

# **ANNOUNCEMENTS – 2025**

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**During the 2020 Legislative Session the Mississippi Legislature passed HB1439. House Bill 1439 amends §29-1-3 and §29-3-82 Miss. Code Ann. (1972) to require 16<sup>th</sup> Section Lease information be submitted in an electronic format. As a result of this bill's passage, the Public Lands Division has transitioned to electronic only submission of documents.**

**If you have an issue with the electronic submission of documents, please contact Bill Cheney at (601) 359-6377 or [bill.cheney@sos.ms.gov](mailto:bill.cheney@sos.ms.gov).**

## **Land Management System**

The Secretary of State's Office has deployed the School District Portal at <https://districtportal.sos.ms.gov>. The site can also be accessed from the Secretary of State's website at <http://www.sos.ms.gov/Public-Lands/Pages/School-District-Online-Portal.aspx>.

This website provides the school districts with the capability to electronically create and submit leases, to record lease payments, to add or change school district contact information, and to submit the required annual financial reports, litigation report and List of Leases report. A school district can track the progress of a lease through the Secretary of State's lease review process; post bid notices; and use robust searches to view leases, school district properties, and school district contact information.

The Secretary of State's Office emailed each school district superintendent a unique login and password to access the online filing site last year. That login is still effective. If you need to reset your password, go to <https://districtportal.sos.ms.gov> and click on "forgot password" and you will receive a link to reset your password. If staff is new, please contact the Public Lands Division so we can get you login information.

## **Shared Township Revenue**

Remember to exchange your educable children lists with the school district for which you shared 16<sup>th</sup> Section revenue. Under the law, a school district may not expend funds from a shared township until the educable children lists have been exchanged.

## **Requirement for Land Descriptions**

The tax parcel number must be included as part of the legal description for all leases. Please also provide the acreage in the legal description.

## **Contact Information**

For legal questions, lease issues, Secretary of State 16<sup>th</sup> Section policy guidelines, and general inquiries:

William G. Cheney, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State, Lands. Telephone: 601-359-6377;  
Fax: 601-359-1461; E-mail: [bill.cheney@sos.ms.gov](mailto:bill.cheney@sos.ms.gov).

For legal questions, lease issues, timber management, and general inquiries:

Drew Pettus, Senior Public Lands Attorney. Telephone: 601-359-6373; Fax: 601-359-1461; E-mail: [drew.pettus@sos.ms.gov](mailto:drew.pettus@sos.ms.gov).

For lease review status, providing bid notices for placement on website, filing executed leases, data change sheet inquiries, data entry, and state lease number questions **along with questions concerning the new Secretary of State web portal:**

Kecia Davis, Administrative Support Specialist. Telephone: 601-359-6375; Fax: 601-359-1461; E-mail: [kecia.davis@sos.ms.gov](mailto:kecia.davis@sos.ms.gov).

For general assistance:

Shelli Bounds, Administrative Support Specialist. Telephone: 601-359-6393; Fax: 601-359-1461; E-mail: [shelli.bounds@sos.ms.gov](mailto:shelli.bounds@sos.ms.gov).

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