



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 Secretary's Desk

PHOTO ID LAW WORKED, AGAIN

Last week's elections had a lot of people talking. About the winners and losers. About the new

Twitter service we provided that allowed us to tweet election returns as soon as we received them from the counties. About the races that lie ahead on the November ballot. About what the election means for the future of our state. But there was one thing people weren't talking that much about: Our new law that requires voters to show photo identification at the polls.

That's because, just like the March presidential primary, implementation of the law went smoothly. A small number of critics of the law have suggested that requiring photo IDs would discourage many people from voting. There's no evidence that happened. In fact, statewide turnout was higher than it has been in 16 years for comparable elections.

All but a fraction of a percentage of voters showed up at the polls Thursday with proper identification – and those without proper identification were allowed to cast provisional ballots and return to their local election offices with proper IDs within two business days after the election.

Polls have consistently shown broad public support for photo ID laws – in Tennessee and elsewhere across the country. Most people understand that a photo ID requirement helps prevent ineligible voters from casting ballots in the name of eligible voters.

The law's critics contend there isn't very much of that type of voter fraud happening because there have been few documented cases. This is a Catch-22, of course. Before we had a photo ID requirement, how could anyone know how frequently eligible voters have been impersonated in the past?

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But let's suppose for a second that the critics are right and there are only a few cases of voter impersonation in each election. Last week, unofficial returns indicated that a primary for state House District 2 was decided by 11 votes. The primary in state House District 71 was decided by five votes. A sales tax referendum in the city of Millington was decided by three votes. And a school board race in Bradley County was decided by a single vote.

Is a little bit of fraud OK, even if it could affect the outcome of a close election? Absolutely not! This office is committed to taking all reasonable

steps to ensure our elections in Tennessee are fair. And enforcing the photo ID law is one of those steps.

I am very pleased with the work our Division of Elections, county election officials and other groups have done over the last year to help voters understand the photo ID law. As last week's election demonstrated, their efforts are paying dividends.

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



TENNESSEE BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT PROMOTES MILITARY PRODUCTS

Quality equipment and tools are an absolute necessity for military personnel on active duty defending our freedom. In recognition of some Tennessee companies manufacturing essential gear for our nation's armed services, this month's Tennessee Business Spotlight theme is "Military 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 highlighted in August are:

- *Nightline Inc. in Mountain City*
- *Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc. in Murfreesboro*
- *Powell Military Supply, Inc. in Sweetwater*
- *American Ordnance LLC in Milan*
- *Military Systems Group, Inc. in Nashville*
- *Friedman's Army Navy Store in Nashville*

"This industry not only employs Tennesseans, but also serves our national security interests," Secretary Hargett said. "Several of these companies provide the men and women of our armed forces with the equipment necessary to keep our country safe day after day. That is a job worthy of recognition."



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. 

MEET HOPE GARNER



HOPE GARNER

When Jason and Heidi Garner of Brentwood had their fourth child, adoption was not even a thought on their minds. However, that changed when Heidi heard the audible voice of God, leading her family to adopt a child from Africa.

Before adopting their daughter Hope from Ethiopia, the Garners had a wonderful individual step into their lives.

“There was a surgeon from Indianapolis who went to Ethiopia and he got to meet our little girl and spend a couple of days with her and took video of her,” Heidi said. “He sent all the video and pictures to us. It was an amazing thing how it all worked out.”

And in May of 2009, Heidi and Jason were on their way to Ethiopia to see their 19-month-old girl.

“Right before we met her, we were really nervous and anxious,” Heidi said. “But when we saw her for the first time, I remember thinking how amazingly cute she was – she was just the cutest thing ever.”

While waiting for the final paperwork to be processed, the Garners stayed at a guest house in Ethiopia.

“We brought her to the guest house where we were staying and it was just very surreal,” Heidi said. “We spent a lot of time trying to figure out what she liked to eat and how to get her to sleep. It was amazing and crazy at the same time.”

The change was very difficult for Hope at first.

“She was hysterical when we first got to the guest house,” Heidi said. “We had an interpreter who talked to Hope in Amharic, which is her native language, and that seemed to calm her down, but it was very sad at first for everyone because she was so upset.”

The Garners spent the next couple of days getting to know their new child.

“She didn’t know how to do anything – we’d try to play with her and she didn’t know how to play,” Heidi said. “We realized that she didn’t know how to do a lot of things for herself. It was a good experience for us to learn how to teach her those things.”

