licenses for auto dealers and other businesses.

In a major step toward transparency in government, Land's team published the most detailed spending information of any state agency online. The department also secured state and federal approval to move ahead with Land’s plan for an enhanced driver’s license that can be used in lieu of a passport at the border, smoothly administered a presidential election that featured record voter turnout and signed up more than 160,000 new organ donors.

While there were numerous accomplishments this year for the people of Michigan, with two years left in Land’s term, there are certain to be many more.

PROVIDING EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

As head of the state department with the most direct interaction with Michigan residents, Land is driven by the desire to make doing business with the state simple and easy and to offer convenient options that customers will appreciate.

► **More services for customers:** The Secretary completed the second phase of her Branch Office Modernization Program in 2008, consolidating six traditional offices into three regional PLUS offices that offer customers expanded hours and more services including instant titles and the ability to purchase their own driving record.



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“Land delivers smart options, efficient service to customers”

The Michigan Chronicle;
May 28-June 3, 2008

► **Now accepting MasterCard!** Thanks to Land's diligence, SUPER!Center and PLUS office customers are now enjoying the convenience of using MasterCard credit or debit cards at the counter in addition to Discover cards. This option was made possible after Land pushed for a change in MasterCard policy to allow the department to charge a nominal fee for face-to-face transactions to cover MasterCard service fees. In the first month of the program, more than 10,000 people used their MasterCard at the counter.

► **Online redesign:** At Land's direction, the department's Web site (www.Michigan.gov/sos) was redesigned to make it as useful, up-to-date and easy-to-navigate as possible. Links to frequently asked questions, popular topics, forms and publications, and online services were placed prominently on the home page. Among many other helpful changes, step-by-step instructions for processes such as registering to vote were added and search engine capability was greatly improved.

“The Michigan secretary of state's Web site is a wonderful resource.”

The Oakland Press
editorial;
Oct. 19, 2008

► **Going wireless on the road:** Harnessing technology to provide better service, Land converted the Mobile Branch Office from dial-up to wireless data service, reducing customer wait times as transactions are processed more quickly thanks to increased bandwidth. Due to the portable nature of wireless technology, this change lets the Mobile Branch Office serve more locations. The office traveled more than 7,500 miles in 2008, bringing department services to communities, college campuses and special events statewide.

“The Michigan Secretary of State's Office is testing out technology to help deaf and hard of hearing people when they visit branch offices.”

Matt Helms
Driving columnist,
Detroit Free Press;
Nov. 21, 2008



► **A first in sign language services:**

Determined to meet the needs of customers who use sign language, Land announced a video interpreter services program to provide them with greater flexibility and freedom when conducting business with the department. Available at 10 branch offices at no cost to the customer, the pilot program uses a monitor with a built-in camera and audio

system to connect the customer and clerk to a sign language interpreter. The system provides a means of communication that is more natural and faster than writing or lip-reading, especially for people who exclusively use sign language. Michigan's is the first department of motor vehicles in the nation to offer such a service.

► **1-888-SOS-MICH:** Department of State Information Center staff answered nearly 1 million calls on behalf of all branch offices south of Clare, freeing up branch staff to focus on helping customers at the counter.



“New license plate gives troops support”

Tom Greenwood
Commuting columnist,
The Detroit News;
Nov. 11, 2008



► **Supporting our troops:** The department unveiled a Support Our Troops license plate for purchase by residents, \$25 of which goes to a national organization that sends care packages to overseas troops. Plates were also introduced for soldiers who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan and personalization was allowed on all veterans plates.

“Veterans with service in Iraq and Afghanistan will be able to show their pride in their efforts with two new veteran license plates offered by the Michigan Secretary of State.”

Daily Mining Gazette
(Houghton);
July 3, 2008

► **Spectacular milestone:** The one millionth Spectacular Peninsulas license plate was sold in May. The green, white and blue plate, which features a cityscape, forest and the Mackinac Bridge, was based on the design suggestions of residents and introduced in January 2007.

► **Plates to go!:** More car buyers than ever are taking advantage of a timesaving option: the ability to drive home from the dealer’s lot with their permanent license plate and tabs in place. The Dealer Direct program has been expanded to include used-car dealers. More than 370 auto dealers are participating (up from 279 in 2007), moving an average of more than 25,000 transactions a month out of the branch offices.

► **Reducing the need to travel:** In April, the department began offering the option of an administrative review as a convenient alternative to a license appeal hearing for Michigan residents currently on a restricted license who are requesting full driving privileges. The license review is conducted solely on the basis of written documents, such as driving records, ignition interlock reports and medical statements, submitted in advance without requiring the petitioner to appear at a hearing.

