

FOR THE

RECORD

JULY 2003

COUNTY RECORDER ONLINE LEADER

Online Leader Maricopa County, AZ - More Than Halfway to Goal of 60% E-Recording... From "The Real Estate Data Insight", May 6, 2003, pp 16 & 17

Maricopa County, Arizona, the fourth-largest county in the U.S., has the second-fastest growth rate in the nation. The county records between 7,000 and 12,000 documents each day with a staff of approximately 40 people.

Maricopa County's recorder's office, with the help of its IT staff, set up a virtual private network (VPN) to allow submitters to use any scanner and scanning software they choose to scan their own documents and submit them for recording.

The recorder's office in Maricopa County wanted to allow submitters to scan their own documents and submit them electronically to keep pace with the 10% to 15% increase in recording volumes each year. However, state law prohibited digital recording until the late nineties.

"Each company sets up its own VPN - a secure connection which allows them access to our network from their Web browser. They scan their documents and drop them electronically into a directory outside of our firewall. Our system automatically scans the directory every second and places the documents past our firewall into our own production environment," explained Frerichs.



In 1998, Arizona laws were changed to allow the digital submission of optically scanned originals, with the provision that only title insurers or their agents, state or federal banks, or government entities could submit electronic documents for recording. Barbara Frerichs, county recorder project manager, saw the change as an opportunity to improve recording efficiencies.

Documents recorded electronically are returned almost instantly, improving the process for lenders and title companies. After superimposing an image of the recording seal and information onto the scanned document image, employees of the county recorder's office place the combined image in the customer's return folder. Then, the title company or lender, in a matter of minutes, can print the recorded document and mail or e-

"On occasion, we visit other recorder's offices of similar size to see how they do things," she said. "In the late nineties, we visited Orange County, California, which had been doing digital recording for more than a year. They chose a third-party vendor, but we didn't feel the title companies we work with on a regular basis wanted a

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third party involved, so we met with our own IT staff to find a way to accomplish digital recording without using a third party." mail it to those waiting to receive it.

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Recorder's Office gets national accolades

Helen Purcell
County Recorder
Karen Osborne
Elections Director
Linda Weedon
Deputy Elections Director

111 South 3rd Avenue,
Phoenix, AZ 85003-2294
602-506-1511 • 602-506-3069 Fax
602-506-2348 TDD
www.recorder.maricopa.gov

In 1992 the NACCO Achievement Award for Design and Implementation was awarded to the Recorder's Automation Project.

In 1994 the NACCO Achievement Award for Re-Engineering was awarded to the Recorder's

Micrographics Department providing the Recorder's information and images on-line through public access.

Recorder's Office was inducted into the Year 2000 Computerworld Smithsonian Collection for Vote by Mail.

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Registration

Who Can Register

In Arizona, you are eligible to register to vote if you are a citizen of the United States, will be 18 years of age on or before the date of the next election following your registration, have not been convicted of a felony (unless rights have been restored), or have not been adjudicated mentally incompetent.

I Moved

You must be registered to vote at least 29 days before any election. It will be necessary for you to re-register before the 29-day deadline if you wish to change your political party affiliation.

Registration Forms

Registration forms are available at post offices, driver's license

locations, libraries, offices of city/town clerks, and many other government offices near you. Election information may be obtained by calling the Maricopa County Elections Department at 602/506-1511 or by writing to 111 South 3rd Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85003-2294. You may also download the registration form by accessing the Maricopa County Recorder's website - www.recorder.maricopa.gov or register online at www.servicearizona.com.

Arizona is an Open Primary State

Arizona law permits you to indicate or decline political affiliation when registering. Arizona is now an Open Primary state. A voter who is not registered in a recognized political party may choose

ballot of his or her choice at the Primary Election. In the General Election all candidates are on the ballot and you may vote your choice. This option does not apply to the Presidential Preference Election in February.

