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New KYTC Regional Office in Lexington Shows the Future of Driver Licensing in Kentucky

Fayette County first to transition driver licensing to KYTC

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 28, 2020) – The recently opened Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) Regional Driver Licensing Office in Lexington is ushering in a new way by which Kentuckians will obtain operator licenses, learner permits and state identification cards.

Over the next two years, starting in Fayette County, all operator licensing and official ID functions will transition from the circuit court clerk in each county to a network of KYTC regional offices across the Commonwealth.

"This transition allows us to offer top-notch customer service and assistance in every region of the commonwealth, building on the great work our circuit clerks have done over the years to get Kentuckians on the road safely," said Gov. Beshear. "I'm grateful to all state and local staff members who have helped us get these services ready and all offices in compliance with *Healthy at Work* guidelines."

The transition, which has been planned for years, officially launched with passage of House Bill 453 during the 2020 Kentucky General Assembly, and will be completed by June 30, 2022. The KYTC regional offices, already the exclusive issuers of REAL ID-compliant licenses and IDs, will also be the place to get standard driver licenses, commercial driver licenses (CDLs) and ID cards.

In July, the Office of the Fayette Circuit Court Clerk became the first to hand off in-person and mail-in driver license issuance, renewal and replacement to a new KYTC regional office at 141 Leestown Center Way in Lexington.

"In the months ahead, the circuit clerks in more and more counties will be making the same transition," KYTC Secretary Jim Gray said. "When the transition is completed, license issuance will be entirely within the Transportation Cabinet. And the new regional offices, once fully staffed, will offer state-of-the-art customer service, including online appointment scheduling as well as walk-in service. I want to thank Fayette Circuit Court Clerk Vince Riggs for the excellent driver licensing services he and his team provided Lexington residents over the years."

Doug Hall, Circuit Court Clerk in Floyd County and president of the Kentucky Association of Circuit Court Clerks, said the association was pleased to see the transition in Fayette County going smoothly despite the "inevitable hurdles brought on by COVID."

"The regional issuance model originated under the previous administration, but Secretary Gray has done a yeoman's job in navigating the final stages of its implementation. Circuit Court Clerks will continue to assist KYTC during the transition of credential issuance back to the Executive Branch, as we have always supported whatever is best for the citizens of the Commonwealth. Customer service is our highest priority," Mr. Hall said.

To date, in addition to the new office in Lexington, the cabinet has regional offices operating in Paducah, Madisonville, Elizabethtown, Frankfort, Somerset, Morehead and Prestonsburg. More offices are being opened – or reopened after closure caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic – as conditions permit. The network eventually will comprise about two dozen offices, covering all sections of the Commonwealth. Despite their regional character, there is no restriction on which office a Kentucky resident can use; each office can serve customers from anywhere in the Commonwealth.

Because of the pandemic, and restrictions in keeping with Gov. Beshear's Healthy at Work guidelines for protecting employees and customers, the other regional driver licensing offices open to this point offer only a limited menu of services besides issuing REAL ID-compliant licenses and IDs.

But the Lexington Regional Driver Licensing Office, even at less than full capacity, will issue all credentials previously issued by the Fayette Circuit Court Clerk, including – but not limited to – standard operator's licenses and IDs, CDLs and permits.

When fully deployed, the Lexington office will offer 21 camera stations, more than doubling the number of customers who previously could be served at one time in Fayette County. Also, customers will have a 4-year or 8-year renewal option for most credentials.

Kentucky State Police officers will be on site to administer driver testing, with kiosks for the written tests for a license or learner permit. Questions about testing, including scheduling and current operational status under COVID-19 guidelines, can be found here.

At this time, however, space inside the new office is not fully occupied in order to help protect employees and customers in keeping with Gov. Beshear's Healthy at Work guidelines for coping with COVID-19.

There is easy access to the office on and off New Circle Road and ample free parking. The office is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET. Customers are encouraged to make an appointment, which can be done online here**.** Walk-in customers also will be served but are encouraged to arrive early and be prepared to wait, as walk-in spaces tend to fill up quickly.

However, KYTC strongly recommends use of a temporary mail-in option for those who need to renew or replace a standard Kentucky license or ID and who do not need State Police driver

testing or retesting. The mail-in option is good for holders of licenses that expired – or will expire – from March 1 to Sept. 30, 2020.

REAL ID

While Kentucky will continue offering the option of a standard driver's license, a REAL ID or other form of verified identification, such as a passport or military ID, will be needed as of Oct. 1, 2021, for passing through airport security and boarding a U.S. commercial flight, visiting a military base or accessing a federal building or facility that requires verified identification. More information is available at realidky.com. In addition, obtaining a REAL ID requires extra documentation, so be sure you have the proper documents by checking here and here.

To maintain the safest possible environment, employees and customers of the KYTC regional driver licensing office are required to adhere to Gov. Beshear's Healthy at Work standards, which include wearing a mask and observing social distancing. Surfaces are cleaned and touch pad equipment sanitized after each use. A video explaining the new Healthy at Work procedures is available here.

Keep up with information from Gov. Andy Beshear and his administration about the COVID-19 pandemic at governor.ky.gov, kycovid19.ky.gov and on the Governor's official social media accounts Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

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