



# STATE OF NEBRASKA

## NEWS FROM SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN GALE

December 2003

Dear Friends:

Since our first Newsletter in July, I want to report on new projects and several accomplishments that we felt were worth bringing to your attention. Since our office does not send Holiday cards, this Newsletter also will serve as our Holiday greetings!

Since our last report, we have continued to make changes to our website, and would appreciate any comments you might have. Hopefully, it tells you what you need to know about our office, our staff, and our programs. If you have suggestions, let us know. Check out our website and see if you find it helpful: [www.sos.state.ne.us](http://www.sos.state.ne.us).

We hope to complete our office reorganization by the end of the year or shortly after. I am excited about our prospects for 2004! Here are some of our recent highlights:

1. The Elections Division has been doing an outstanding job moving forward to meet the federal mandates under the Help America Vote Act of 2002 as passed by Congress. You will see a statewide provisional voting system in 2004 designed by my office. We expect to see public bidding on the statewide voter registration system by early 2004, and possibly public bidding on the electronic voting equipment (one per voting precinct) by the end of 2004. These will help bring about some terrific efficiencies in assuring citizens of their right to vote without registration glitches and that their vote will be counted accurately.
2. The Business Services Division has been reviewing various alternatives to achieve a higher percentage of online filings. Nebraska seems to have a smaller percentage of online filings than several comparable states, and we want to change that. Online filing for a broader number of Uniform Commercial Code documents will require potential hardware and software changes, but we are aggressively looking into the possibilities. We have been a leader in this field, and would like to maintain that leadership for the benefit of our lenders and secured parties.
3. The Address Confidentiality Program has been fully implemented by the Licensing Division with the necessary firewalls of confidentiality. Some victims of domestic abuse are already using it.
4. As Chief Protocol Officer, I was asked to speak to the Regional Conference of Committees for International Visitors (CIV) held in Lincoln this summer, along with U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel and Charles Moore IV, Director of the CIV Office for the U.S. State Department. We have greeted over 250 foreign dignitaries and leaders from around the world, educating them about Nebraska and our unicameral Legislature.

5. As Chairman of the Nebraska Quarter Design Committee, I can report that Nebraskans are catching onto the competition! After our statewide kickoff events at five cities in September, and the good publicity that we received, we have been receiving an increasing volume of design ideas from all across the state. The deadline is May 1, 2004. You may have noticed the most recent quarter release of the Arkansas quarter, as one idea for multiple images for a state.
6. In partnership with Nebraska Educational Television, we released a videocassette called "Vote in Honor of a Veteran." The video features an Army veteran, who survived the landing at Omaha Beach on D-Day, as he relates his dramatic story to students at Lincoln Northeast High School. Copies were sent to high schools, educational service units, veteran's service officers and county clerks in Nebraska just before Veterans Day. The video has been well received and already has gotten good use. We are very pleased with the video and its powerful message reminding citizens of their duty to vote.
7. As Secretary of State, I was appointed by the Legislature to the new Vote Nebraska Initiative, a task force of 18 members from diverse backgrounds. The task force is charged with looking into the issue of low voter turnout, reasons given for not voting and ways to better educate voters to exercise their right to vote. The task force has met twice and intends to meet regularly to do a useful investigation into this important subject. I was selected to serve as Chairman, and my office is providing the staff for the project.
8. The State Records Board, of which I serve as Chairman, has been involved in awarding a new contract regarding Internet access to state government records and information. The bid letting is complete and a contract has been authorized, subject to final drafting and signing. It has been a major task consuming some six months of effort to go through the preparation of bid specifications, bid letting, evaluation and contract negotiations. It has been a real learning experience, but I am convinced that public bidding for major projects is a true win-win for both the public and the eventual vendor.

Well, that is sufficient for this Newsletter! If you have any thoughts or comments, just send us a note, email or fax and we would be happy to respond.

Please have a Happy Holiday Season, keeping warm, safe, and imbued with a spirit of good cheer and good will!

With warmest regards from all our staff and management,

John A. Gale  
Secretary of State