Voter Registration Card

You will receive a voter identification card from the Elections Department within 30 days after receipt of your voter registration form which will indicate your precinct name and other jurisdictional districts.

Sample Ballot

For each election, a sample ballot is sent to each household. It will list candidates and measures to be voted on at the election.

Election Day and Voting

Polls Open

The polls are open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Your Polling Site

The address of your polling site will be printed on the address label of your sample ballot. If you need further information about your polling site or directions, please access our website at www.recorder.maricopa.gov for mapping or location information

or call 602/506-1511.

Early Voting

Call Maricopa County Elections Department at 602/506-1511, and you will be provided information about requirements for requesting an early ballot. An early ballot enables a qualified elector to vote for the candidates and/or issues prior to the official election day. Qualified electors are not required

to give a reason for voting early.

Early voting may be done in person at the County Recorder's 3 offices or at any of the county satellites. Early ballots may be mailed to your residence by submitting a request in writing to the Maricopa County Elections Department, by using our website: www.recorder.maricopa.gov, or by calling 602/506-1511.

Other Services

Voter Assistance

You may also write to the Maricopa County Elections Department if you are interested in learning about special services available to assist voters who are homebound and

serve as a board worker at a polling site on election day, as well as serve in other capacities on the election day. The Elections Department is always looking for people to help with early voting processing, other processing boards, and workers at the polls on election day. Please call

unable to go to their
polling place on election
day.

602/506-1511 and let the operator
know you would like to help.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Elections
Department is to provide
access to the electoral
process for citizens,
jurisdictions, candidates, the
legislature and special
interest groups so that they
may have equal access and
may readily participate in
elections.

Board Workers

As a qualified elector you
may

County Recorder Online Leader (cont. from page 1)

"The VPN has resulted in faster document turnaround for our customers and fewer trips to the recorder's office," Frerichs said.

"We have about 50 customers dropping approximately 2,600 documents on a day-to-day basis in the VPN," said Frerichs.

"That's 35% of our recording volume." Frerichs added that the volume of documents recorded through the VPN is expected to increase to 45% to 50% soon. "Our goal is to receive and process 60% of the submitted documents electronically," she said.

In addition title companies, attorneys, and anyone else who records documents in Maricopa County can visit a live Web site to view anything they recorded that day, right online. "Through a live Web page, we can send and receive messages to and from our customers," said Frerichs. "If we're having problems with our telecommunications equipment, we can send out a broadcast message to all our users saying the VPN is down and they should try again in 20 minutes," she said. "Or, we can send an individual message to one company, and the company can send us a message letting us know they placed a document in the queue."

Maricopa County does both digital and e-recording, and Frerichs distinguishes between the two. "Digital recording means the document started out as an original piece of paper that had a normal signature," said Frerichs. "E-recording means the document never started out as paper. There are three levels of e-recording: one is digital recording, two is digital recording plus data, and three is totally electronic recording."

"With our current rate of growth,

to eliminate the scanning step for lien releases since the documents were created, signed, and recorded electronically. Maricopa County's e-recordings come in from out of state, said Frerichs, because Arizona has yet to pass its e-notary rules and regulations.* However, digitally recorded documents originate from inside as well as outside of the state.

Within the past year, Maricopa County has developed partnerships with city governments as well as businesses to increase its recording efficiency. "We have a partnership with Property Insight, a title plant in Arizona," said Frerichs. They key in information, such as legal descriptions and maps. We provide them with the documents they need in exchange for the extra data they key in, so that we can add it to our database. That means all we have to key in is the data they don't key in. So, instead of having eight data entry operators, I can have four." She said.

Though Maricopa County is no stranger to using advanced technologies in its processes, much of its innovation starts out as old-fashioned shoe leather. "Every day we evaluate our processes and ask our customers what they think," said Frerichs. For example, in the past, we would get documents that were stapled together. We would unstaple them so we could scan them, then we would staple them back together. We asked our customers what they thought of the process, and they said they didn't like the documents stapled because they have to unstaple them to make copies. It's those little things you find out that save you the most time," said Frerichs.

