

## 2008 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 08-W-14MT

**Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:**

State: Montana

Assign Program Category (applicant): Public Safety/Corrections (Use list at end of application)

1. **Program Name** – Temporary Registration Permit Service
2. **Administering Agency** – Montana Department of Justice
3. **Contact Person (Name and Title)** – Audrey Hinman
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8. **Web site Address** – <http://app.mt.gov/trp>

9. **Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.** The Temporary Registration Permit service allows approved auto dealerships to create and print a temporary licensing plate to place on the vehicle until permanent plates and tags are received. Automating the permit system is convenient for new vehicle owners, improves safety on the roadways, and reduces fraud.

10. **How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 1, 2008 to be considered.** – The service was launched March 14, 2005.

11. **Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?**- The Temporary Registration Permit (TRP) service was created to streamline and automate the outdated and time consuming paper temporary registration process. The service addresses safety concerns that resulted from delays in the existing system.

Prior to the online service, the information collected for a vehicle purchase was collected by the dealerships, mailed to the county office and manually entered at each office. It would take anywhere from two to four weeks for the counties to receive the information from the dealers and enter the data into the state's database. This delay made it difficult for law enforcement officials to identify the owner and vehicle information on a vehicle with temporary license plates.

The paper TRP's required the Department of Motor Vehicles, Title and Registration Bureau and the auto dealers to inventory their paper TRP stock. If the stock of paper TRP's do not add up correctly, it can take both the state and the auto dealers countless hours to reconcile.

Before the TRP service was implemented, the vehicle and owner registration information would take weeks to be downloaded into the law enforcement databases. This delay made it difficult for law enforcement officials to identify the owner on a vehicle with temporary license plates. Having the

purchaser and vehicle information instantly available was needed to provide a safer environment for officers when they are performing traffic stops.

**12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.** - The Temporary Registration Permit service allows the dealership to enter the vehicle and purchaser information into the system when a car is purchased, eliminating the need to send the paperwork to the counties. The TRP system connects to the Montana Driver Control Database, the Montana Title and Registration Database, the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS), and to Vehicle Identification Number Analysis (VINA) software to pre-fill information on the purchaser and the vehicle. The connection to these systems also allows the service to stop a TRP transaction in case the vehicle is identified as stolen. Warnings will also appear on the system for dealers to notify the purchaser that a vehicle may have titling or insurance issues on the vehicle and to expect possible delays in registering their vehicle in Montana. In addition, the TRP service ties in with another mt.gov service, Vehicle Search, which gives dealerships vehicle information for free. After all of the information is entered and all checks are run against multiple databases, the dealer prints a temporary registration permit. The TRP, with a unique letter and number identifier, is placed in a plastic sleeve and attached it to the rear license plate location on the vehicle. The dealerships can use their administrative page to cancel, reissue, and print a TRP. They can also search for a particular permit and use the administrative page to track their sales.

Immediately after the information is entered in the TRP system law enforcement officials can use the TRP number to look up the registration information on their database. Prior to the online service, the registration information could take weeks to be downloaded into the law enforcements databases.

When the customer goes to the county to register the vehicle, the information is available immediately so that the vehicle can be titled right away. Because the customer and vehicle information is in the database the customer does not have to bring paperwork with them. Additionally, the county clerk does not have to enter the information at the time of registration, which eliminates data entry at the county offices.

The service also has the ability to collect the information and issue a TRP even if the state's database is not available. The unique offline mode allows dealerships to enter the information and issue a permit regardless of the status of the state's mainframe system that hosts the Driver Control and Title and Registration information. The information is stored in an Oracle database and a listener is used to monitor the mainframe. When the mainframe comes back online the information is uploaded using a batch process. If there are any errors in the information then the record is held in a follow up file that can be accessed by the state on their administration page. The state Title and Registration Bureau can use their administrative page to track sales, review follow-up permits from offline mode, and view individual permits.

**11. 13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?** - Automating the permit system is convenient for new vehicle owners, improves safety on the roadways, and reduces fraud. The service streamlines the outdated and time-consuming paper temporary registration process. The service was designed to help reduce errors and address safety concerns that resulted from delays in the existing system. The TRP service, with real-time updates, is a huge benefit to all parties involved in the process, including the state, counties, law enforcement, dealerships, and vehicle purchasers.

When the user chooses to create a temporary registration permit they are required to enter certain information such as vehicle identification number, title number, and purchaser information. Based on the information collected the system pre-fills the information from the state's database and it helps users issue the permit quickly and correctly. If the information is not available the dealer can still issue the permit but they will have to enter the information manually. Additionally, the system uses a zip code match to pre-fill the city, county and state for the user.

Prior to the online service the information collected for a vehicle purchase was collected by the dealerships and manually entered at each county office. It took weeks for the counties to receive the information and enter the data into the state's database. This delay made it difficult for law enforcement officials to identify the owner and vehicle information on a vehicle with temporary license plates. With the new service law enforcement can view the purchaser and vehicle information as soon as the TRP is entered into the system.

