



Mary Kiffmeyer

MINNESOTA SECRETARY OF STATE

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Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer, Dakota County Officials Oversee State's 1st "e-Recording" of Real Estate Records

--Thought To Be the Most Far-Reaching Transactional e-Gov't Project Underway in US

HASTINGS—Minnesota Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer, chair of the state's Electronic Real Estate Recording (ERER) Task Force, and Joel Beckman of the Dakota County Property Records Office today oversaw the state's first electronic filing of real estate records. In partnership with US Bank, US Recordings, Inc. facilitated the electronic filing, referred to as "e-recording."

Today's e-recording is part of an implementation project developed by the state's ERER Task Force (see <http://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/lcc/erertf.htm>). The task force consists of public and private sector stakeholders. Following a comprehensive four-year process of assessing needs and legislative requirements, standards were adopted for electronic real estate filings in June of 2002.

"The proceedings of the task force have represented a dynamic public-private partnership in the development of statewide standards for e-recording of real estate records," said Kiffmeyer. "Both sides were talking and agreeing, and this is a necessary foundation when embarking on a project of this magnitude."

Today's transactions represent Phase 1 of a two-phase implementation and include the filing of "Satisfactions" (acknowledgement of full payment of mortgage debt) and "Certificates of Release" (notification of payment of mortgage debt). Both documents are simple, typically single-page documents. Phase 2 will include the e-recording of other, more complex filings encompassing all the documents associated with a residential real estate transaction. Those documents—including deeds, mortgages, certificates of release, well certificates, and certificates of real estate value—typically exceed 15 pages and include detailed financial and legal information.

"Pilot tests—including the one today in Dakota County—are meant to validate the standards we've put in place and to evaluate the technology that is being built. These tests will help us determine if any adjustments to the standards are needed to ensure transactions continue to be filed accurately and efficiently," said Kiffmeyer.

The e-recording of real estate records will deliver savings of time and paperwork to both county governments and the private sector. It will eliminate technical errors that often result in document rejections and will expedite real estate transactions. Dakota is one of five pilot counties testing ERER standards; the other four are Hennepin, Lyon, Renville, and Roseau. Eventually, e-recordings could be available statewide.

"To illustrate the practical implications of this initiative," explained Dakota County Property Records Director Joel Beckman. "Dakota County currently has 10 staff people involved in processing a single document through various steps, and 30 days or more elapse between receipt of the document and filing in the county's database. A totally automated process will require minimal staff, and the time to record a document will be reduced to less than a minute."

"For consumers, this means that a process that currently can take months for complex filings will be expedited in minutes," added US Recordings CEO Jeff Carlson.

"Minnesota's electronic real estate recording project is one of the most far-reaching e-government projects underway in the nation," said State Archivist and task force secretary Robert Horton. "This is really something to be proud of."

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