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## Behind the Scenes: Meet ‘county-facer’ in chief Dwight Shellman

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Dwight Shellman's job title — county support manager for the Elections Division at the Colorado Secretary of State's Office — sounds wonkish enough to keep him toiling in the trenches of technocratic obscurity for the rest of his life. Yet, there he was, right in the middle of [a national news report not long ago by D.C. political pulse taker Politico](#) on our state's groundbreaking move to run a sophisticated cybersecurity audit of election results as a check against hacking:

"Many, many states are still using legacy voting systems that are 10 or 15 years old and are rapidly reaching their end of life," said Shellman. "In Colorado, we were a bit ahead of the curve," he added, noting that 54 of the 64 counties in the state will be using a "brand-new voting system" as of this year.

A well-deserved moment in the spotlight for the Aspen native and former Pitkin County elections manager — the job he left about four years ago to work for Secretary of State Wayne Williams. He now plays a pivotal role helping oversee the state's elections technology.

Shellman is one of those people whom others rely on to make sure complicated things actually work. He's also eminently likable, colleagues say. Secretary of State's Office communications chief Lynn Bartels calls him, "the kind of guy you want at your side whether you're working on a thorny election issue or schmoozing with clerks ... he's that good, he's that fun and, doggone it, most people like him."

His own description of his job? "A lot of my time I spend helping county clerks understand and effectively use all of those technologies." He also helps Colorado's 64 county clerks makes sure they are following proper procedures and heeding election laws. In other words, if you're a county clerk he's there for you. "County-facing," he calls it.

...But, as he makes clear, he doesn't do it alone. He won't even take credit for a whole lot of it: "A lot of people here contribute to the effort ... the voter registration database customer support team, our IT department, our voting systems team ... ballot access team ... and often our legal and policy team. In addition, county clerks provide a lot of support to one another.

Sometimes, it's the little details clerks' offices need most, like when it comes to formatting ballots: "They'll ask, 'Should I center-line this or left-line it?' or 'Should it be all caps?' We have great clerks and recorders, and they just want to make sure."

His hometown "is an amazing place to live," but back when he was a kid: "It was kind of a difficult place to grow up because it was this adult Disneyland. Children didn't really fit into the culture of the town at the time."

His dream job — other than the one he has now: "If I couldn't work here, I'd want my old job back."