



THE BLUE PAGES

TENNESSEE SECRETARY OF STATE

Tre Hargett

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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.

WHAT THE TENNESSEE DIVISION OF ELECTIONS REALLY DOES

From the Secretary's Desk

As I travel the state, I'm frequently asked about the work done by our Division of Elections. From some of the questions I receive, I can tell some Tennesseans have misconceptions about the role state government plays in the electoral process.

It seems as if many people believe the state Division of Elections is a huge operation, with satellite offices and personnel in every one of Tennessee's 95 counties, with our staff members looking over the shoulders of county election officials and assessing what they are doing on a "real time" basis. On election days, we're often treated as a "one-stop" source for information about

what's going on at 2,000-plus polling places across the state.

That's not the way elections in Tennessee are run, however. We have a decentralized system in which county election offices are largely responsible for overseeing the elections within their jurisdictions. These county offices are run by five-member election commissions, who hire full-time administrators to manage the operations of those offices. Administrators hire their own staff members and on election days, the election commissions hire poll officials to operate their voting precincts.

As a group, these thousands of poll officials are extremely dedicated and serve because they believe so strongly in the electoral process. They do their

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jobs for little recognition or pay. Unfortunately, like sports referees, people only tend to notice them when they make mistakes. When they do make mistakes, it's the responsibility of county election officials to make sure those mistakes are corrected.

The state Division of Elections does play a role in providing training about election laws and offering administrative and technical support to the county election offices. State training is done primarily with the county election administrators, who then have the responsibility for making sure their workers - full-time, part-time and poll officials - do what they are supposed to be doing. Since the state Division of Elections has a staff of only eight full-time employees and two part-time employees, it isn't possible for our personnel to be everywhere at once, particularly on election days. We have to rely on county election officials to let us know what is happening within their jurisdictions and follow whatever advice we might offer. We also have a toll-free number for voters to call for questions, comments and complaints.

I am proud of the work our Division of Elections does. Outnumbered more than 100-to-1 by county election officials, our staff does an incredible job of responding to the counties' questions and meeting their needs. On election nights, our staff collects and posts results at an impressive rate of speed. All the good work that the Division of Elections does is a credit to Tennessee Coordinator of Elections Mark Goins, who typifies the often-expressed ideal of "doing more with less."

I hope this column has provided a better understanding of the responsibilities of the state and the counties in elections. It's definitely a collaborative effort – and we all must do our part to ensure elections in Tennessee are fair and properly run.

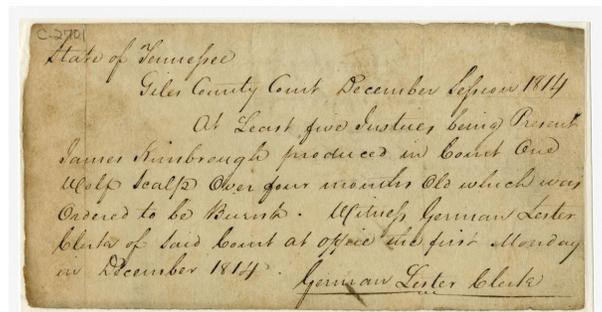
As always, I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Secretary of State. If you have questions or comments, please feel free to contact my office.



HIDDEN TREASURES AT THE STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

The Tennessee State Library and Archives contains thousands of interesting historical records. Each month, Blue Pages will be highlighting an item uncovered by our archivists. This month's item comes from the State Treasurer's records. It's the monetary reward given to those who could produce a wolf's scalp in the county court. As a frontier region in the early republic, Tennessee had to deal with the problem of predators such as wolves that wreaked havoc on foraging livestock. Some hunters became quite skilled in dispatching wolves and managed to earn sizeable amounts

of money for their efforts. This wolf hunter in Giles County received three dollars in cash for bringing in the scalp of a wolf that was at least four months old—the age at which wolf pups are able to hunt for prey. 🐾



(Record Group 23—Treasurer's Records,
1796-1891—Box 4, Folder 21)

<http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla/tslatreasures/tslatreasures1.jpg>

BUSINESS SERVICES AIDS IN TEACHER SHARING GIFTS OVERSEAS

When Patti Griscom graduated from college, she decided not to stick close to home. Instead, the former Chattanooga resident applied for and accepted a job teaching English at the Michuhol Foreign Language High School in Incheon, South Korea.

