

Service on Your Schedule

Secretary of State Expands Online Offerings

By Todd Rokita

The days of a 9-to-5, Monday through Friday workweek are long gone for many Indiana businesses. Employees and managers often work late into the evening and return to the office on weekends.

Some Hoosiers do not even see daylight except through a window or when they run out to grab a sandwich for a quick lunch. There is nothing more frustrating than being at work, needing to get something done outside of normal business hours and then finding the rest of the world is not on your schedule.

Since taking office in 2003, I have made numerous changes so that many of the services provided by the Secretary of State's office are available on your schedule. You can access them via the Internet – 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Forms and services are just a click away when you log on to www.sos.IN.gov.

Simplified process

It once was a hassle for businesses to fill out their business entity reports, sign them and then file them with my

because the fee for electronic filing is lower than for paper filing. A certificate of existence or "good standing" can be printed from the web site within minutes after filing an entity report by computer. This saves a great deal of time for business leaders on the go.

This option is growing increasingly popular. About 52% of business entity report filings now take place via the Internet. That is up from 32% in June of 2004, and usage is growing every month as word of the Internet option spreads.

State savings

Online business entity report filing is also saving the state time and money. Before the Internet filing was an option, my office mailed up to 12,000 business entity reports each month. The time and costs involved have been greatly reduced since Internet filing became an option. Now, businesses receive postcards



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This is a system that includes information for the public about liens against an individual's or company's assets. Previously, customers could search the UCC database only by using the debtor name or filing number. Now, customers can search by many different criteria, including secured party, city, ZIP code and filing date. The change will reduce the time

customers spend online looking for information.

What happens if you need a notary, but do not know of one or your usual notary is not available? Hoosiers can now search the notary public database by ZIP code. There are more than 100,000 active notaries in Indiana. Online notary searches can be performed by visiting www.in.gov/serv/sos_notary. You can also search by notary name, county or commission number.

There is a great deal of other information available on my web site. For example, you can find information about trademarks and get the forms to apply for or renew trademarks.

I plan to continue expanding the services available on the Secretary of State's office web site over the next two years. I welcome the ideas of businesspeople across the state. If you use one of the online services, please take a moment to fill out the online survey and let us know what you liked and what could be improved. Your input will help us improve the web site so that the state is truly doing business on your schedule.

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office in Indianapolis. Business entity reports provide current information about a business and must be filed every year for non-profit businesses and every two years for for-profit businesses. It took as long as three working days to have the report processed and filed. Only then could a certificate of existence (or "good standing") be printed from the web site.

Indiana businesses can now file their business entity reports electronically at any time. This system is more cost effective and efficient for the customer than filing on paper either in person or through the mail. Businesses actually save money

reminding them it is time to file.

This electronic database and filing system is just one component of a larger modernization project that involves scanning millions of documents for eventual online use. Scanning should begin early in 2005 and will vastly increase the information available about corporations and other business entities via the Secretary of State's web site.

Additional services

Another online service offers an easier way to search the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) lien database.

INFORMATION LINK

Author: Indiana Secretary of State
Todd Rokita can be contacted at
(317) 232-6536 or
e-mail: aa@sos.in.gov