



THE THIRD-QUARTER REPORT

Key Actions from December 6, 2004 to October 1, 2005

A. IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE

- 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.
- 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.
- Modified recording policy to accept documents unnecessarily rejected by previous Register.
- Indexing Procedures are being standardized to reduce potential errors for public search.
- Three electronic newsletters sent to users, elected officials, and the public providing updates Register of Deeds issues. (1100 subscribed)
- 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.
- Implementing new ACD telephone system on January 1, 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 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.

B. TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS

- Military discharge scanning completed 02/21/05. The result saves staff time processing DD214 documents.
- RFP Awarded 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 and verification of documents back to 1771 was completed in June 2005. This project was ongoing for several years. This Register implemented image verification to improve overall quality of the project.
 - Contracted with Darrel Eichman and Associates to assist Deeds staff streamline workflow and processing of public documents, and completed a 200-page RFP for a new computer system.
 - RFP for a new software system for the ROD office
 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.
 - Reviewing existing paper flow with goal of making templates for electronic production.
 - Presentation given to Paralegal Association in June 2005.

C. Organizational Development

- Jeff Thigpen completed individual meetings with all 33 employees.
- Merit-based increase policy now consistent with Guilford County.
 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.
- Performance Goals set for each area of office and administration with assistance from Guilford County Human Resources.
- 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 to be implemented to enhance employee evaluation and performance management. (DSS and ROD)
- 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. Sending staff to Team Building and Conflict Resolution training with Human Resources and working to implement principles on daily basis.
 3. Developing an internal strategy for cross-trainings.
 4. Each employee has been given an email account and computers upgraded for Microsoft Office.
- 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.
 - Personnel Policy Procedures
 1. Consolidating memos into an Internal Manual for employees.
 2. Collaborating with HR, County Attorney, and employees on language and substance of procedures.

D. Capital Projects

- New Workstations and carpeting to be installed for Greensboro and High Point offices in FY 2005-06.
- Tiling installed in Greensboro office in high-use areas (05/01/05).
- Dividers installed in Indexing Area (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.