State of Vermont
Office of the Secretary of State
128 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-1101

[phone] 802-828-2363
[fax] 802-828-2496
www.sec.state.vt.us

James C. Condos, Secretary of State
Christopher D. Winters, Deputy Secretary

February 2, 2016
For immediate release
Contact: Chris Winters, 802-279-1649

PRESS RELEASE

Secretary of State Jim Condos and Governor Peter Shumlin Announce the Vermont Business Portal

Montpelier, VT – Today, Governor Peter Shumlin, Secretary of State Jim Condos, Tax Commissioner Mary Peterson and Labor Commissioner Annie Noonan are pleased to announce the successful partnership among their agencies to create a single sign-in business portal to make it easier to register and start a business in Vermont.

Everyone doing business in Vermont must first register with the Secretary of State's Office. Those businesses must also obtain a tax identification number from the Department of Tax, and register with the Department of Labor for unemployment insurance. Until recently, that meant multiple forms, visits, letters, checks and phone calls. The new online Business Portal allows Vermont businesses to create an account with the Secretary of State's Office, and then interact with each agency quickly and simply in one place.

Vermont Business Owner Benefits
• Fast, simple way to register a business and establish tax and labor accounts
• Data can be entered once and carried over for each agency
• Eliminates multiple forms and duplicate processes
• Secretary of State business registrations processed within 24 hours (compared to 7-10 days previously)

Vermont State Agency Benefits
• More efficient use of staff time - less data entry and paper processing
• More accurate and consistent data when entered once by the applicant
• Electronic financial transactions are faster, revenue credited to accounts immediately (fewer checks)
• Clearer, more concise process means happier customers, fewer requests for assistance

At a State House press conference which included a demonstration of the Business Portal, Vermont Secretary of State Jim Condos said *"This is a success story for all involved. Vermonters often find state regulations overly complex and confusing. This good government solution improves customer service and saves the State time and money. The Portal makes it easier to interact with state government which can be important, particularly for business owners who need to stay focused on growing their business and delivering their products."*

Governor Shumlin added, "*I am really pleased with the work done by the Secretary of State's Office and my Commissioners. Through innovation and initiative, they've found a way to create efficiencies for both business and government. This represents the positive change that happens when state agencies work together and better translate their business processes to the end users.*"

According to Secretary Condos, the new business portal removes redundancies and multiple points of entry. The departments of Tax and Labor report increasing usage of the portal which is beneficial for their staff and for the customers they serve.

"The Vermont Department of Taxes is very pleased with the success of the business portal," said Tax Commissioner Mary Peterson. *"Since the portal was launched, we've processed almost 2,000 registrations for business tax accounts. Our ability to process applications electronically has made us more efficient, shortening the time businesses must wait to receive their licensing, which is a win all around."*

"The Labor Department has been an involved partner in this business portal from the very beginning. Since we interact with almost every Vermont employer on a regular basis, we know how challenging it can be for them to wade through all the state and federal regulations, particularly if they don't have in-house expertise. This new portal will guide them through the process and important information, agency by agency, making it easier for them to set their business up correctly from the start," said Labor Commissioner Annie Noonan.

The Secretary of State's implementation of the one-stop portal is hoped to include additional agencies that businesses might interact with for things like licenses and permits, as well as include information and resources for starting, growing and maintaining a business.

With this successful launch, the agencies are moving forward with Phase Two of the Business Portal work. The Secretary of State's Office is currently interviewing businesses and economic development experts to determine what the next iteration of the Portal should be. The Secretary's Office welcomes input from the public on how to serve the business community better through our online business services.

Visit: www.sec.state.vt.us
facebook.com/SecretaryOfStateJimCondos Twitter: @VermontSOS

The Business Portal is but one feature of the recently overhauled business registration website of the Secretary of State's Office. In the last few years, new business formations have gone from 10 day processing to same day processing, sometimes within the hour they are filed. With 0% processing online only a few years ago, online processing is now well over 90% for the more than 80,000 transactions in the Secretary of State's Corporations Division each year.