Electioneering

No person is allowed to remain inside the 75-foot limit while the polls are open **except for the purpose of voting**, or working at the polls. The only exception is for Kids Voting, youth in the booth, and necessary activities by the property owner. No news media, exit polling, or checkers are allowed within the 75-foot limit. In addition, electioneering is prohibited within 75 feet of the polls from 6 am to 7 pm on election day. No campaign related signs, buttons, literature, shirts, bumper stickers, advertisements, endorsements or written materials may be located nor be visible or audible to voters as they enter the 75 foot limit, as designated by the election board. If a voter is handed campaign material outside the 75-foot limit as they enter the polls they are to be advised to secure the item from view while in the polling place.

Many polling places have specific preferences about election day signage. Some places have designated specific areas for signs - others prohibit signs anywhere on the premises. Persons placing signs on the property must check with the property owner or manager first. Unauthorized signs may be removed and confiscated. See Recorder's website for campaigning/electioneering information.



HAVE YOU REGISTERED?

HAVE YOU REGISTERED?

HAVE YOU REGISTERED?

the only way for us to maintain our high level of customer service is through automation," said County Recorder **Helen Purcell**. "The addition of electronic recording to our office is a natural outgrowth of our ongoing efforts to remain a national leader in recording efficiency."

The new electronic recording system, which debuted on May 15, 2002, allowed title companies

"Helen Purcell, our county recorder, always wanted to make sure this office is forward thinking, out there on the edge," said Frerichs. "A lot of times we're on the bleeding edge. But she's willing to take that risk because she knows how important it is."

** Since the date of this article administrative rules have been signed by the state attorney general. June, 2003.*



ELECTION DATES

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ELECTION</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>REGISTRATION CUTOFF</u>
2003	Consolidated Election	March 11	February 10
	Consolidated Election	May 20	April 21
	Consolidated Election	September 9	August 11
	Consolidated Election	November 4	October 6
2004	Presidential Preference	February 3	January 5
	Consolidated Election	March 9	February 9
	Consolidated Election	May 18	April 19
	Primary Election	September 7	August 9
	General Election	November 2	October 4
2005	Consolidated Election	March 8	February 7
	Consolidated Election	May 17	April 18
	Consolidated Election	September 13	August 15
	Consolidated Election	November 8	October 10
2006	Consolidated Election	March 14	February 13
	Consolidated Election	May 16	April 17
	Consolidated Election	September 12	August 14
	Consolidated Election	November 7	October 9

Election Information

Candidates for Office - The Secretary of State designates to the County Board of Supervisors a list of offices for which candidates are to be nominated no later than 120 days before each primary election. Candidates for state offices file with the Secretary of State's office; candidates for county offices file with the County Elections Department. The candidate's nomination papers, their petition(s) with the required number of signatures, and any other required documents must be filed at these offices not less than 90 days nor more than 120 days prior to a primary election.

Voters with Disabilities - The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates the removal of physical barriers and the development of a cooperative partnership between the disabled citizen and the rest of the community. To this end, the Maricopa County Elections Department wants to ensure the greatest accessibility possible in the voting process. If you are a disabled citizen/voter and desire information on alternative voting procedures and materials, accessibility of polling places or if you have other concerns, please call 602/506-1511 for assistance. Our Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD) number is 602/506-2348.

Where and How to Vote - No less than 11 days before each county, state, and federal election, sample ballots are mailed by the Elections Department to every household that has a registered voter. Your assigned polling place is printed above your name on the mailing label. You may use your sample ballot as a guide when voting. On election day go to your assigned voting site, announce your name and address, sign your name in the register, receive your ballot, mark the ballot according to the directions, and insert the ballot in the scan voting equipment. Good Luck!