► **Business Application Modernization (BAM) Project:** The department continued on a multi year project that is re-engineering and redesigning its business processes and associated technical infrastructure. The BAM team completed specifications and business requirements for many elements of the new system, which will provide employees and customers with better access to information and give customers more 24/7 transactional options with the department.

“Meanwhile, Land continues to try to make Secretary of State functions as convenient as possible for Michigan residents.”

The Oakland Press
editorial;
Oct. 2, 2008

► **Boundary and annexation survey:** In response to a request from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Office of the Great Seal verified all annexations, detachments and conditional transfers of property filed with the department for a five-year period. The review allowed cross-referencing of data with the Census Bureau and verification of municipal boundary filings located in paper files with electronic data maintained by the department in an internal audit-like manner. A more accurate Census count is of great importance to local municipalities as state and federal funding is partially tied to the population residing within a jurisdiction.



LEADING THE WAY ON FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

“Land puts spending statements on line”

Michigan Information & Research Service;
April 23, 2008



Secretary Land takes her role as a steward of taxpayers dollars seriously and encourages innovation to save money. She looks long-term and makes tough decisions today that lay the foundation for the future. From cutting costs to making the best use of existing resources, Land continues to demonstrate that she is a friend to taxpayers.

“The office of Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land has opened its books to Michigan taxpayers to an unprecedented degree for a state agency in Michigan”

Kenneth M. Braun,
Policy analyst,
The Mackinac Center

► **Transparency for taxpayers:** To encourage the greater openness in government that citizens deserve, Land put the department’s fiscal year 2007 spending online and updates the information quarterly. The data includes comprehensive details such as payments for individual leases, contracts, employee travel, utilities and grants to local governments—all information that would previously have taken citizens time to request or research.

► **Smart storage savings:** Through “Just in Time” delivery of envelopes and forms and consolidation of stored materials in one warehouse, the Department of State was able to close a second warehouse, saving \$40,000 a year.

► **Telecom savings:** The department saved \$423,000 in telecommunication costs in fiscal year 2008. The savings are the result of rate reductions and eliminating unnecessary equipment and lines.

► **Reducing technology costs:** Based on a careful analysis of the department's technology needs, Land made inventory reductions that saved the department more than \$30,000.

► **Acing the audit:** Under Land's leadership, the department's financial reports were flawless. The Auditor General reviewed the department's use of transportation funds and reported no issues in its most recent two-year audit.

► **Collecting on debt:** Rather than having taxpayers eat the costs of debts incurred by non-paying customers, Land formed an innovative partnership with the Eaton County prosecutor in which his office seeks collection of outstanding non-sufficient funds checks for the department on a statewide basis. As a result of the partnership, the average time it takes to collect on delinquent accounts has been reduced and more than \$100,000 was collected on taxpayers’ behalf in the first five months of the program.

“... officeholders who are providing excellent service to the public-- Terri Lynn Land for example...”

The Daily Tribune
(Royal Oak);
Oct. 8, 2008



MAKING THE MOST OF TECHNOLOGY

“The Department of State’s online renewal program for vehicle and watercraft license plate registrations has helped residents easily renew license plates for ten years now.”

The Davison Index;
July 3, 2008

“Michigan’s secretary of state is taking care of technology and making it easier to keep everything on the straight and narrow.”

Keith Crain
editor-in-chief
Crain’s Detroit Business;
June 2, 2008

“SOS self serve stations popular”

WEYI TV 25;
April 9, 2008



Under Secretary Land’s leadership, the department has embraced technology as a means to faster and more convenient service for customers. Automated and online options cut transaction times and costs. These options can even save people a trip to a branch office!

► **One million online renewals!** For the first time in the 10-year history of the department’s online renewal program, more than 1 million vehicle and watercraft registration renewals were recorded in a calendar year. On average, transactions over the Internet can be processed at half the cost of doing so at a branch office counter. They also reduce the number of customers traveling to branch offices, which allows staff to spend more time with those who do need over-the-counter services.

► **Save the stamp:** In Land’s nonstop drive to provide modern, cost-effective services that save time for customers, she introduced a convenient Web-based program that allows auto dealers and salvage yards to renew their licenses. Within the program’s first three months, more than 1,100 auto dealers had renewed online.

► **Positive peer pressure:** Land has teamed with the Detroit Auto Dealers Association to promote Courageous Persuaders, a unique program in which high-school students warn middle schoolers of the dangers of underage drinking. Students create their own TV commercials and compete for scholarships. Winning videos are run on the digital TV network in branch offices and are seen by thousands of teens and their parents.