In addition to saving time, the TRP service helps reduce fraud associated with the temporary licenses. A purchaser is responsible for the fees and taxes on the vehicle upon purchase. Should the purchaser trade in the vehicle prior to making these payments, the auto dealer then becomes responsible for the fees or the state loses the revenue. The TRP service helps eliminate this fraud by tracking the information in real-time. When a TRP is issued on a vehicle the title work and fees must be taken care of before the vehicle can be traded in or sold.

There is A security feature with unique keys known only to law enforcement that runs across the top of the TRP. If an office has any reason to believe a TRP is fraudulent, they can look at the security feature on the TRP and know within minutes if it a valid TRP. This security feature can be checked and validated prior to the officer approaching the vehicle.

Another innovative feature of the service is its ability to collect the information and issue a TRP even if the state's database is not available. The TRP information is stored in an Oracle database and a listener is used to monitor the mainframe. When the state's mainframe system comes back online the information is uploaded using a batch process. If there are any errors in the information then the record is held in a follow up file that can be accessed by the state on their administration page.

**14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.) –**

The Temporary Registration Permit service was developed and is being maintained without the use of tax dollars or a state general fund appropriation. This is possible through a public/private alliance between the state of Montana and mt.gov.

There were no special material or technology purchases necessary to begin or run the TRP project. Department of Justice (DOJ) has a full-time project manager and developer working on TRP. Both of these employees were already on staff with DOJ at the start of the project.

**15. What are the program's annual operational costs? -** Maintenance and enhancements to the service are also provided at no charge through the lifetime of the service. Maintenance cost savings for the state is currently more than \$100,800.00.

**16. How is the program funded? -** The Temporary Registration Permit service was developed and is being maintained without the use of tax dollars or a state general fund appropriation. This is possible through a public/private alliance between the state of Montana and mt.gov.

**17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.** – No, legislation was not required to proceed with this program. However, legislation was passed to mandate all dealers in the state to use the service, to change the permits from a 30-day to a 40-day expiration date, and to allow a permit fee to be charged. This legislation was codified in Section 61-3-224, Montana Code Annotated, 2005. The law went into effect on January 1, 2006.

**18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?** The service is run on Production Database Server - 10.194.140.62 Headless Dell PE2950 Quad Core Xeon Processor X53552x4MB Cache, 2.66GHz, 1333MHz FSB (x 2)  
8GB RAM  
4 - 300GB SCSI drives - RAID5  
SuSE Enterprise Server 10 Operating System  
Oracle 10  
Backup performed daily via Upstream

=====  
Blade enclosure  
Dell 1655MC PowerEdge blade enclosure  
Headless  
2 - Gigabit switches  
2 - power supplies

=====  
Blade 1 - app.mt.gov - 161.7.9.81  
Dell 1655MC PowerEdge blade server  
Headless  
1.4GHZ Processor - Dual procs  
2GB - RAM  
2 - 146GB SCSI hard drives - mirrored  
2 - gigabit NIC cards  
SuSE Linux Standard Server 8  
Kernel 2.4.21-281-smp  
Backed up by Upstream

=====  
Blade 2 - mtprodj1.mt.gov - 161.7.9.83 Dell 1655MC PowerEdge blade server  
Headless 1.4GHZ Processor - Dual procs 2GB – RAM  
2 - 146GB SCSI hard drives - mirrored  
2 - gigabit NIC cards  
SuSE Linux Standard Server 8  
Kernel 2.4.21-281-smp  
Backed up by Upstream

=====  
Blade 3 - mtprodj2.mt.gov - 161.7.9.85 Dell 1655MC PowerEdge blade server  
Headless 1.4GHZ Processor - Dual procs 2GB - RAM  
2 - 146GB SCSI hard drives - mirrored  
2 - gigabit NIC cards  
SuSE Linux Standard Server 8  
Kernel 2.4.21-281-smp  
Backed up by Upstream

=====  
Blade 4 - 161.7.9.87  
Dell 1655MC PowerEdge blade server

Headless  
1.4GHZ Processor - Dual procs  
2GB - RAM  
2 - 146GB SCSI hard drives - mirrored  
2 - gigabit NIC cards  
SuSE Linux Standard Server 8  
Kernel 2.4.21-281-smp  
Backed up by Upstream

=====

Blade 6 - 161.7.9.84  
Dell 1655MC PowerEdge blade server  
Headless  
1.4GHZ Processor - Dual procs  
2GB - RAM  
2 - 146GB SCSI hard drives - mirrored  
2 - gigabit NIC cards  
SuSE Linux Standard Server 8  
Kernel 2.4.21-281-smp  
Backed up by Upstream

=====

APP5 - app5.mt.gov - 161.7.9.161 Dell 2550 PowerEdge server Headless  
931 MHz Processor - Dual procs  
4GB - RAM  
50+GB SCSI disk space - RAID5  
Ethernet Pro 100 NIC  
Kernel 2.4.21-281-smp  
Backed up by Upstream

**19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address. – No.,** Montana was the second state in the nation to implement the TRP system.

