



THE BLUE PAGES

TENNESSEE SECRETARY OF STATE

Tre Hargett

Our mission is to exceed the expectations of our customers, the taxpayers, by operating at the highest levels of accuracy, cost-effectiveness, and accountability in a customer-centered environment.

From the Desk of the Secretary

As we enter the month of June, for the first time in several years the Tennessee General Assembly has already completed its work. That’s a credit to our legislators and their leadership who worked hard to make government work well, saving taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars in the process.

This year’s legislative session was a busy time for my staff and me, since there were a number of bills we took a special interest in tracking. I’m pleased to say that most of the legislation we were supporting this year was approved by the General Assembly.

Protecting the Generous Intent of Tennesseans

For example, legislators approved a bill that increases the financial reporting requirements for organizations involved in disaster relief fundraising. As we learned following the floods that hit Tennessee in May of last year, new organizations sometimes spring up and existing organizations shift their focus in response

to disasters. Tennesseans are eager to give money to help people in need, but it’s important that charitable organizations have a great deal of transparency about how much money is being raised and how it’s being spent.

Protecting Student Athletes, Schools and Fans

Also, legislators strengthened the state’s laws governing sports agents. Since there’s an article about these reforms elsewhere in this issue of *The Blue Pages*, I won’t go into a lot of detail about the changes here. However, the legislation that was approved will provide greater protection for student athletes, schools and, by extension, even their fans.

Protecting the Integrity of our Elections

There were several pieces of elections-related legislation that were very important. The General Assembly passed a requirement for voters to produce photo identification at the polls. This act is a necessary

INSIDE

Secretary Hargett Praises New Law Regulating Sports Agents.	page 2
New Law Will Bring More Transparency to Disaster Relief Fundraising.	page 3
Genealogy Workshop at the State Library and Archives	page 4
Find Genealogy Through the Tennessee Electronic Library	page 5
Obion County Teens Win in National Library Video Challenge	page 5
Filing Reminders Sent to Businesses.	page 6
Rule Making Hearings and Lists of Rules	page 7

safeguard against voter fraud. Most people in our state have photo IDs, which are needed to cash checks, board airplanes or perform numerous other everyday tasks. The law makes provisions for people who don't have photo IDs, for various reasons. None of us wants to have our votes cancelled out by someone who has illegally impersonated another voter – and we know this law will help prevent that from happening.

Other changes to our elections laws will make it easier for military personnel to vote by mail when

they are stationed overseas, for minor political parties to be recognized on the ballot and for our Coordinator of Elections to investigate suspected violations of state elections laws.

It's been a very busy year, but our work is just beginning. My staff and I will work hard to make sure these new laws are properly implemented. Once again, I want to thank you for the privilege to serve as Secretary of State and I welcome any comments or suggestions that you have.



SECRETARY HARGETT PRAISES NEW LAW REGULATING SPORTS AGENTS

Secretary Hargett applauded members of the Tennessee General Assembly for approving legislation that is aimed at cracking down on unscrupulous sports agents.

“It isn't widely known, but the State of Tennessee does play a role in regulating the activities of sports agents who operate in our state,” Secretary Hargett said. “This legislation makes several important changes that should provide greater protection for student athletes, universities and their fans. I applaud Sen. Jim Tracy and Rep. Joe Carr, the legislation's primary sponsors, as well as all of the other members of the General Assembly who supported these reforms.”

“I sponsored this bill because I think it is important to expand the definition to all parties that are currently acting as an athlete agent in order to protect the student athletes and punish the wrongdoers,” Sen. Tracy said. “This legislation reforms the Uniform Athlete Agent Act of 2001 by expanding the definition of an ‘athlete agent’ and clearly defining the Secretary of State's role in investigating potential illegal activity by sports agents.”

“It is important that we take some reasonable steps to increase the regulation of sports agents' activities,” Rep. Carr said. “While college athletics are governed by rules about student athletes interacting with agents, the agents themselves operate outside the reach of college athletics' governing bodies. As a result, student athletes who deal with agents and the colleges that the athletes represent can face sanctions, but the agents haven't. Under the new law, that will change.”

The legislation, known as the Athlete Agent Reform Act of 2011, was approved by both the House and Senate without a dissenting vote.

The act broadens the definition of a sports agent so agents can no longer use unlicensed intermediaries to communicate with athletes. The expanded definition includes athletes' parents and guardians - if they seek payments or other compensation not allowed under National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules, regulations and bylaws.

“This is pretty basic. If someone is functioning as an agent, he or she should register as an agent and follow all the requirements registered agents must follow,” Secretary Hargett said. “It makes

sense for us to be able to monitor the conduct of those who are acting as agents in Tennessee.”

Agents will also be required to notify colleges and universities in writing at least 48 hours prior to contacting student athletes enrolled at those colleges.

