



## **2005 YEAR END ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **VISION**

Register of Deeds is committed to be the best organization, a role model, by using the most advanced technology and innovative business practices. By providing courteous, professional and excellent service, we will exceed the expectations of the citizens.

### **MISSION**

The mission of the Guilford County Register of Deeds Office is to record, preserve, maintain and provide access to real estate and vital records in an effective and efficient manner in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes.

### **2005 DEPARTMENT GOALS**

- 1. IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE**
- 2. TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS**
- 3. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **1. IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE**

- Eliminated policy that required users to pay their own postage and provide envelopes for document return.
- Reduced copy costs for uncertified copies from 25 cents to 5 cents.

- Reduced copy costs for certified plats from \$2 to \$.50 a copy; reduced copy cost uncertified plats from \$1.00 to \$.10 a copy.
- Modified recording policy to accept documents unnecessarily rejected by previous Register.
- Indexing Procedures are being standardized to reduce potential errors for public search.
- Four electronic newsletters sent to users, elected officials, and the public providing updates Register of Deeds issues. (1100 subscribed)
- Two public user meetings in High Point (04/19/05) and Greensboro (04/21/05) attended by over 20 citizens. Notes published on ROD website.
- Public users attended Vendor Demonstrations for new computer system: Aptitude Solutions (7) on 02/22/05; BIS (15) on 03/16/05; Hart Intercivic (15) 04/06/05; Amcad (7) 04/14/05; Alpha Corp 04/15/05; Fidlar (10) 05/03/05; Cott Systems (8) 05/11/05; Manatron (11) 05/19/05.
- Public users provided written feedback to RFP Selection Committee related to the four finalists for the new computer system (November 2005)
- New ACD telephone system implemented on January 31, 2006 led by Office Specialist to give customers immediate assistance. The ACD telephone system comes with software package for monitoring our efficiency in helping the public.
- Created Identity Theft Resource Information on website with sign-up page to communicate with public re: removal of Social Security Numbers from public records on the Internet (350 sign-ups).
- Registered [www.GuilfordDeeds.com](http://www.GuilfordDeeds.com) to make our website more accessible to the public.
- Enhanced web access for public in coordination with Information Services; implemented customer survey and public can contact us via web more easily.
- Hired office specialist to serve public inquiries and for call management.
- Created a voluntary “Good Deeds Team” to support local charities.
- Created new envelopes with historical information provided by Greensboro and High Point Convention and Visitors Bureau.
- Signed over 250 notary applications.

## **2. TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS**

- Business Information Systems (BIS) selected as new computer software provider on January 30, 2006 by RFP Selection Committee. This recommendation will be on the Board of Commissioners Agenda for approval on February 16, 2006.
- Military discharge scanning completed 02/21/05. The result saves staff time processing DD214 documents for public.

- RFP for Imaging Real Estate Books
  1. Awarded to Business Information Systems (\$136,000 from Automated Enhancement Fund). This project will match indexes to images from 1982 to 1771 and “go-live” with new computer system.
  2. When completed, every real estate document can be viewed online. Only a few NC counties can provide this service.
- Real Estate imaging project for documents back to 1771 was completed in June 2005. This project was ongoing for several years. The current Register implemented image verification process to improve quality of the project.
- Contracted with Eichman Software Consultants to assist Deeds staff in streamlining workflow and processing of public documents.
- RFP for a new software system for the ROD office (200 pages)
  1. Released on August 1, 2005; tentative award date is February 27, 2006.
  2. RFP for hardware to be released after software vendor chosen.
  3. Tentative implementation July, 2006
  4. Workflow plans created for each service area: Land Records, Vitals, Vault, Scanning, High Point.
  5. ROD supervisors visited Forsyth County Register of Deeds (02/09/05); Mecklenburg County ROD (02/18/05); Iredell County ROD (04/06/05); and Randolph County ROD (04/05/05).
- ACD telephone system
  1. Short-term goal to create easier call flow.
  2. Immediate goal to change to ACD system for better customer service and management.
- Hired Business Development Analyst with focus on performance management.
- Enhanced Plat System search engine implemented through GIS to better serve surveyors and the public (April 2005).
- Two additional Tax terminals have been integrated to 5 PCs for user convenience and greater accessibility to Tax records.
- Hired part-time position to scan old deed books and deal with “temp-to-perm” sheet backlog during previous Registers’ tenure. (A potential liability issue corrected.)
- Moved digitized document information from snap servers to Storage Area Network (SAN) through Guilford County IS department for improved data storage capacity.
- Reviewing existing forms with goal of making templates for electronic production and reduce paperwork.
- Presentation given to Paralegal Association in June 2005.

