

**STATE OF WISCONSIN**

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**Office of the Secretary of State**

**2009-2011 Biennial Report**

December 2011

Dear Citizens of Wisconsin,

As required by Wisconsin Statute 15.04 (1) (d), I am submitting to you the 2009 - 2011 Biennial Report of the Office of the Secretary of State.

This report presents an overview of the functions of the Agency, the operations and performance of the Agency during the past biennium, and projected goals of the Agency.

Reflected here are the duties performed by the Agency's dedicated, service-oriented staff, as well as the volume of work handled. The people of Wisconsin have consistently praised this Agency for its effectiveness, user friendliness, and professionalism. It is our intention to continue in this tradition as responsively and thoroughly as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doug La Follette". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Doug La Follette  
Secretary of State

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# OVERVIEW OF THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES, 2009 - 2011

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Wisconsin's Constitution requires the Secretary of State to maintain the official acts of the Legislature and Governor, and to keep the Great Seal of the State of Wisconsin and affix it to all official acts of the Governor. Since 1969, when the Legislature established that the Secretary of State would head an office, it assigned the Office a wide range of responsibilities, which have evolved over the years.

Recently many important responsibilities have been removed from the Office of the Secretary of State and placed in another agency which reports to the Governor. This has led to confusion and problems for those attempting to obtain services from the State. In most other states in the nation these core duties are housed in the Offices of the Secretary of State. These are services that are critical to Wisconsin's business, legal and real estate communities, as well as to other members of the public – both in and outside the state of Wisconsin.

For example, across the nation, the Offices of the Secretary of State are responsible for the following:

- Handling Corporation Registration and business information – 43 other states
- Registering Trademarks and Trade names – 46 other states
- Administering Uniform Commercial Code – 42 other states
- Handling Notary Public Commissions – 47 other states

If our goal is to make Wisconsin more business friendly and to have a “one-stop shopping” approach to respond to citizens and businesses that utilize these services, it is essential for Wisconsin government to do the following: consolidate all such “business functions” within the Office of the Secretary of State, including Notary Public Commission functions, Trademarks and Trade names functions, Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) administration and Corporation registration. This would bring Wisconsin in line with other states in the nation, streamline service provision and make the Office more competitive.

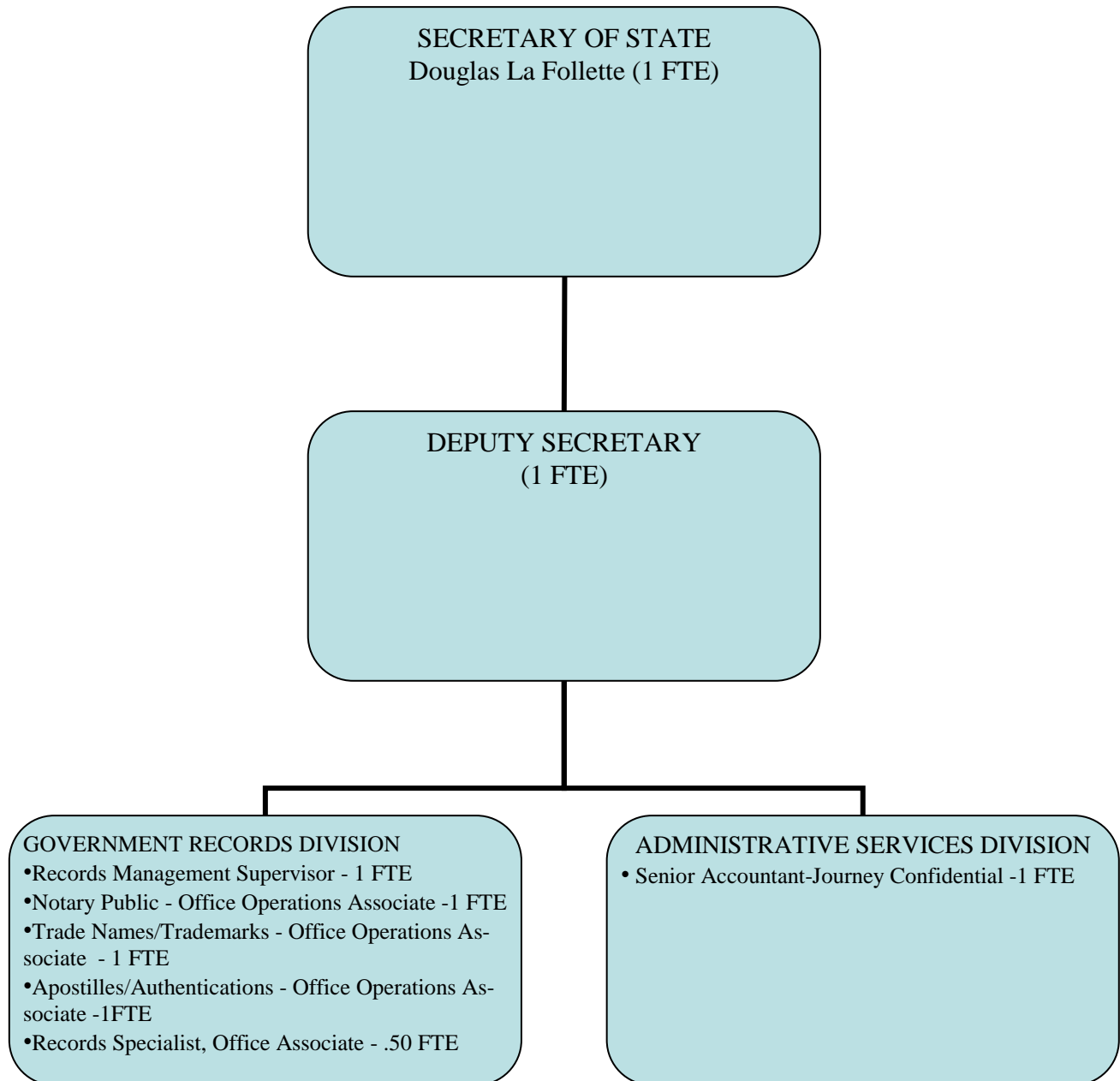
Through Fiscal Year 2011, the Office of the Secretary of State was responsible for overseeing the Government Records Division and the Administrative Services Division. Legal assistance is provided to the Office by the Attorney General's Office, with information systems support provided by the Division of Enterprise Technology within the Department of Administration.