“There have been some very sad cases in which student athletes have lost their amateur status because they have had dealings with agents,” Secretary Hargett said. “Those athletes lose their eligibility to play college sports, even if they’re not ready to turn professional. Also, colleges can face NCAA sanctions if they field teams with athletes who have lost their amateur status. Those sanctions can impose serious financial hardships on the colleges. And, of course, sports fans of those schools suffer when sanctions are imposed.

“THERE HAVE BEEN SOME VERY SAD CASES IN WHICH STUDENT ATHLETES HAVE LOST THEIR AMATEUR STATUS BECAUSE THEY HAVE HAD DEALINGS WITH AGENTS,” SECRETARY HARGETT SAID.

For all of those reasons, it is good practice to put an additional safeguard in place to protect student athletes from entering into professional contracts and creating situations where sanctions might be levied.”

As a result of the legislation, agents who attempt to persuade high school athletes to accept college scholarships must disclose if they have working relationships with those colleges.

Finally, the legislation gives the Secretary of State’s office a more clearly defined role in investigating potential illegal activity by sports agents and seeking penalties against lawbreakers.

For more information about the legislation, visit the General Assembly’s web site at <http://wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/BillInfo/Default.aspx?BillNumber=SB1671> 

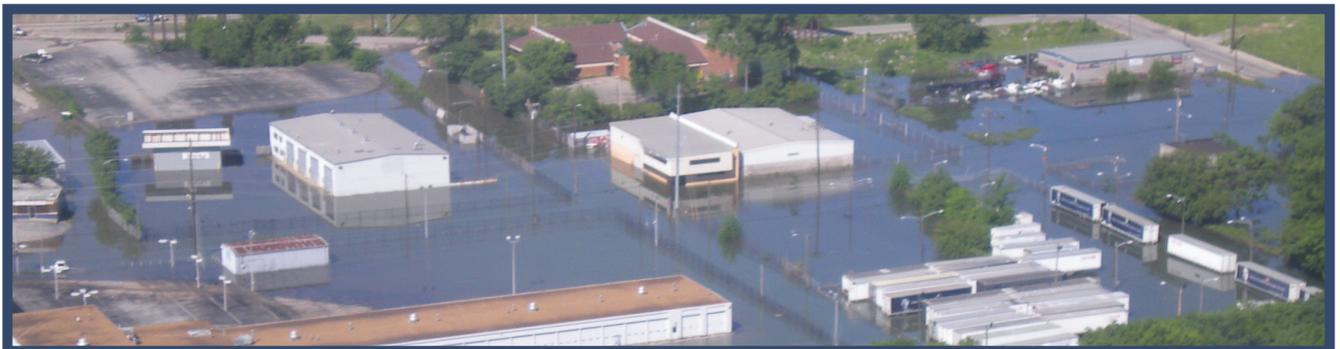
NEW LAW WILL BRING MORE TRANSPARENCY TO DISASTER RELIEF FUNDRAISING

Within the last 13 months, Middle Tennessee and West Tennessee have suffered from record flooding and East Tennessee has battled deadly tornadoes. These natural disasters have given birth to a new state industry: disaster relief.

Since Tennesseans have shown that they are still volunteers, ready to lend a hand when disaster

strikes, new charities and organizations have formed to help meet the needs of victims. Now a new law will make it easier to see how the hard-earned money donated to organizations engaged in disaster relief is spent.

The Secretary of State’s Division of Charitable Solicitations and Gaming is in charge of registering



charities that solicit contributions in the state. As part of the registration requirements, charities must submit annual financial reports. The new law increases financial reporting requirements for organizations which solicit contributions in Tennessee for disaster relief, providing greater transparency about how money is spent and hopefully deterring charities from misusing donations.

“PEOPLE OFTEN FEEL COMPELLED TO GIVE TO CHARITIES AFTER A MAJOR DISASTER AND BECAUSE THEY ARE EAGER, SOMETIMES THEY FORGET TO CHECK WITH OUR OFFICE TO SEE IF A GROUP IS PROPERLY REGISTERED,” SAID SECRETARY HARGETT.

The new law requires groups that raise \$25,000 or more annually for disaster relief to file quarterly reports with the division detailing how the money is being spent. Also, the law requires organizations that have raised disaster relief funds dating back to May 1, 2010 to file reports on how that money was spent. That includes fundraising activity that came in the wake of the flooding that hit Nashville and other parts of the state last year.

“People often feel compelled to give to charities after a major disaster and because they are eager,

sometimes they forget to check with our office to see if a group is properly registered,” said Secretary Hargett. “This new law is a great way to increase transparency with charities, monitoring their financial expenditures each quarter and making that information available to potential donors.”

Reports with detailed information about how organizations spend their money are available on the Secretary of

State’s web site at: <http://tnsos.org/charitable/CharitableOrgReports.php>.

