



Season's Greetings from the State Registrar

2010 closes with much economic turbulence still felt in the workplace and at home, yet I write this greeting with optimism for the coming year. I need only look back at what we have accomplished and see collective efforts bringing about amazing results. Electronic birth registration has been achieved at all birthing hospitals statewide. This by itself has been a tremendous undertaking, but much more has been done this past year. Electronic divorce reporting for Bay County began in January 2010. Staff has been working with Miami-Dade County to bring them on beginning with January 2011 events. Our goal is to have 50% of the divorce file electronic by 2012. Electronic death registration is expected to be piloted by the end of the year, with statewide rollout to begin later in 2011. We posted our first web based online tutorial, addressing physicians and their completion of the cause of death on the death record and it has been well received within the medical community. We received approval for our Disaster Recovery System to move to a Tier 1 status; in the event of an emergency, we will soon be able to have our system up and running within 24 hours. Quality data continues to be at the forefront of our data gathering efforts; special programs enable us to monitor reporting quickly, and effectively work with users who might get "off track". With Florida's implementation of the Real ID Act, requests for certifications have increased by 25%, allowing us to assist those in need of driver's license renewal and the necessary documentation required under this act.

Our partners "in the world": county vitals offices, funeral homes, medical examiners offices, physicians, hospital birth registrars, birthing centers, midwives, clerks of court, the professional associations representing many of those just mentioned, all make tremendous contributions as part of the vital statistics team.

There are still challenges to be met. We face a difficult legislative session in the spring, with some tough decisions to be made. The bureau and its many partners are ready to proceed to do what is required of us, keeping in mind our mission and commitment to Florida's citizens.

I respectfully extend my wishes to all of you for a happy holiday season and a new year full of peace, prosperity, and above all, good health.

C.Meade Grigg, State Registrar

State Office Improves Apostille/Exemplified Service

An Apostille is a certification provided under The Hague Convention of 1961 for authenticating documents for use in foreign countries. An Exemplified certification serves the same purpose, only for those countries who did not sign The Hague Treaty. The sole function of the Apostille or Exemplified certificate is to certify the authenticity of the signature of the document. In Florida, the Apostille or Exemplified certificate contains the original signature of the State Registrar and the Secretary of State.

In recent years, a client would request an Apostille/Exemplified from our state office. At a cost of \$29 for a birth certificate, plus a separate \$10 fee for the Florida Secretary of State, our office would process the certificate, then mail it, along with the \$10 payment, to the Secretary of State in Tallahassee. The Secretary of State would process their Apostille or Exemplified certification and then mail the certificate with Apostille or Exemplified certification back to the customer. The process would take about two weeks.

Under the improved process, upon payment of a \$9 fee for a birth certificate, a client will receive from our office a certificate suitable to be Apostilled or Exemplified for the country of use. The customer then provides it directly to the Secretary of State in Tallahassee to get the Apostille/Exemplified for \$10. The number one benefit is the cost savings to our clients. In today's economy, everyone is looking for ways to save money, and with the new, improved process, the customer can do just that. Additional advantages to the process are that it reduces our response time, shortening the turnaround time, and thus saves time for the customer, and with the certificate going directly to the client, it lessens the chance of the certificate not getting to its final destination.

Ordering instructions for the new procedure are available on our internet website (http://www.doh.state.fl.us/planning_eval/vital_statistics/apostille.htm).

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Spotlight On....Gadsden County

Gadsden County was created in 1823, and named for James Gadsden of South Carolina, who served as Andrew Jackson's aide-de-camp (personal assistant) in 1818. Once known as the Shade Grown Tobacco Capital of the World, it is located approximately 20 miles west of Tallahassee and just an hour's drive to the white sands of the Gulf Coast. Gadsden is Florida's only county with an African-American majority population. Just a stone's throw off the Blue Star Highway, you'll find the Gadsden County Vital Statistics office. With combined years of service over 43 years, Gadsden County has four Vital Statistic's employees. They are CDR Pauline Powell, Deputy Registrars Bridgett Chandler, Alondrea Williams, and Debra Weston. Pauline's team services nine funeral homes. Last year, her office issued 1,382 death certificates. With the upcoming implementation of the Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS), Pauline exclaims, "Long time coming, and can't wait to see it happen!" With a population over forty-six thousand, Pauline's crew will continue giving their community the best customer service. Keep up the good work, Gadsden County Vital Statistics! Moreover, if you're lucky enough to visit Gadsden County, don't be surprised if you do find everything you are looking for. When the original settlers came here in the early 1800s, they found the ideal place, and folks today will say the same thing. As a well-used slogan declares, "Gadsden County is a great place to spend an hour, a day, or a lifetime."

