

# **MVD meets challenge of better service**

**By Demesia Padilla / Secretary, N.M. Taxation & Revenue Department**

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In the last five years, the Motor Vehicle Division has come a long way in improving customer service and our wait times.

In fact, some wait times are down by as much as 85 percent — with many customers around the state having to wait just under 10 minutes to receive help.

It wasn't always like this. As many New Mexicans can attest to, taking a trip to the MVD used to be one of the most unpleasant — yet necessary — chores. Six years ago, that could mean waiting more than an hour to get help — not counting how long it would take to complete a transaction.

But things have changed.

Since taking office, we have faced the unique challenge of improving services and lowering wait times in the face of flat budgets. Instead of throwing up our hands and giving up, we have made it our mission to do more with less, to find ways to become more efficient and to improve what we can, whenever we can.

We started by looking at the private sector. We looked at companies like Southwest Airlines and the Ritz — all synonymous with good customer service.

We used their example to model our own customer service initiative. We made key changes in our management style and our employees bought in. This collective culture change led us to make our approach wholly customer-centric.

For example, we installed the United States' first real time MVD customer satisfaction tracking system, and we have used that feedback to inform our every decision.

We designated a greeter in each large office, who confirms that customers have everything they need before they go up to a window to ensure they aren't stuck waiting — only to find out they don't have the right documents.

And then there was our aging computer system, which was 25 years old and kept the MVD stuck in the 20th century. We made it a priority to replace it, and we've seen it pay off.

Since we rolled out the new system, efficiency has skyrocketed. The number of transactions per customer doubled in just a few months — not to mention that it came in almost \$12 million under budget.

And just last month we launched the MVD Mobile Unit. The Mobile Unit will travel around the state serving rural communities without MVD offices.

Since we started making these changes, the MVD has been awarded by Quality New Mexico four years running, for commitment to improving service. MVD has also been ranked as one of the top five best MVDs for wait times, in the country, by the Washington Post and DMV.com.

States like California and Georgia are using us as a model for their own offices. But more importantly, our customers are giving us a positive report.

Across the state, customers have given our offices a 99 percent customer satisfaction rating. But perhaps the most important metric of all, our wait times, say it all. Since 2011 our average wait times have dropped from nearly 2 hours to less than 15 minutes.

Despite all of that, I will be the first to admit that the MVD is far from perfect and, yes, sometimes we make mistakes. But thanks to the support of our governor and the dedication of our staff, we have come a long way in improving the customer experience.

Every day, we come into work focused on making the MVD better, and we will continue our work in the hopes of making the MVD experience positive for every New Mexican.