



Inside the Virginia DMV's Richmond Central Customer Service Center
January 18, 2012

Virginia DMV Prepares for 'FACE'lift

By *Brian Heaton*

The Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is getting a technology facelift.

All 74 Virginia DMV offices will upgrade their transaction processing systems to a Web-based application called For All Customers and Employees (FACE) that will rely less on data entry and more on intuitive controls and navigation. Officials hope the overhaul will improve DMV's image and increase efficiency throughout the agency.

Once installed, the new front-end technology will allow DMV employees to concurrently handle multiple issues — such as [renewing](#) a driver's license and then looking ahead in a person's record to handle items such as car registrations — in a "one-stop shop" mentality.

The DMV's Tappahannock office will debut the system on Thursday, Jan. 19. In a phased approach, other locations will follow throughout the year. The project should be fully rolled out by July 1.

Virginia DMV Commissioner Rick Holcomb said the 360-degree view of customers and functionality that FACE provides will enable workers to provide better [service](#) and ultimately improve the overall customer experience at each DMV branch office.

He explained that currently, if a person is ineligible to renew his or her license, the clerk handling the transaction wouldn't know until the end of the process. But the new system will spotlight any red flags at the outset, so a customer can be alerted and the appropriate actions taken.

"What would probably be a half-an-hour transaction only to be disappointing the customer at the end, will probably turn into a five-minute transaction," Holcomb said. "The customer wouldn't be happy leaving without their credential, but at least they are leaving quickly with very clear instructions on what they need to do."

Nips and Tucks

Replacing the entire processing system isn't a minor tech procedure. The old system — CSCNET — which uses antiquated databases and runs off UNIX boxes, is being entirely gutted on the front end. The "MS DOS-looking" display workers see now is being replaced by a .NET framework in a Windows environment. Transactions will run securely through the Internet.

FACE was built in six months, entirely by DMV staff. Holcomb felt the system would benefit from the in-house design, chiefly because of the familiarity DMV IT workers have with the issues faced by their front counter brethren in the various branch offices around the state.

"The front-line people are getting exactly what they want and need because their colleagues understand that," Holcomb said. "They also know if they don't give them what they need, they're going to hear about it. So it's worked out wonderfully."

Money-wise, Holcomb expected FACE to save Virginia quite a bit of cash. The DMV has been paying approximately \$120,000 per month for the UNIX boxes in each of the DMV offices. Without that expense and factoring in both costs for the project and additional savings, he estimated Virginia should save more than \$1 million in the first year.

Once the rollout of FACE is complete, enhancements to the system will gradually be introduced. Lana Shelley, deputy CIO of the Virginia DMV, said that in time, functionality will exist where clerks will also be able to see what branches customers have previously visited. Plans are also in the works to replace the business logic element on the mainframe that calculates fees and remembers customer history.

For now, however, Holcomb and his staff are centered on a successful first step with the Tappahannock deployment.

"[We've] used them as guinea pigs in the past," Holcomb said of the Tappahannock office, which employs six people. "They are our alpha. We'll run it there for 30 days and if it works the way we think it's going to work, we'll bring it down to our Richmond Central headquarters office."