► **Convenient self-service!** The quick convenience of the department’s ATM-style Self-Service Stations continues to draw customers, who can instantly renew their license plate tabs. This self-service option frees up branch office staff to help other customers. In 2008, the department made 8 additional machines accessible to customers and introduced its next-generation model. The new sleek design makes their placement easier and more economical. Self-Service Stations are in SUPER!Centers, PLUS offices and some government centers. In fiscal year 2008, more than 170,170 transactions were done using this popular option - more than double that of the prior fiscal year!

► **Behold the power of kiosks:** The department installed 141 Commercial Driver License (CDL) automated testing kiosks in branch offices in fiscal year 2008 and received an additional federal grant to cover the cost of purchasing another 141. These new kiosks give instant feedback to the customer, prevent cheating and the automatic grading of the tests saves branch staff an average of 13 minutes per applicant.



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“...our secretary of state’s office should be applauded for making that information easy for voters to access.”

Daily Telegram
(Adrian) editorial;
Sept. 21, 2008

“Greatest numbers ever turn out to vote in Michigan”

The Alpena News;
Nov. 5, 2008

“The state has a track-record of well-run elections.”

Grand Rapids Press
editorial; Oct. 10, 2008

“Good for Terri Lynn Land and Michigan officials who encourage democracy instead of block it.”

Rochelle Riley
Detroit Free Press
columnist;
Oct. 25, 2008

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS IN ELECTIONS

Michigan’s elections system, a model for the nation in many respects, continues to thrive. Working with local officials, Secretary Land has strengthened the system by making voting easier and more accessible, by further safeguarding the integrity of elections and by encouraging more citizens to participate in their democracy.

► **Piloting paperless check-in at the polls:** The department piloted an electronic poll book program in approximately 30 jurisdictions during the August and November elections with positive results. With a swipe of a driver's license, the e-Poll Book allows poll workers to check in voters more quickly than the traditional manual method -- the use of a computer speeds up the process and reduces lines.



► **View your ballot before you vote:** An interactive ballot feature was added to the Michigan Voter Information Center Web site. With the click of their mouse, voters can preview and print a sample ballot for their jurisdiction in advance of Election Day. Another feature allows voters to print a map to their polling location. MVIC received more than 16 million hits from Nov. 3-5.

► **Record number of voters registered:** Through outreach efforts, Land’s team helped boost the number of registered voters in Michigan this year to a record 7.47 million. The Bureau of Elections processed more than 75,000 voter registration applications in preparation for the November election. Through Land's efforts, roughly 6,500 new voters at naturalization ceremonies and nearly 5,000 individuals on college campuses have been registered.

► **Elections, elections and more elections!:** With the outstanding performance of Michigan’s hard-working clerks, the department successfully administered the January presidential primary, the August state primary and the November presidential election, in which more than 5 million residents voted – the most in state history.

► **Extensive, innovative training:** To ensure a smooth voting process, the department provided an unprecedented level of training to county, city and township clerks. In one innovative endeavor, the Bureau partnered with Michigan Virtual University to launch a one-hour online training course for clerks on “Managing the Polls on Election Day.”

► **A national leader:** Michigan’s campaign finance disclosure Web site was ranked first in the nation for usability and for its electronic filing program for candidates and committees, according to the Campaign Disclosure Project, an independent collaborative that grades the states' campaign finance disclosure programs and practices. Overall, Michigan’s disclosure efforts ranked third nationally and earned an “A minus” this year, up from a “B” in 2007.



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“Michigan’s campaign finance disclosure program rates high”

The Detroit News;
Sept. 18, 2008

► **Demanding campaign finance accountability:** In 2008, the department responded to more than 140 campaign finance complaints, up from last year’s total of 56. A record fine of \$190,138 was imposed on Meijer Inc. and its political action committee to resolve violations of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act.

► **Connecting with election officials:** To promote communication on election issues, the Secretary of State Election Email System was launched for use by election officials in 1,625 counties, cities, townships and villages. Local election officials now have the flexibility to access information from any computer with Internet access.



“Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land has made a number of proposals for ‘real-time’ finance reporting that expose much of the tangle of bureaucratic and political organization procedures that can impede citizens’ timely access to such important information.”

Ann Arbor News
editorial;
Sept. 21, 2008

► **Setting the standard:** To provide guidance and improve consistency, the department collaborated with election officials, voting system vendors and printers to create a Michigan Ballot Production Standards Manual. It covers the legal, technical and design standards that must be adhered to by local election officials responsible for ballot production. This was shared with the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and as a result Michigan’s ballot production standards and pre-election logic and accuracy testing procedures are now posted on the EAC Web site as a model for other states.