**20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?** Yes, Montana modeled the TRP system after a similar system in Arizona. Montana's system has more functionality and features than Arizona's. Compared to Arizona, Montana's TRP system pre-fills data from multiple database sources, updates all state driver, titling, and law enforcement systems in real-time, stops permits from being issued if the vehicle is known to be stolen or registered as a junked vehicle, has an attached Vehicle Search service for dealers to check vehicle information on trade-in vehicles for free, has an administrative site for dealers, state, and county users to run reports, check sales, and void, reissue, or reprint TRP's, and works in offline mode so that dealers are not interrupted from servicing a customer if the state's mainframe database is down.

**21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken? –** The program has been fully implemented and enhancements are ongoing.

**22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples. -** The Temporary Registration Permit (TRP) service was created to streamline and automate the outdated and time-consuming paper temporary registration process. The service was designed to address safety concerns that resulted from delays in the existing system. The TRP service has been very effective in addressing the objectives of the program.

The service has achieved success by streamlining the process and saving time. With the TRP service the dealership enter the customer's information into the system when a car is purchased updating the state's database immediately. The online service eliminates the paper forms and dealerships no longer have to order and inventory the paper permits which saves them time and money. The paper TRP's required the state agency and the auto dealers to inventory their paper TRP stock. If the stock of paper TRP's do not add up correctly, it can take both the state and the auto dealers countless hours to reconcile.

Before the TRP service was implemented, the registration information could take weeks to be downloaded into the law enforcement databases. This delay made it difficult for law enforcement officials to identify the owner and vehicle information on a vehicle with temporary license plates. Now law enforcement officials can use the TRP number to look up the registration information on their database immediately after the information is entered. Having the purchaser and vehicle information instantly available provides a safer environment for officers when they are performing routine traffic stops. The TRP service has made the Montana community safer and has assisted law enforcement.

In a custody case where a father in Missoula, Montana did not return his child on time to the mother the TRP system helped to resolve the issue quickly. The mother contacted law enforcement within ten minutes of the child not being returned. Montana law enforcement went to the father's home and found that he had left. The neighbor said she saw him leave in a new white truck with a TRP on the back. Law enforcement contacted the state and asked for them to run a query of all TRPs issued to a white truck in Missoula County. The TRP number was found on the system along with a description of the vehicle. An all points bulletin was issued and law enforcement apprehended the father and child about 100 miles outside of town. The child was returned safely and it was handled so quickly that it was determined to be unnecessary to issue an Amber Alert.

In another example, a Montana State University student was murdered in a remote area outside of Bozeman, Montana. The body was found approximately 12 hours after the crime was committed. Law enforcement published the area of the crime and asked the public for any information. Two people responded and said they had seen a 4-door, dark colored vehicle with a TRP on it in that area during the time frame of the crime. Law enforcement contacted the state and asked them to run a search on dark colored, 4 door vehicles purchased in Gallatin County. A match was made within 20 minutes of the request and law enforcement apprehended the suspect. The suspect is currently awaiting trial. Due to the immediate availability of information on the vehicle the situation was resolved within 72 hours.

The TRP service also helps reduce fraud associated with the temporary licenses. A purchaser is responsible for the fees and taxes on the vehicle upon purchase. Should the purchaser trade in the vehicle prior to making these payments, the auto dealer then becomes responsible for the fees or the state loses the revenue. The TRP service helps eliminate this fraud by tracking the information in real-time. When a TRP is issued on a vehicle the title work and fees must be taken care of before the vehicle can be traded in or sold.

With the new, complex service there are security and training requirements. Dealerships are required to register with mt.gov. Mt.gov provides the customer secure access with a username and password to issue the permits. Dealerships are responsible for those usernames and passwords and for maintaining their account information. Dealerships are also required to take training on the new TRP process to help eliminate any confusion and make sure that they are able to issue the TRP's correctly. A unique online training tool allows dealerships to take the training online and submit an email to

mt.gov once this is complete. Mt.gov can verify that the training was taken before issuing the username and password.

**23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?** – The enhancements to the service will continue to improve the ease of use and add functionality to the service. Enhancements currently in development include the usage of the TRP service by all County Treasurer MVD Offices, MVD field operations and Title and Registration Bureau staff; additions of all types of TRPs; and the addition of filing lien data. The final enhancement to the service will begin in 2009 and will include the ability for citizens to create, pay for, and print a TRP for a private vehicle sale.

**24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?** – The TRP system was demonstrated to the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2007. The Motor Vehicle Commissioner in Virginia signed a contract in 2008 to begin work on almost an identical TRP system. The front end of the service is extremely easy to duplicate. States will need to make modifications or write code to allow the TRP web enabled service to connect to a state backend database.