



**Your Safety • Your Mobility  
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**IDAHO TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**  
P.O. Box 7129 • Boise, ID 83707-1129  
(208) 334-8000 • [itd.idaho.gov](http://itd.idaho.gov)

August 27, 2018

Kieran Donahue, Canyon County Sheriff  
1115 Albany Street  
Caldwell, Idaho 83605

Dear Sheriff Donahue,

I am writing in response to your August 23<sup>rd</sup> letter addressed to Governor Otter and your concerns over the rollout of our new system, GEM, a system complete and separate to that of our Driver's License issuance vendor. As a crucial partner in this project which provides driving credentials to the customers we mutually serve, your input is very important to us. The necessity and urgency to transition from an outdated 1980s mainframe computer system to a more modern system is a massive effort with numerous challenges to overcome, and I appreciate your frustration. I continue to propose a working group to discuss solutions to your concerns as the best approach for moving forward. Having said that, it is also worth noting that the comments you shared from sheriffs were on the first day of the new system's launch, and there was significant improvement by the end of the first and second weeks as staff became familiar with the new system.

I believe that the system rollout was affected in three ways. First, we closed offices for two days the week before to transition more than 30 years of data and bring the new system into production. This caused a larger than normal amount of customers when we reopened the following Monday. Second, testing and training environments were made available beginning January of 2018 yet we still had only 25% of counties and only 10% of county staff that went in to test or practice in preparation for Go Live. As a result, many county staff saw the system for the first time on the day we went live. I understand sheriffs have limited staff and that could have been a reason why many county employees never went into the system to prepare, but 90% of the 3,000+ calls we received from county staff the first week were training related. Finally, the system itself; 10% of the calls during the first week were related to items the counties found wrong or inefficient with the system and asked us to adjust or fix. Our teams worked tirelessly to make adjustments to improve the system and support the counties before and during the transition.

During the three busy weeks just prior to the new system, counties averaged 9,500 credentials statewide weekly. The first week we went live we issued 8,330 and last week we achieved over 8,700. We are fairly close to normal transaction numbers in just two weeks since we went live. Some counties have fared better than others. I believe that the combination of us continuing to fine tune the system and staff becoming more familiar will result in better outcomes. Additionally, the new system should allow for a future where we can move many driver's license transactions on-line so we reduce traffic to your lobbies.

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In regards to your statement about responses by ITD the week of the 13<sup>th</sup>, ITD ensured we had 26 trainers across the State that week including the three ITD staff that were in your office in Canyon County. We also had six of our communication staff throughout the State on day one to help with the public and media relations. I devoted the entire week responding to calls, e-mails and texts from county staff including your staff in Canyon County. On a positive note, the e-mails, thank you cards, and appreciation sent by staff from large and small counties has been encouraging to my staff and me. The county front line staff have expressed optimism and are collaborative with us while we work through the new system.

I know sheriff's and ITD offices have had extreme technical issues since the contract with our Driver's License vendor went into effect in November of 2016 including the recent outage today, August 27<sup>th</sup>. I understand and share the frustration by sheriffs and their staff. I believe this has contributed largely to the desire expressed by some sheriffs to request a change in who delivers driver's license services. I do, however, believe the issues related to driver's license service go beyond technology. Transaction revenues, staffing, facilities, training, and business hours and days all contribute to the customer experience. We hear repeatedly that what sheriffs collect from transactions does not cover the cost to operate a driver's license office, especially as our population rapidly grows. This is a valid concern that warrants further discussion.

On August 16<sup>th</sup> I sent an e-mail to Vaughn Killeen recommending that we set up a workgroup that would include the Idaho Sheriffs Association, ITD, and possibly county commissioners to explore various solutions to the issues being brought up regarding driver's license offices. I understand you and the executive board for ISA are aware of the offer. I want to once again extend that offer that we come together in a constructive and collaborative way to find solutions to improve service, budgets, staffing and of course that we ensure technology is not the problem. I understand one of the solutions you seek is to remove sheriff offices from the role of overseeing driver's license offices. I believe we would need to develop a strategy and plan on how that could work. As it stands today, several of our counties already have employees other than sheriffs' staff delivering this service.

We stand ready and are anxious to begin working on these issues.

Sincerely,

Alberto Gonzalez  
Administrator, Division of Motor Vehicles  
Idaho Transportation Department