Ms. Griscom is able to teach overseas thanks in part to apostilles and authentications issued by the Secretary of State's office. An apostille or an authentication certifies the authenticity of the signature, seal and position of the official who has executed, issued or certified a copy of a public document. An apostille or an authentication enables a public document issued in one country to be recognized as valid in another country.

In Ms. Griscom's case, she needed the documentation for her teaching credentials, which included undergraduate and master's degrees from the University of Tennessee.

"Teaching abroad has been one of the most meaningful experiences for my personal growth and career," she said of her five-year stint abroad. "I have learned great practical experience in my field during my time in Korea."

On a typical day, Ms. Griscom teaches English essay writing, listening skills, and conversation and debate skills. She also runs a weekly English book reading club.

"I usually wake up around 5:30 a.m., get ready and commute for an hour to school," Ms.



SOUTH KOREA

Griscom said. "I might teach a conversation and writing class with our juniors, work one-on-one or in small groups with some seniors who have chosen to apply to college through English, teach a listening class to our freshmen, and hold a book club meeting during lunch with a select group of students."

"I enjoy hearing stories like Ms. Griscom's, where Tennesseans are sharing their gifts of teaching young people not only here in Tennessee but also overseas," Secretary Hargett said. "I have no doubt Ms. Griscom will continue to do great things in South Korea and am proud our office played role in helping her get her education qualifications approved there." 🌐

MEET SOPHIE AND SHEPHERD HOLLIS

As teachers, Nashville residents Steve and Katie Jo Hollis had a great love for children and wanted to have some of their own. However, after running into complications with conceiving children and adopting domestically, they looked to China, where they received not one but two wonderful gifts.

"We had been trying to adopt domestically for a year and waiting on referrals and hoping birth mothers didn't change their mind – I couldn't go through it anymore," Katie Jo said. "We learned that adopting from and within the United States is an extremely difficult and financially risky

process. And ultimately, it wasn't God's plan. China was."

In 2004, the Hollises started paperwork and fundraising for their first international adoption. It took a year to get everything ready to adopt - from paperwork to home studies - then another year to raise the \$25,000 they needed. But the work was worth it and by May of 2006, they had a beautiful little girl named Sophie.



HOLLIS FAMILY AFTER SHEPHERD FIRST ARRIVED IN THE UNITED STATES.

"It was a rainy, hot day and Sophie had a yellow outfit with five layers on," Katie Jo recalls of their first meeting. "She was very stoic, very hard."

Sophie had a few behavioral issues at first, which the Hollises attribute to the changes the adoption brought to her life.

"She was 10 months old when we got her and she seemed and acted like a 3- or 4-month-old," Katie Jo said. "She was bent over and slumped, she wasn't able to sit up all the way and was falling over and sucking on a pacifier. She was like a big newborn. On day four with us, she was crying and I put a pacifier in her mouth and she took it out and gave it back to me and looked around as if to say, 'And I'm done here. Y'all will do. I'm good.' And suddenly she seemed like a 10-month-old."

The transition to parenthood wasn't easy for Steve and Katie Jo, either.

"Sophie was a baby when we got her and we fondly call her time with us 'parenting boot camp' because we were in it and we didn't know what we were doing and we were handed a baby and hoped and prayed we could figure it out," Katie Jo said. "It was very hard on us and our marriage, but by the grace of God we're stronger because of it."

And in 2009, they started the paperwork to adopt Sophie's brother, Shepherd.

"We found him instead of being referred to him because Shepherd was [a] special needs [child]," Katie Jo said. "When I first saw a picture of him, he was an adorable, tiny baby. But I quickly saw the date on the picture was old and asked for an updated picture. When I saw the new picture, I started to weep. He was not a baby - he was a little boy who knew exactly what was going on - and it broke my heart for him."