► **Removing obstacles to voting:** In the third year of its “Improving Access for All” program, the department continued to award Help America Vote Act funds to local communities improving the accessibility of polling places. This year, modifications were made to accommodate voters with disabilities in Calhoun, Genesee, Isabella, Mackinac and Mason counties.

► **QVF goes statewide:** Building on a successful 2007 pilot that gives local election officials in smaller municipalities direct access to the state’s Qualified Voter File, the department rolled out online access to all small jurisdictions by way of a secure Internet connection. The statewide launch involved the training of approximately 400 election officials and the installation of QVF software on 321 computers. The majority of the training and software installations were performed in the field at regional locations.

► **e-Wizard:** The department completed the first phase of the Election Wizard project, which allows local election officials to enter their ballot information (offices, candidates and ballot issues) into the Qualified Voter File prior to every election. A collaboration between the Secretary of State and local election officials, the e-Wizard provides the data used to display the interactive ballot for voters on the Michigan Voter Information Center Web site in advance of each election. In the future, the e-Wizard will also be used for optical scan tabulator programming and compiling statewide election returns.

“Michigan has a well-deserved reputation for a clean, accurate and efficient voting system.”

Holland Sentinel
editorial;
Oct. 1, 2008



“With this agreement, Michigan’s leadership has shown both its innovative spirit and its commitment to national security.”

Stewart Baker
Asst. Sec. for Policy,
U.S. Department of
Homeland Security;
Oct. 13, 2008

“We think (approval of Land’s enhanced driver’s license plan) is an important step in improving security while at the same time minimizing inconvenience for travelers.”

Battle Creek Enquirer
editorial;
Oct. 16, 2008

“Chertoff applauds Michigan on drivers license standards”

Gongwer News Service;
Feb. 28, 2008

“License will help border travelers”

The Times Herald
(Port Huron);
Oct. 14, 2008

PROTECTING OUR FAMILIES

The Department of State takes its role in protecting Michigan’s families from harm very seriously. Whether promoting traffic safety or guarding against identity theft and terrorism, Secretary Land has the department taking measures to increase the safety of all residents.

► **Balancing security and convenience:**

Having received state and federal approval this year, the department is moving full speed ahead on Land’s plan to create an enhanced driver’s license that can be used in lieu of passports at America’s borders.

In February, Land met with U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff to pursue this secure, convenient option for Michigan residents. In October, her efforts paid off as she received the green light to begin offering the new license in the spring, before tougher federal border ID requirements go into effect on June 1, 2009. The department also received state approval this year to issue an upgraded standard driver’s license, which will have added security features to further protect against fraud.



► **Tools to combat ID fraud:** The department strengthened its procedures for issuing identification to first-time applicants in 2008 after finally receiving legal authority to discontinue issuing driver’s licenses to illegal aliens, a practice required by a 1995 attorney general opinion. Land worked with the Legislature to ensure that legal, temporary residents could receive state-issued identification and the federal government to more efficiently and effectively verify immigration document so only the eligible non-citizens receive them. Further, she implemented the Social Security Online Verification application, which allows staff to immediately verify the name, age and Social Security number (SSN) of customers applying for a driver’s license or identification card. The department also continues to reduce access to SSNs and remove them from reports, documents and data systems.

► **Strengthening driver education:** To properly and consistently prepare our young drivers for the challenges of the road, Land’s team developed a multi tiered approach for training instructors and providers on the requirements of the new driver education program. Workshops were conducted statewide to train driver ed providers and instructors on the new model curriculum. The department also introduced a test generator that allows driver ed providers to print unique randomized tests to deter cheating and ensure knowledge of the information. Additionally, staff conducted on-site inspections at 52 practice range locations to ensure new compliance standards are met so students receive a quality training experience.



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“Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land’s plan to penalize young drivers who have had an accident or ticket caused by using a cell phone behind the wheel makes sense.”

Lansing State Journal editorial;
July 1, 2008



► **Motorcycle safety training record:** In 2008, the department’s Motorcycle Safety Program trained a record 14,779 individuals at 32 training providers. Thanks to federal grants, the department was able to purchase 24 new training motorcycles for use in the program and to hold 92 additional training classes.

► **Eliminating distractions for young drivers:** In an effort to curb risky behavior and save lives, the department put in place a policy that prohibits some teenagers from using cell phones while driving. Teens may be restricted when it is determined that cell phone use played a role in a negligent crash or traffic violation. The rule applies to probationary drivers who are between 14 years and 9 months and 19 years of age.

