

Talk of the Town - Whitley County

Positive News in Whitley County

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New Secretary of State visits Columbia City, talks with Rotarians Tuesday

(Talk of the Town photo by John Meier) Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson, below, spoke to Columbia City Rotarians today, explaining the unique work her office performs for the citizens of Indiana.

By Jennifer Zartman Romano with reports

With just 120 days in office under her belt, Indiana's Secretary of State Connie Lawson spoke before the Columbia City Rotary Club Tuesday.

"I'll have to admit the first 30 days I didn't get much sleep worrying about my appointment by Governor Daniels last March 16," Lawson told Rotarians. "But now things are much better, and I love the work."

Lawson's visit to Whitley County makes the 28th county she's visited since taking office, taking over for the ousted Charlie White. White was convicted of six felonies, including theft, perjury and voter fraud. White had been urged to step down from his position when the charges surfaced, but remained in office until he was convicted. Because Indiana law prohibits convicted felons from holding office, he was removed from office on February 4 and Governor Mitch Daniel was able to replace him on March 16.

With much of the drama of her appointment behind her now, Lawson and her staff of 80 cover a variety of areas of responsibility, including securities, business services, auto dealers and elections. According to Lawson, the securities division is responsible for protecting the public from a myriad of swindlers and scam artists as reported by residents throughout the state. State level investigators work with local level prosecutors to investigate and occasionally prosecute cases.

The business services division is responsible for job creation and aiding would-be business owners with the proper paperwork to register their businesses online with the state. With a goal of simplification, most of the necessary documents are now readily available online for ease of access to business owners.

A lesser-known area of responsibility for the Secretary of State is the auto dealer services division.

"We issue the temporary licenses that a person uses in the purchase of a new car or truck. The division regulates auto dealers, and protects against odometer fraud and fraudulent titles," Lawson said, adding that the division is now linked into a national law enforcement database, making tracking licenses more seamless from state to state.

The Secretary of State's office is best known for overseeing the process of elections statewide.

"The elections division has had a tremendous change due to advances in technology," she said. "No longer are we dealing with the old lever machines. Currently, most of Indiana uses a precinct-based election. Hopefully that will move forward to a vote center model, which was recently used in seven counties and



had very positive results."

To learn more about the Secretary of State's office, [click here](#).

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