### **3. Organizational Development**

- Jeff Thigpen completed individual meetings with all 33 employees in 2005.

- Individual meetings for 2006 began January 15<sup>th</sup>. (Meetings consist of review individual goals and expectations and for soliciting employment involvement for in identifying areas of improvement for office)
- Merit-based increase policy is now consistent with Guilford County effective January, 2005
  1. Employees can now get a “5” maximum on yearly Employee Performance Appraisals.
  2. Increases are no longer held by Register and will be dispersed the month of the appraisal, not in April of each year.
- Vision and Mission statement created for Register of Deeds office in collaboration with Guilford County Human Resources (Sept. 05)
- Performance Goals set for each area of office and administration with assistance from Guilford County Human Resources. (Nov. 2005)
- Initiated Team-Building process with Guilford County Human Resources and Fred Starling, HR Group.
  1. Frontline staff has been trained to create performance goals, enhance problem solving skills, and appropriate ways to address conflict.
  2. Staff involvement has been increased in shaping future office operations
- Human Patterns Software program implemented to enhance employee evaluation and performance management (January, 2006)
- Vacation Policy
  1. No longer a “Monday Friday” rule and two days in conjunction with a holiday.
  2. Indexing and Recording areas split from Vacation policy so each employee can get adequate vacation time.
- Supervisors Meetings have been implemented
  1. Previously supervisors did not have regular meetings.
  2. Assessing staff concerns is ongoing priority.
  3. Workflow analysis completed with Supervisory Team.
  4. Direct communication from the ROD to Supervisors.
- All supervisors, along with Register, have completed Supervisor Trainings with the Guilford County Human Resources (HR).
  1. ROD met with HR to implement the principles of training.
  2. All supervisors and Administrators to ROD school (9)
  3. Five employees sent to NCROD on recording standards
  4. Nine employees sent to ROD conference
  5. All supervisors and Administrators went to Durham for presentation on Web-Portal concept for NC RODs
- Training for Employees

1. Sent 11 staff to Asheboro for NC Register of Deeds District Training covering every area in the office. Three staff members sent to Buncombe County for NC ROD District Training.
  2. ROD Administrators and Supervisory staff to NC Register of Deeds School for employee certification.
  3. Sent staff to Team Building and Conflict Resolution training with Human Resources and working to implement principles on daily basis.
  4. Developing an internal strategy for cross-training to better utilize existing staff.
  5. Each employee has been given an email account and computers upgraded for Microsoft Office for better office communication
- Dress Code
    1. No longer a panty hose requirement.
    2. Staff can wear tennis shoes. (Policy resulting from seven staff members having medical approval due to nature of work and hard floors.)
    3. If an employee is not sick or tardy from work during the month, the employee is given two additional dress-down days of their choice during the following month to foster employee morale and good attendance.
  - Personnel Policy Procedures
    1. Consolidating memos into an Internal Manual for employees to simplify standard operating procedures.
    2. Collaborating with HR, County Attorney, and employees on language and substance of procedures.

## **Capital Projects**

- New Workstations and carpeting installed in Recording Area in Greensboro (January 22, 2006)
- New Workstations and carpeting to be installed for High Point by June 2006.
- Tiling installed in Greensboro office in high-use areas due to deteriorated carpet (05/01/05).
- Dividers installed in Indexing Area to reduce noise distortion for staff (04/08/05).
- Reconfiguration of office will be needed to match new workflow plan when new computer system is installed.
  1. Newer furniture and workstations will be needed for all ROD areas with the implementation of new computer system.
    - Counters installed by former Register of Deeds in Greensboro will be replaced with more user-friendly modules.
    - Vital Records will have new, extended countertops.