

Passport

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important services that the library provides.

“Since we increased our passport hours this year,” said Schaff, “we’ve seen a lot of growth. On average, we process a mixture of 40 new and renewal passports each week. We are happy to see that we are meeting such an important need for Mandan, Bismarck, and the surrounding areas.”

It should be noted, though, that the passport process requires service from both sides—anyone in search of a passport must also bring their birth certificate, a valid photo ID, citizenship documents, and photocopies of everything for good measure. A mandatory fee must also be paid, which Schaff says tends to catch people by surprise.

“I’d say people tend to forget to bring a check to pay for their passport,” said Schaff. “The U.S. Department of State will only accept a check as a valid form of payment for a passport. It’s a tricky thing to remember in this day and age, where no one uses checks very often.”

This application process may seem lengthy to some, to the point where it can border on tedious if one needs to make repeated visits to gather the proper paperwork— but this is by no means intentional on the library’s part. When applying for a passport, even the smallest mistake can lead to a complete restart of the



photo | Brendan DeLuca-Rodenberg

A VIEW OF the Morton Mandan Public Library's Passport Service office.

process, making it crucial to get every detail right on the first try.

“While we keep the process as quick and easy as possible,” said Schaff, “it’s important to remember that passports are formal travel documents. Filling out the paperwork correctly and sending in the required documents and payment are essential. The process to get a passport is the same no matter which passport facility you visit. We are here to help you.”

Regardless of how difficult the process can be, Schaff states that the benefits of having a U.S. Passport far outweigh the temporary bouts of confusion. It is an essential tool to travel outside of the United States, and see everything they have to offer: an experience that provides a sense of freedom that little else can match.

“It’s certainly important if you want to travel

outside of the U.S.,” said Schaff, “and it is also useful for travel inside the U.S. Passports are also a great form of identification and are proof of citizenship. Personally, I think passports are important for the freedom they offer. I will never get tired of seeing new places, and having a passport unlocks those doors for me.”

Passport appointments are available by visiting the Morton Mandan Public Library’s website or by calling 701-667-5365 to speak with a passport agent. Appointments generally take place on weekdays in the afternoons and evenings, though a no-appointment session also takes place once a month. Passport forms are available at the library for free and can be accessed on the U.S. Department of State’s Travel.state.gov website.



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