The Hollises traveled to China again in 2010 to get Shepherd.

"It was August 9, 2010 and when they walked him in to where we were, he was so very sad and so scared," Katie Jo said. "He was three years



BANNER FOR THE HOLLIS FAMILY PROVIDED BY FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

old and very aware of what was going on. When we showed him his picture book that we had sent him, we could tell he knew who we were. We could tell that he had been prepared for us."

Shepherd's special need is that he was born without a hand, but it doesn't slow him down.

“When someone asks him what it is like to have a special need, he reacts like, ‘I mean, what are you talking about? I don’t have a special need,’” Katie Jo said. “He has no idea even now because it’s just what life has been for him. There might be some emotional pain going forward as he gets older, but right now, he is an utterly content child.”

Both children returned to large crowds at the airport, which Steve and Katie Jo remember as very special times, even today.

“My kids look back at those pictures and it makes them so happy to see how many people were waiting for them each time and wanting them to be here. That was very important for them,” Katie Jo said. “It’s very important for Sophie that Shepherd has a similar story to hers and it has meant that they bond in a very special way. They are best friends and adore one another.

“We’ve come out of this process knowing that adoption is huge on your marriage and we’ve learned that this family can do hard and can roll with the punches. If I’m honest, my children’s beginnings grieve me – they didn’t have a sweet start to life – but I am reminded that neither did Jesus and I pray their lives will be filled with the revelation of grace and salvation.”

International adoptions in Tennessee require an apostille or authentication by the Tennessee Secretary of State’s office. For more information on document authentication, call (615) 741-0536 or go to http://www.tn.gov/sos/bus_svc/apostilles.htm.

“Parenting can be a difficult task, no matter if a child is biological or adopted,” Secretary Hargett said. “I applaud Tennesseans who genuinely love children and can grow loving families despite the challenges of doing so in today’s society. I am also proud that my office plays a role in assisting families with the international adoption process.” 🌟



SOPHIE AND SHEPHERD ENJOYING THE SNOW.

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS

Some people may have the impression that the only thing state employees do is push paper around. This story is an example of how state employees positively impact Tennessean’s lives and the lives of children worldwide. International adoptions require an apostille or authentication, depending on the nation of origin, by the secretary of state in the state where the documents were signed. This certification of the signatures’ validity on the documents is much like the notary publics would be on the local level. Apostilles/authentications are processed in the Secretary of State Division of Business Services. About 20,000 apostilles and authentications were processed last year.

Documents may be submitted by mail or in person.

For more information, contact: Division of Business Services, 312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, Snodgrass Tower, 6th Floor, Nashville, TN 37243, 615.741.0536, business.services@tn.gov, or visit http://www.tn.gov/sos/bus_svc/apostilles.htm

TENNESSEE BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT PROMOTES COMMERCIAL EQUIPMENT COMPANIES

Our country's economy relies on a stable system of interstate commerce and Tennessee is home to several companies offering the equipment used to move, build and maintain America. In recognition of these Volunteer State organizations, September's Tennessee Business Spotlight theme is "Commercial Equipment Month."

Tennessee Business Spotlight is a feature on the Secretary of State's web site that showcases some of the state's businesses that create jobs, produce quality products and give back to their local communities. People visiting the Tennessee Business Spotlight web page can learn about the selected companies' goods and services, operations, employment figures, photos and links to web and social media sites that provide more information.

The companies showcased in September are:

- All-Access Coach Leasing, LLC in Gallatin
- Astec, Inc. in Chattanooga
- Kiefer Manufacturing in Sneedville
- Miller Industries Towing Equipment, Inc. in Ooltewah
- Stowers Machinery Corporation in Knoxville
- Tri-State Truck Center, Inc. in Memphis

"We are fortunate to have Tennessee companies producing or selling such a variety of quality commercial equipment," Secretary Hargett said. "From the semi-trucks that move goods to heavy equipment used to build highways, these machines not only create jobs in our state, but also jobs and opportunities elsewhere across the country. These companies possess footprints extending far beyond the state of Tennessee."