The Garners arrived back in the United States to a large gathering at the airport to welcome home the newest member of the family. Adjusting to life in the United States was not easy for Hope. She was shy around her siblings, then began exhibiting anger toward everyone.

“Adjustment was very hard. She was angry – there was major hair pulling and biting. I think in her heart she knew she had been abandoned and that was very traumatic and this was her way of dealing with it,” Heidi said. “She had never sat at a table for a meal, so we would leave food out and she would walk by and eat it. All of it was a big change for her and a hard transition for all of us. She had to learn to trust us and we had to learn how to show her this was her family.”

Now, she is a completely different girl.

“Now, to God be the glory, she’s an awesome and happy girl,” Heidi said. “She has her Barbie doll and is the best of friends with her siblings. The girls even pushed their beds together so it’s like they’re all sleeping in one bed. You’d never know the drama that preceded that.”

The Garners could not have done this adoption without a lot of support and some great resources.

“Our adoption was very hard at times and one of the things that has been great for us is there are some amazing speakers and books that really helped us – ranging from topics of disciplining a child from a hard place to learning how to love her well. We’re very thankful for all the resources shown to us through the transition.”

As for the surgeon who sent videos and pictures to the Garner family, he still stays in touch.

“He comes and sees Hope every year from Indianapolis,” Heidi said. “It’s amazing. He fell completely in love with her while he was over there and is very intentional about staying in contact with us and with her.”

The Garners have submitted paperwork for the adoption of a second child from Ethiopia. They are now in the waiting period, but are looking forward to welcoming home the eighth member of their family soon.

International adoptions in Tennessee require an apostille or authentication by the Tennessee



THE GARNER CHILDREN: JACKSON (12), LINDSEY (9), MAX (11), HANNAH (6), HOPE (4)

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.

“This is a service our office is proud to offer,” Secretary Hargett said. “Adopting a child takes a lot of time and effort even before the child joins the family - let alone after - and I commend the families that choose to do so.” 🇺🇸

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

STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES REPORTS

USE OF E-BOOKS RISING DRAMATICALLY

Usage of the Regional E-Book and Audio Download System (READS) surged by 77 percent this year, according to Tennessee State Library and Archives officials, reflecting impressive growth in the popularity of electronic books available through the program.

READS is a free program that offers thousands of digital e-books and audio books to patrons of public libraries that belong to the Tennessee Regional Library System with the simple click of a mouse. Digital titles can be downloaded to a personal computer or a variety of portable devices.

“This program offers patrons young and old an opportunity to enjoy the experience of reading their own way, from their own homes, at any time,” Secretary Hargett said. “This program is beneficial to not only patrons, but also to libraries seeking to better serve their communities by offering creative ways to share their resources outside the library walls. I am proud of the success of this great service.”

The program began in 2005, primarily with audio books. As e-readers and smartphones have become cheaper and easier to use, the popularity of e-books has grown rapidly. READS was originally limited to MP3 players and a short list of e-readers, but now titles are available to download to almost any portable device.

“Tennesseans’ use of e-books through the Regional Library System is increasing at an extremely rapid rate,” State Librarian and Archivist Chuck Sherrill said. “At the same time, use of the physical library continues to grow. Libraries are

challenged by having to budget for both traditional services - books on paper - and digital formats.”

The total number of books downloaded across the state in the 2011-2012 fiscal year was 701,506 - a 77 percent increase over the previous fiscal year. In June 2012, 65 percent of the books downloaded were e-books and 35 percent were audio books.

“In a survey conducted in October 2011, we found that 68 percent of our users are over 40 years old, with almost 22 percent over the age of 60,” READS Administrator Marion Bryant said. “Thirty



three percent of our users have a household income of \$50,000 or less. What I find most remarkable about that is that many digital readers have not been library users in the past. Libraries are attracting a new group of readers with this format.”

What you need to participate in the READS program:

- A valid library card from a participating library.
- Access to the Internet.

- Free software for the device on which you wish to use your digital book. The software is available from the digital book web site: <http://reads.lib.overdrive.com/>.

For more information on the READS program, please visit www.tn.gov/tsla/lps/READS/reads.htm or contact Marion Bryant at 931-388-9282. 

RULE-MAKING HEARINGS AND LISTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE 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 Cody York at 615-741-2650 or email him at: Cody.Ryan.York@tn.gov 

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