Pictured from left to right: Deputy Registrar Bridgett Chandler, Chief Deputy Registrar Pauline Powell, Local Registrar Marlon Hunter, Deputy Registrars Alondrea Williams and Debra Weston



BITS ' n PIECES

EBR Birth Registrars:

Be sure to inform the parent(s) at the time of naming the child, special characters are not acceptable by SSA. If used, it WILL be rejected by SSA and an automated number will not be issued. The parent(s) will have to make an in-person visit to their local SSA office to apply for the SSN. So save time and educate.

PO Boxes cannot be used for Mother's Residence. If street address is unknown, enter UNKNOWN. If location has no number and/or street name, enter the rural route number or a geographical description of the place that will aid in identifying the precise location.

Remember when completing a record not to use any special characters, such as periods or number signs, especially on the suffix of the name and/or part of an address.

~ In Memoriam ~

The Putnam County Health Department and the Bureau of Vital Statistics has lost a valuable team member and friend in Sandra "Sandy" Lupton, Chief Deputy Registrar and Billing Administrator, who died on July 4, 2010. Sandy started with Vital Statistics and the department in 2007, and in that short time had developed a good rapport with her employees, clients, and visitors.

Sandy had a great personality, was a beloved friend and coworker, and will be missed terribly. Our thoughts go out to her family and co-workers.

Orange Park Medical Center lost their valuable lead Birth Registrar, Mary (Lynn) Creighton on October 26, 2010. She was employed with Orange Park Medical Center for twenty-four years. Lynn had an ability to make a smile happen in others. Lynn was known for her love of shopping and decorating for the holidays. She had many friends and family that loved her dearly. She will be greatly missed.

Welcome Aboard

The following appointments have been made to the position of registrar in the county health department:

Chief Deputy Registrar

Sandra Tuttle.....Putnam County
Amarilis J Salazar.....Broward County

You can now find Florida Department of Health Vital Statistics quicker and easier, at <http://www.floridavitalstatisticsonline.com>

Reflections on Florida's Electronic Birth Registration System (EBRS)

- The Bureau of Vital Statistics would like to announce that implementation of our Electronic Birth Registration System (EBRS) is complete -- 100% electronic birth registration! What does this mean for Florida? We have an incredible project team that dedicated many hours to provide you with a state of the art system. We are the only state that started out collecting electronic signatures. We set standards that other states have decided to follow. Over 220,000 records a year are now available within a day or two of the child's birth; parents in every county can purchase a certification without having to rely on the postal service getting a hard copy record to the state office. We built an online EBRS Tutorial for future trainings for hospitals' new birth registrars; we created a dedicated help desk team, a Registration Support team; we maintain strong communication via emails, phone calls, and our vitals newsletter, helping to keep everyone informed.
- County health department staff have contributed to this success story by working with the hospitals to be sure we have records for every delivery and by helping parents as they become accustomed to the new process of a speedier birth certification. We thank the hospital staff for the feedback, assistance, and support they provided along the way - it helped make a good system even better!
- Relationships were built, statutes enforced, and records registered complete. EBRS has taken us down I-95, I-4, I-75, and across I-10. No matter the route, when we returned to Jacksonville we ended up with a success story. Quality Assurance Field Representatives saw their car rental agent more than their own families; a few GPS and blackberry phones later, we achieved our goal. Each time a hospital went live, we shared the news and first tracking number filed with the entire project team - it was always the best news of the week because we knew one more hospital now had a system that benefited not just the hospital, but families, counties, and the state office as well.
- Florida is fortunate in that our hospitals not only care about their patients, but they are just as committed to supplying the required birth data to the state office. Together, we will work to ensure that Florida continues to report accurate and timely data to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Customer service is a chain reaction and we continue to pass it along to Florida citizens.
- Just because rollout is complete doesn't mean our job is done. The QA team and our Registration Support Team will continue to be there for the hospitals. The state and county offices want to thank each and every one of you for taking pride in your job and making our system and the data it produces, top quality – together we are a winning team!

Chief & Deputy Registrar Training

A regional chief and deputy registrar training was conducted in the Jacksonville state office September 28-30, 2010. In this training, we had newly appointed deputy state registrars from several counties attend from all over the state. This training revealed an updated version of the vital statistics presentation along with hands-on learning in our computer lab. During the 3-day training, exercises on safety paper, Electronic Birth Registration System (EBRS) reconciliation, death certificates review and noncompliance scenarios were conducted. Attendees were also able to log into the training module of e-Vitals and perform typical transactions that would occur in any county office.

For those unable to attend any of the training classes offered, an instructional CD can be mailed that contains the updated version of the CDR/DR Vital Statistics training along with the e-Vitals distance learning presentations. In addition, included on the CD are the training folder materials and the exercises conducted during class. The chief deputy registrar Trak-It course is still available online for additional training.

For more information, you may contact a QA field representative.



"Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success."

- Henry Ford