To visit Tennessee Business Spotlight, go to www.spotlight.tnsos.net.

To nominate a company to be recognized in Tennessee Business Spotlight, please visit the web page and click the "Submit a Business" link or call (615) 532-5605. 🇺🇸



ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY SAVE TIME AND MONEY FOR NEW HIRE PROCESS

When Internet search engine Google recently upgraded its services, one of the changes led to cost savings within the Secretary of State's office.

Late last year Google came out with Google+ Hangouts, which allows up to nine people to participate in video chats from any location with Internet access.

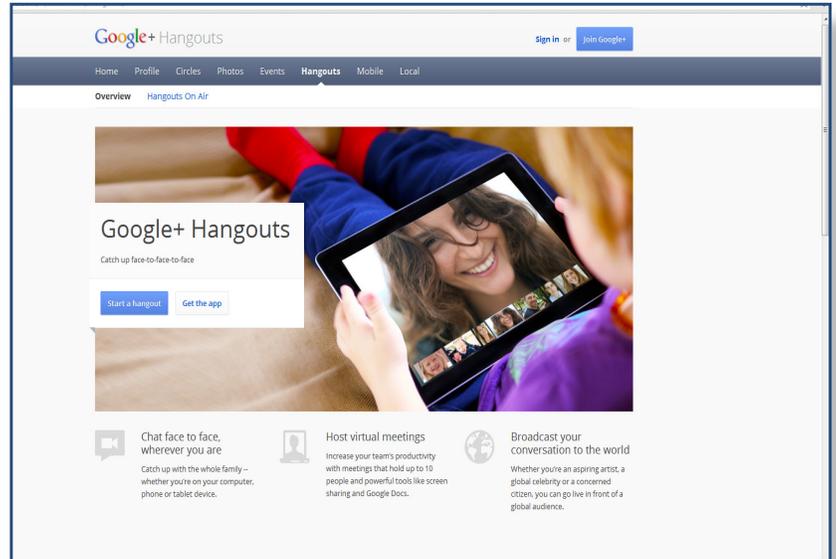
The Secretary of State's human resources staff has put this technology to good use for employee orientation sessions with new hires working outside Nashville. The Tennessee State Library and Archives, which is part of the Secretary of State's office, includes regional libraries across the state. By using Google+ Hangouts for employee orientations, the human resources and regional library staff members save time and travel expenses.

"The staff in my office continues to come up with new cost-saving ideas that benefit Tennessee taxpayers," Secretary Hargett said. "By keeping up with technology trends, they have found a new way to provide low-cost training for our new employees working outside the Nashville area."

"We have been using Google+ Hangouts since August 1 of this year," added Maggie Bahou, the office's director of human resources and organizational development. "We will use it for numerous activities, but the most useful thus far has been the new hire orientation for our regional libraries.

"During orientation, we go through the full orientation manual covering policies, benefits,

payroll, and all other necessities on a new hire's start date, just as we would if they were here in our office. Orientation takes one to two hours and we conduct it one-on-one for each new hire so that we can customize to each new hire's situation."



GOOGLE+ HANGOUTS SCREEN SHOT.

Though some documents need to be signed and returned to human resources in original form, the HR staff is looking at ways to make sharing documents easier through Google+ as well.

"The video chat aspect has been very helpful because we can see the new hire," Bahou said. "We can show which form is being discussed, where to sign or check a box or provide a date. Having forms filled out properly streamlines paperwork. Eventually, we will move to sharing documents through Google+, making it even easier to complete this process."

Google+ Hangouts is free to use. The only materials needed are a laptop/computer set up with camera and microphone, and a free Google+ account. 🌐

RULEMAKING HEARINGS AND LISTS OF RULES

Rulemaking 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 rulemaking 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 Cody York at 615-741-2650 or email him at: Cody.York@tn.gov. 

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