



NASCIO State IT Recognition Awards

Digital Government - Government to Citizen Award Nomination

State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation Seller Notify System

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Executive Summary

Each year private citizens sell tens of thousands of vehicles to each other in the State of Wisconsin. Buyers are obligated to submit title transfers to the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in order to transfer the title into their name. These title transactions are manual and require a lengthy mail-in process or a visit to the DMV. As a result, the State was forced to wait days, or weeks, for notice that a vehicle had been sold. In some cases, buyers would fail to transfer the title altogether.

When a buyer delays title transfer or fails to submit it, any citations or other illegal activities related to the vehicle lead the justice system and law enforcement back to the seller, rather than the current owner, resulting in substantial costs and inconvenience for individuals and the state. To address these problems, the Wisconsin State Legislature enacted legislation on August 12, 2015, requiring sellers to notify the DMV of private vehicle sales as of January 1, 2016. Buyers are still required to title the vehicle in their name, so this new statute is an extra layer of protection for the seller in the event that a buyer fails to promptly title their new vehicle.

[Seller Notify](#) was built to make this notification a convenient online process. Seller Notify is a free, self-service system that protects private sellers from unscrupulous buyers by collecting sale information from the seller, transmitting it in real-time to the DMV, and immediately making it available to officials authorized to perform enforcement and investigation activities.

The project Statement of Work was signed in early October, 2015, and the app was operational in late December to meet the January 1, 2016 regulation.

As a result of the Seller Notify system, tens of thousands of private sales per year will be reported electronically rather than on paper, saving citizens and the DMV all the time and potential errors that would come with taking this information on paper from the sellers. Sellers are protected from unlawful activity related to the vehicle after the sale, especially if the buyer fails to properly title the vehicle. Also, by automating a feed of this information to the Department of Justice, DMV staff was freed of any time necessary to provide this information to state law enforcement.

Project Narrative: Concept

Based on existing information, the DMV estimated that more than 100,000 qualifying sale transactions occur every year. If the DMV had been required to accept these notifications on paper, it would have resulted in a significant drain on time and resources at the DMV's 90 Customer Service Centers.

Wisconsin state legislators had time and resources in mind, and included with the regulation a requirement to provide online submission. The law called for an automated self-service system to avoid costs associated with supporting users in completing paper forms, processing and entering data from those forms, and responding to law enforcement and other authorized requests for this data. The DMV also needed a way to track their Customer Service staff efforts in supporting users of the notification system.

Seller Notify addresses all these requirements and was delivered in less than four months.

When private sellers access the application, they use the same identifiers they usually use when accessing other DMV applications. This approach is familiar to end-users and has resulted in low customer support requests; only two calls have been received from users having trouble with the login screen.

Once they identify themselves, sellers are presented with a list of vehicles titled in their name according to DMV records, making transactions much faster and more accurate. This also reduces typos associated with entering complex and lengthy Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs), thereby improving data quality for the DMV's records.

Once the transaction is complete, users can choose to receive confirmation of the transaction via email, allowing the entire transaction to stay paperless.

For DMV staff, the application features an alternate entry path. Using this feature, they can submit sale notifications for any users who were not able to use the electronic system for any reason. Staff members and their work locations are then recorded to provide analysis of user adoption of the automated system. To date, more than 80 percent of sale notifications have been submitted by sellers.

Additionally, the DMV has partnered with the Department of Justice to allow authorized officials to access sale notification data in real-time through their existing system for accessing vehicle information. This approach keeps the sale notification data highly secure and ensures that it is available when and where it is needed most.

Significance

Seller Notify is built using Responsive Design. Users can submit sale notifications from anywhere, at any time, using their favorite phone, tablet or desktop computer. Analytics data shows that more than 28 percent of sessions are transacted on a phone or tablet.

Additionally, vehicle sale notification data is immediately available to authorized enforcement officials, avoiding costs and delays associated with providing data through some other mechanism to law enforcement and other authorized personnel. Most notably, this data is delivered to the authorized officials in real-time, through systems that they already use and understand. This avoids any costs associated with offering an external portal for them to access the information, and time delays associated with transferring it to them manually.

Impact

The new legislation took effect January 1, 2016. In the first 11 weeks, the system avoided costs and time associated with processing more than 5,000 sale notifications that would have otherwise needed to be handled by DMV staff. The vast majority of sale notifications are completed online using the self-service system, with more than 80 percent of sales being recorded by private Wisconsin sellers – not DMV staff.

From the seller's perspective, they have avoided the need to print out sale notification forms, and either mail or deliver them in-person to a DMV office. Sellers never need to wait in line to report their transaction, and this service is provided completely free to them. They receive their confirmation immediately, and can choose to email a copy rather than print, allowing the entire sale notification process to be paperless.