The Division of Charitable Solicitations and Gaming also has authority to investigate and assess civil penalties against organizations that are required to register but fail to do so and organizations that engage in fraudulent or misleading fundraising practices. To report suspicious activity about a charitable organization, contact one of the division’s investigators at (615) 741-2555. 🌟

GENEALOGY WORKSHOP AT THE STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

DNA testing is the newest tool in genealogy research and the topic of the Tennessee State Library and Archives’ (TSLA) next public services workshop. On June 18, genealogist J. Mark Lowe will explain DNA fundamentals in his class “Understanding the Basics of DNA Testing for Genealogical Research.”

“We are pleased to offer this new genealogy class for free to any interested Tennesseans,” said Secretary Hargett. “The staff at the Library and Archives works hard to offer interesting classes with great lecturers.”

The workshop will be offered from 2 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. in the State Library and Archives

building, which is located at 403 Seventh Avenue North in downtown Nashville. Contact TSLA to reserve a spot by calling (615) 741-2764 or e-mailing workshop.tsla@tn.gov. 🌟



J. MARK LOWE
GENEALOGIST

FIND GENEALOGY THROUGH THE TENNESSEE ELECTRONIC LIBRARY

Genealogy is one of the most popular hobbies in America today - and the Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL) is the place to get started with research. Using TEL, Tennesseans can discover their family histories with HeritageQuest, an easy-to-search collection of genealogical and historical sources that date back to the 1700s. Search by name, year or location to find family information.

“Genealogy is a very personal way to study history,” Secretary Hargett said. “It can lead to many exciting discoveries. It’s also a powerful history lesson for today’s children to see the changes that have occurred in America over the last 200 years.”

HeritageQuest includes Census records going back to 1790, more than 28,000 digitized genealogy and local history books and Revolutionary War records. It also provides access to the Freedman’s Bank Records, an invaluable collection that gives clues to tracing African American ancestors prior to

and immediately after the Civil War. To get started with HeritageQuest, look for the “Genealogy” button at www.tntel.info. 



OBION COUNTY TEENS WIN IN NATIONAL LIBRARY VIDEO CHALLENGE

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 13 percent of Tennesseans lack basic literacy skills, but a group of teens from Obion County is hoping to address that problem by encouraging more of their peers to spend time at the library.

The Obion County Public Library Teen Advisory Group was recently named the Tennessee winner of the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) “You Are Here” Teen Video Challenge.

Contestants were asked to submit videos that help promote reading and summer reading programs at libraries. Teen groups representing libraries in 20 states participated in the first year of competition.

The Tennessee State Library and Archives, which is part of the Secretary of State’s office, helped promote the contest in Tennessee.

Secretary Hargett presented certificates and a prize check to the students at the Obion County Library in Union City last month.

While the CSLP offered monetary awards of \$250 to the winning teens and \$100 to the libraries they represented in each state, the teens at Obion County Public Library chose to spend all \$350 at their library.

“They are thrilled to win and they plan to use some of their winnings to update the look of the teen department with pillows, rugs, lamps and bean bag chairs,” said Jenny Virgin, Children’s Department Coordinator at the Obion County Public Library. “They will use the rest of the money to start their own Teen Advisory Group account, which they plan to add to through fundraisers and

use for young adult books and other library needs. I could not be more proud of them.”

Secretary Hargett expressed similar sentiments.

“The best way to improve literacy is to read regularly and there is no better place to do that than at your local library,” Secretary Hargett added. “Obion County Public Library and other libraries throughout the state offer free resources to keep Tennesseans of all ages well-supplied with summer reading material.”



Winning videos are available for public libraries across the nation to use in promoting their summer programs. The videos can be seen [here](#). 

FILING REMINDERS SENT TO BUSINESSES

The Secretary of State’s Division of Business Services has mailed approximately 36,000 Notices of Determination to businesses with fiscal years that end Dec. 31 and have not filed annual reports that were due April 1.

Businesses that receive Notices of Determination have until Aug. 6 to file annual reports with Business Services Division or their registration with the Secretary of State will be administratively dissolved. In those cases, the businesses will receive Notices of Administrative Dissolution and will no longer be registered as active and in good standing with the state.

For questions or assistance regarding the notices,

contact the Division of Business Services at (615) 741-2286 or via email at Business.Services@tn.gov. 





HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Department of State's offices, including the Tennessee State Library and Archives, will be closed on Monday, July 4 in honor of Independence Day. This closure is consistent with the practices of other state and federal offices. If you need to conduct business with the department, please plan accordingly.

RULE MAKING HEARINGS AND LISTS OF RULES

Rule making hearings are open to the public. The web link below will provide information about the location and times of the hearings. Information about the rules going into effect includes changes or additions to rules.

To view the rule-making meeting notices online, go to: <http://tnsos.org/rules/RulemakingHearings.php?>

To view the rules scheduled to go into effect, go to: <http://tnsos.org/rules/PendingRules.php?>

If you have suggestions on how the online posting of the state's rules could be more "user-friendly," please contact Richard Arnold at 615-741-2650 or email him at: Richard.Arnold@tn.gov. 🇺🇸

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