► **Vertical ID turns 5:** In July, Land celebrated the fifth anniversary of the vertical ID program for Michigan residents under the age of 21. Since the program’s inception, statistics show a reduction in convictions under the state’s Zero Tolerance Law for alcohol possession. This is a clear indication that vertical driver’s licenses and personal ID cards have had the desired effect of making it difficult for those who are underage to obtain alcohol.



“Secretary of State restricts some teen cell-phone use”

Cheboygan Daily Tribune;
June 23, 2008

► **Protecting young and old:** Land is always working to promote the safety of all motorists on Michigan’s roads. Among the programs this year, Land helped publicize Michigan’s new Booster Seat Law, which requires a child restraint system in vehicles for passengers up to age 8 or the height of 4 feet, 9 inches, and CarFit, which educates senior drivers on how to properly adjust their vehicles controls, mirrors and seats for their height, size and fitness level. She also teamed with the Michigan Sheriffs’ Association to introduce the public to “The Convincer,” a crash simulator that illustrates the importance of seat belts.

“State laud efforts for teen drivers”

Livingston County Daily Press & Argus;
October 20, 2008



► **Truck safety tribute:** In recognition of their efforts to promote truck safety, the Michigan Center for Truck Safety honored Secretary Land and the employees of the Department of State in February with its “Partner in Safety Award.” The Center presents the honor annually to individuals and organizations that help it achieve its mission to protect motorists through safer truck travel.

“Land urges boaters to watch over waters”

Cheboygan Daily Tribune;
May 12, 2008

► **Waterway Watch:** The department continued its partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard in promoting America’s Waterway Watch. The program encourages residents who are boaters to keep a watchful eye on area shorelines, bridges, tunnels, ports, watercraft, lakes, streams and rivers and to report any suspicious activity to authorities.



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ASSISTING OUR COMMUNITIES

*“Secretary of State
urges support of organ
donations”*

Kalamazoo Gazette;
May 5, 2008

Secretary Land believes that improving the quality of life in Michigan is possible by working together, and has directed the Department of State to assist communities and residents in reaching this goal in many ways.



► **The gift of life:** The department continued its year-round efforts to advancing the cause of organ donation. During a successful Donate Life Month in April, Land presented Detroit TV personality Diana Lewis and others with Shining Star awards for their leadership on the lifesaving issue. During the year, staff coordinated the federally funded “Tell

*“State lauds Hurly
organ donation
program”*

WJRT TV 12; June 18,
2008

Us Now” campaign, promoting organ donation in five heavily populated counties through outreach and public service announcements. Over the last 12 months, more than 160,000 organ donors have added their names to the Organ Donor Registry in branches or via the Internet.

► **Cleaning up our streets:** More than 80,000 abandoned vehicles were cleared from roads and communities in the last year, bringing the total to more than 250,000 since the Abandoned Vehicle Law that Land championed was enacted in October 2005.

► **Calling all angels:** Branch offices in the Detroit area teamed with community leaders once again to promote the need for volunteers for the annual Angels’ Night campaign. The campaign recruits volunteers who patrol Detroit streets, turn on porch lights and keep an eye on neighborhoods to protect the city on Halloween.

*“Secretary of State
branches accept
Harvest Gathering
donations”*

Charlevoix Courier;
Oct. 15, 2008

► **Reading is fun!** As she has done every year since taking office, Land visited elementary schools in March and read to students to recognize National Reading Month and to underscore how important literacy is to their future.



► **Serving those in need:** Once again, the Department of State played a leadership role in the state’s annual Harvest Gathering campaign, collecting food and financial donations at branch offices for families in need. In 2008, the department brought in more than 25,000 pounds of food to help others in Michigan, raising its grand total of food collected to approximately 150,000 pounds since Land took office.

*“Secretaries of State
descend on Grand
Rapids”*

Grand Rapids Press;
July 24, 2008

► **Welcome to Michigan!** Land hosted a successful National Association of Secretaries of State conference in Grand Rapids in July. Nearly 400 people attended the event where Land and more than 30 of her fellow secretaries collaborated on policy issues and voted to move forward on their plan for rotating regional presidential primaries. The conference pumped more than \$1 million into Michigan’s economy.

► **Helping the homeless:** The department participated in events organized to connect the homeless and refugees with available services. Additionally, the Mobile Branch Office helped at “stand-down” events in Detroit and Lansing to assist homeless veterans.