

The Idaho Division of Motor Vehicles uses Lexmark laser printers and Lexmark Document Producer throughout 63 branches to print vehicle registrations and renewal stickers on demand.

Idaho Division of Motor Vehicles saves money, improves security and speeds vehicle registration transactions with Lexmark laser printers

The Organization

The Idaho Division of Motor Vehicles processes registrations for all vehicular modes of transportation, including cars, trucks and trailers, motor homes, mobile homes, and motorcycles. The division also issues drivers' licenses, vehicle titles, administers road tests, and licenses dealers. In 2007, the DMV performed 1,899,237 registration transactions. In 1928, Idaho became the first state to issue license plates featuring an image – a potato.

The Challenge

In its 63 statewide branches, the Idaho DMV handled vehicle license plate registration renewals employing long-standing procedures that grew inadequate overtime. Vehicle registration certificates and several different types of registration renewal stickers, manufactured by the state corrections department's inmate population, were distributed to DMV branches in large and small spools to assure adequate supply. Decals were printed with the month and year of expiration for passenger vehicles, and the decal color changed each year. A variety of vehicle specific decals, of varying sizes, also were produced with the month and year of expiration. This resulted in considerable waste each year. Surplus and outdated inventory was destroyed. Complicating matters, like a bank teller tracking every penny, the DMV had to account for every serial-numbered sticker as they were distributed to customers, sat in inventory, or were discarded.

For each registration, the DMV clerk removed stickers from the appropriate roll and matched them with a registration card, making a note of the sticker pair's serial number. It was a slow process with the potential of inaccuracy if serial numbers were recorded incorrectly, said DMV Project Manager Linda Ford.

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–Linda Ford
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Migrating to new printers would afford the DMV an opportunity to redesign many of its forms, allowing the incorporation of modern security features. The key to making this strategy work would be choosing printers able to handle printing of retro-reflective sheeting for the renewal stickers, without jamming.

Initially, the Idaho DMV launched a proof-of-concept project with another manufacturer which was not successful. Though the vision of the DMV's new system was correct, the department needed to find a reliable partner.



Idaho sought a partner with a proven track record and one that could support the design of electronic forms, develop conduits to access and process mainframe-based data, and had devices that could properly print on weatherproof media. In addition, the DMV had a desire to free itself from routine maintenance by outsourcing support to a vendor-certified third-party provider.

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The Solution

Working with a team of Lexmark industry specialists, the Idaho DMV launched a pilot test that included developing applications to extract data, creation of a new vehicle registration form, and printing combination registration forms and renewal stickers.

Lexmark installed monochrome laser printers in each of the DMV's 63 motor vehicle branches as well as all Idaho drivers' license offices. Capable of printing at high volumes and on specialized media, each Lexmark printer was equipped with five input trays to accommodate sheet-fed registration certificates with embedded renewal stickers, letterhead, and blank stock used by the DMV every day.

To print the appropriate information on the registration certificate and renewal sticker forms in precisely the correct location, Lexmark engineers leveraged the power of the Lexmark Document Solutions Suite (LDSS) application. "Our programmers developed the mainframe interface and forms templates very quickly using LDSS," said Ford.

Using the Lexmark Document Producer module, DMV developers designed a template to print on high-security form stock developed for the DMV by RR Donnelly. The forms contain special color decals and other embedded security features that make counterfeiting all but impossible.

Renewal stickers are printed on high-security, chemical-resistant weatherproof vinyl sheeting, a media type the Lexmark printers accommodate without any modification. Once the toner is fused to the stickers, the image is permanent and does not smudge.

Renewal stickers are no longer printed in sequentially serial-numbered spools, a process that could lead to issuing the wrong sticker and which also resulted in year-end waste. They are now printed on demand for each renewal transaction. By doing so, the individual vehicle's license plate tag number is now imprinted directly on the stickers, adding a valuable new security component.

The Idaho DMV chose to lease its Lexmark printers under a five-year agreement renewable for two additional five-year terms. Certified on-site support throughout the state is provided by Decision One, a Pennsylvania-based provider of technology support services in North America.

The Results

DMV clerks no longer handle spools of pre-printed renewal stickers, instead printing them on demand. The stickers now display the vehicle license plate number, making their use with a different vehicle impossible. Registration certificates feature a modern design with crisp laser text that does not smudge or fade. The DMV no longer deals with day-to-day maintenance issues and is confident in its third-party provider.

Idaho DMV was able to roll out a proven system to all its branches on time and on budget, save money, eliminate waste, improve security, and outsource technical support.

"This project has been successful," said Ford. "By partnering with Lexmark, the entire project came in on time and on budget. The Lexmark team has been responsive to each of our requirements."

Through its engagement with Lexmark, the Idaho DMV was able to roll out a proven system to all its branches on time and on budget, save money, eliminate waste, improve security, and outsource technical support.