The Government Records Division administered program responsibilities set forth in approximately 100 sections of the Wisconsin Statutes, including issuing notary public commissions; issuing notary authentications and apostilles; recording annexations and charter ordinances of municipalities; registering trade names and trademarks; publishing legislative acts; recording official acts of the Legislature and the Governor; and filing oaths of office and deeds for state lands and buildings.

The responsibilities of the Administrative Services Division included accounting for all receipts and disbursements of the Agency, managing agency printing and procurement programs, and maintenance of the office-wide inventory system. In addition to certain personnel and budget duties, this Division administered the Agency's payroll operations, the fringe benefit programs, and all other agency business services.

# OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

## FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION CHART 2009-2011



## REVIEW OF AGENCY OPERATIONS AND WORKLOAD IN THE 2009 - 2011 BIENNIUM

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The Office of the Secretary of State has been vigilant in its efforts to maintain performance and responsiveness while holding the line on expenses. This has been accomplished through ongoing commitment to supporting agency employees in fulfilling the Office's mission by working across disciplines; seeking innovative ways to improve services; keeping abreast of technological advances; and exercising appropriate leadership.

During the 2009 - 11 budget cycle the Office of the Secretary of State expanded use of its website by launching an interactive notary public training tutorial, incorporating upgrades to all of its major databases, increasing availability of on-line forms and instructions, including introducing a bilingual version, and digitalizing historic state records which are now electronically available to the public for the first time.

To continue to preserve important records, and maintain electronic public access to those records, and to maintain IT systems that meet industry standards and public expectations, on a very limited budget, will require ongoing efforts to optimize information technology systems.

The volume of notary public, trademark and authentication applications resulted in relatively steady Office revenues overall. With these revenues, the Office has been able to offset the increased cost of salaries, fringe benefits, printing, and postage - ultimately providing for additional program revenue to lapse to the general fund.

## PROJECTED GOALS AND CHANGES FOR THE 2011 - 2013 BIENNIUM

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Effectively managing workload volume in areas administered by the Office and building capacity through technology will be ongoing challenges. The Office will strive to meet these goals with current staffing and budget levels by continued cross-training of all employees and by working closely with the Division of Enterprise Technology in the Department of Administration to maximize efficiency of computer programs and systems.

In addition, the Office will make every effort to continue to provide the prompt, courteous and professional response our users have come to expect in person, on the phone, by mail and electronically. This will be accomplished by staying abreast of trends in information management and seeking unique approaches to improve service.

Currently all forms and applications available from the Office of Secretary of State are available on-line. These forms and applications will require updating and upgrading on the website to promote ongoing ease of use for customers. The Office will continue to explore and integrate new technologies as appropriate to most effectively utilize finite resources.