



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
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Kentucky crosses into new era of driver licensing

By Jim Gray

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 18, 2022) – The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet has delivered its fair share of big, bold and transformative infrastructure projects over the years. On June 27, 2022, we crossed a significant milestone by completing one of the largest statewide initiatives in our recent history that surprisingly didn't involve roads or bridges.

Driver licensing issuance shifted from a decentralized model in each county to a centralized regional model managed by the Transportation Cabinet (KYTC). With that change came new modern conveniences and more card options than ever before.

The move can be traced back to the passage of the federal REAL ID Act prompted by the 9/11 attacks that involved fraudulent licenses. The Act introduced strict application and security requirements for states to offer new REAL ID license versions to curb fraud.

The majority of Circuit Court Clerks collectively asked KYTC to take over REAL ID issuance and their licensing functions to allow them to focus on court duties. The shift required an overhaul of the licensing process and a lengthy task list to find new office spaces, hire and train staff and reimagine how to modernize licensing.

The Transportation Cabinet introduced new service options to reduce the number of trips to a regional office, like online and mail-in renewal, plus the choice of an eight-year credential. In counties without a regional office, Popup Driver Licensing staff will make periodic visits based on the county population to bring licensing services to communities. By the end of August, at least one visit will have been made to every eligible county.

There are currently 31 regional offices across the state. Some locations will later move to a permanent site within the same city.

With the REAL ID enforcement deadline less than one year away and a legislative charge to complete the transition by the end of June, our goal was to expand access as soon as possible. We understand this is a significant change for Kentuckians. That's why licensing is our only business at regional offices, and we're committed to fine-tuning the process to make the licensing experience a positive one.

Kentuckians may visit any regional office location, regardless of where they live, to request, renew or replace credentials. While all driver testing will continue to be scheduled with and conducted by Kentucky State Police, they now have a presence at most regional offices.

I encourage Kentuckians to visit drive.ky.gov to compare services offered in-person, online and by mail. Also, be sure you're REAL ID ready by visiting realidky.com. Starting May 3, 2023, you'll need a REAL ID license or another form of federally-accepted ID, like a passport, to use at airport security checkpoints, military bases or federal buildings that require ID (like the White House).

Jim Gray, of Lexington, is Secretary of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

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