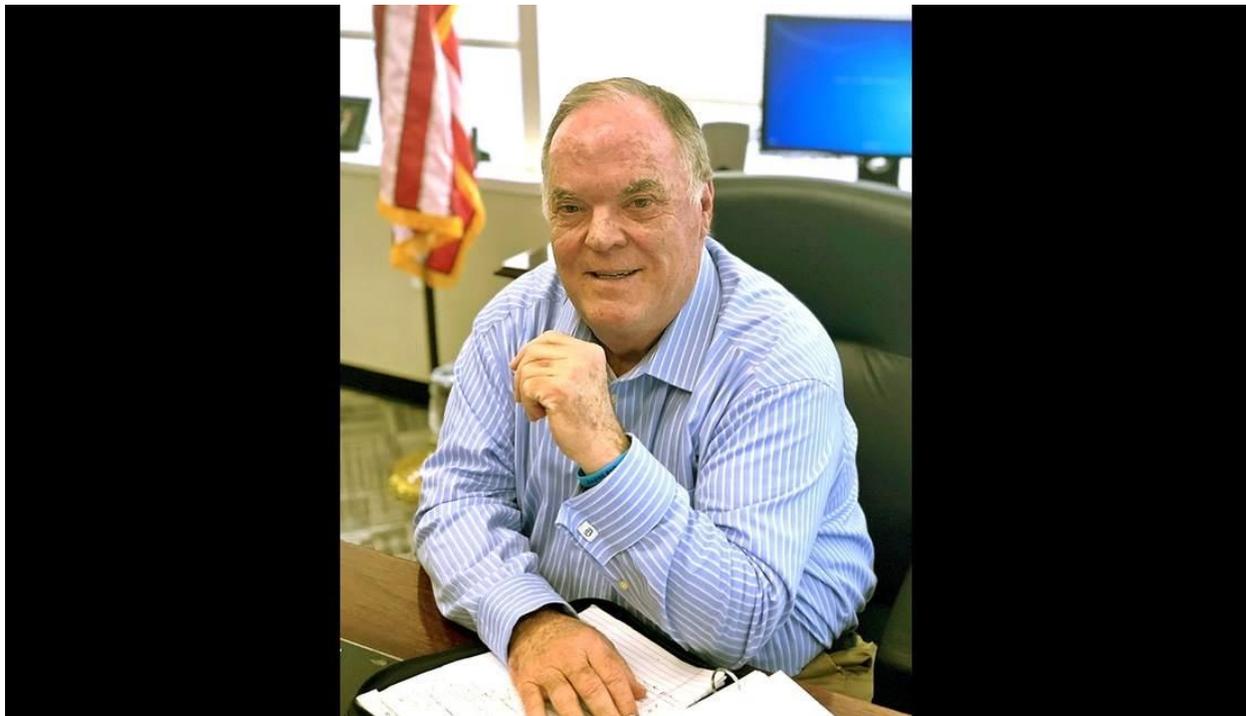


# Tampa Bay Times

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## Tax Collector kiosks offer instant vehicle registration renewals in Hillsborough County

The self-service kiosks are the first in the state, and allow customers to get a new vehicle registration in under two minutes.



Hillsborough County Tax Collector Doug Belden said Wednesday that new self-service kiosks allowing customers to renew their vehicle registrations in just two minutes are available in three branches: the Brandon office on Falkenburg Road, the Drew Park office on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, and the North Tampa office on University Center Drive.

By Anastasia Dawson

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TAMPA — It was a familiar scene Wednesday inside the tax collector's Brandon office: Rows of customers in plastic chairs chatting on phones or listening to music while others strain to hear their numbers finally get called out.

The loud waiting room was a perfect backdrop for Hillsborough County Tax Collector Doug Belden to unveil his latest innovation in customer service: automated, self-service kiosks that let customers renew their vehicle registration with hardly a wait.

They are the first of their kind in the state.

“This is a private-public partnership that has really allowed us to take a step forward,” Belden said. He said kiosks could eventually go in grocery stores, libraries, “anywhere where customers can access them 24/7.”

The office has already installed kiosks in its three largest branches: the Brandon office on Falkenburg Road, the Drew Park office on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, and the North Tampa office on University Center Drive. The kiosks have processed about 1,260 vehicle registrations so far, said Dale Hoffman, the tax collector's director of branch operations.

Introducing the kiosks required about two years of negotiations with the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and rewrites to state legislation. And following the success of Hillsborough County's soft launch, tax collectors in Polk and Walton counties are expressing interest in adopting their own kiosks.

The kiosks accept cash payments at no additional charge or credit and debit card payments for a 2.25 percent service fee. The fee goes back to the company that created the kiosks, Intellectual Technology, Inc., which provided them free and is working to expand to more locations in the county.

The kiosks can complete a transaction in less than two minutes, with both Spanish and English instructions. Similar to an ATM, the kiosks feature a touch screen where customers can immediately print their registration cards and license plate sticker. The machines are also as secure as ATM's, officials said, fully encrypting any transmitted data and, like the tax collector's branch offices, immediately deleting all personal data from its memory.

The kiosk won't complete renewal transactions without proof of insurance or if an outstanding toll violation or traffic infraction has placed a stop on a customer's license, said Nancy Millan, the office's director of community relations. But because the kiosks are already located in the tax collector's office, any issues with the transaction that can't be fixed remotely can be handled by staff on-site, she said.

Customers can use the kiosks to process renewals up to three months early, or pay a late fee if their current registration is expired.

The same process could take several days for processing when completed online, Hoffman said. And procrastinators hoping to renew their registration and receive their new decal on the same day often end up waiting an average of 15 minutes to hear their number called at the Tax Collector's Brandon office, where fewer than 50 employees work through an average of 1,000 customers a day.

The Tax Collector's office processes an estimated 60,000 to 70,000 registration renewals a month and more than 1 million renewals every year, Hoffman said. Last year, about 630,000 of those renewals were completed in person at one of the tax collector's branch locations.

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