

Equity News & Views

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APRIL 2005

LEGISLATIVE WATCH 2005

The future of Senate Bill 231, the only process serving bill to pass the legislature this session, was in doubt for much of March. The bill was *tabled* by the house judiciary committee on March 14th. It was not resurrected until April 1st. It is likely that the e-mails to committee members from the various process servers throughout the state were a contributing factor in getting this bill off the table and through the senate by a remarkable 100 to zero vote. For those of you that took the time to contact your senator, **Thank You!**

The following excerpts show the pertinent changes in text brought about by SB 231.

"25-1-1101 Registered process server—levying officer.
.....the county in which the person resides or in which the person's principal place of business is located. A registered process server may make service of process in any county in this state.

"25-3-301. and manner of return.
.....(3) In compliance with the provisions

of subsection (1) and in lieu of returning a summons, other process, or order to the clerk of court, the sheriff or levying officer may enclose the return of the summons, process, or order in an envelope, postage prepaid, and deposit it in the post office addressed to the officer, agent, or attorney who sent it."

25-13-402. writ executed.

.....(ii) by mail upon a corporation or other legal entity must be consented to in writing by the corporation or other legal entity and may be made by mailing a copy of the writ to an Service may be mailed out of state, at the direction of the third party, if the third party processes garnishments or levies from a location outside the state.

SB 231 has passed both houses, it was signed by the President of the Senate on April 14th and was signed by the House Speaker on April 15th and it was sent to the governor on April 16th. Following the anticipated signing by the Governor you will see it become law. Remember the effective date of this legislation is October 1st of 2005 .

The EQ Spotlight

This month the EQ Spotlight shines on Stephanie Minnick. She has been an Equity employee since September of 2004. Stephanie was raised a *Navy Brat* and she married into the Navy as well. Stephanie and her husband Bob have been happily married for 21 years and are the proud parents of three active teenagers, Aaron, Scott and Deanna.

Equity has found the military influence in Stephanie's past to be apparent and appreciated as exhibited in her ability to perform daily tasks with precision and accuracy. She is presently assigned duties that include preparing levies for service to banks and employers, monitoring employers timeliness in responding to levies, entering responses to levies, releasing levies when necessary and preparing the return of service for the court as the levies expire. Perhaps the most daunting task for Stephanie is deciphering the process servers hand-written notes when updating our computer data files. Her most enjoyable Equity duty is providing articles to be used in the *EQ Spotlight*.

Stephanie has many personal interests and activities. She does *quilting*, is an avid reader and enjoys being creative with the computer. Stephanie has maintained her own *Mary Kay* business for the past four years and she frequently attends *Mary Kay* conventions.

Equity is proud to have Stephanie on its staff!



**STEPHANIE
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Montana Ranks High in Credit Scores!

In today's loan market it is your *credit score* that will determine your ability to get a loan and it will also dictate the interest rate you will pay for that loan. Individual *credit scores* range from 330 to 830. The higher the better, with 700 and above considered excellent and 650 is acceptable. The national average is 676.

How does Montana rank? We are number seven nationally. Montana's average individual *credit score* is 701. South Dakota is number one with a 708 individual average and Texas is number 50 with a 650 average. The trend would seem to be that the highest average scores are in the northern states and the lowest rankings are along the nations southern border. In keeping with the trend, the mid-range average scores are found in the states across the center of the country.

If you are interested in your *credit score*, and you live in the west or the mid-west the three major bureaus, Experian, Equifax and TransUnion offer one free credit report per year per consumer. The Southern states free credit reports will be available as of June first with the Eastern states to follow on the first of September.

To improve your *credit score* you should correct any errors in your credit report, pay your bills on time, pay down your debt and apply for credit sparingly.

