



Mary Kiffmeyer

MINNESOTA SECRETARY OF STATE

For Release:
17 March 2004

Contact: Kent Kaiser
651-297-8919

Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer Announces Successful Execution of First-in-the-Nation, Multi-Platform, Electronic Real Estate Recordings Based on Statewide Standards

Statewide Standards Allow Acceptance of Filings from Any Compliant Technology

SAINT PAUL—Minnesota Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer, Chair of Minnesota's Electronic Real Estate Recording (ERER) Task Force (see <http://www.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/lcc/erertf.htm>) today announced the nation's first multi-platform electronic real estate recordings based on statewide standards.

In Minnesota, Dakota County officials effected these landmark transactions by implementing statewide electronic filing standards developed by Minnesota's ERER Task Force. The real estate filings documented the satisfaction of mortgages on properties and were submitted by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and U.S. Bank and Bremer Bank. U.S. Bank and Bremer Bank use U.S. Recordings's submitter software while Wells Fargo uses an INGENIO product. Having Dakota County's Fidlar application accept filings from different technology submitters provides the first successful test of the platform-neutral standards developed by the ERER Task Force.

Minnesota uses an eXtensible Markup Language- (XML-) formatted data standard, a markup language first developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Because Minnesota's standards are based on XML, they are infrastructure-independent and allow for communication between different systems. Using a schema structure for this data allows for the utilization of more specific data and business rules and for more complex e-government and e-commerce transactions.

Minnesota's ERER Task Force was commissioned in 2001 and authorized to establish statewide standards for electronic real estate recording in Minnesota. Standards were adopted by the Task Force in June, 2002, and soon after pilot counties were selected for two phases of testing. Participating pilot counties are Dakota, Hennepin, Lyon, Renville and Roseau. Phase I is testing the e-recording of Satisfactions of Mortgage and Certificates of Release documents. Since May 2003, over 2,400 Satisfactions of Mortgage and Certificates of Release have been electronically recorded in pilot counties using Minnesota's ERER Task Force standards. Phase II testing will include e-recording the Mortgage, Deed, Certificate of Real Estate Value (CRV), Well Certificate, and Assignment of Mortgage documents. These documents are filed between multiple County offices—Auditor, Treasurer, and Recorder—which dramatically increases the complexity of this work. With the completion of Phase II testing, Minnesota will be the first state with a fully automated real estate recording process.

-Continued-

Members of the public and private sector in real estate, as well as real estate consumers all benefit from the enhanced efficiency of this process.

“What this advancement means for the average property owner or potential property owner is that land transactions will be conducted much more efficiently, accurately, and quickly,” said Kiffmeyer. “For example, before activity can take place regarding a piece of property, all records need to be properly recorded at the county offices; people wanting to refinance their mortgages or to close land deals can lose valuable time if they need to wait for this process to be completed. These issues will be much less a factor in the electronic filing world.”

From the county government perspective, Dakota County Property Records Director Joel Beckman reports, “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 one minute.”

“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. “Pilot tests—including the ones that have taken place in Dakota County—are meant to validate the standards we’ve put in place and to evaluate the technology that is being built. We have been very pleased with the results thus far. This project is one of the most far-reaching e-government projects underway in the nation. This is really something for our state to be proud of.”

Mary Kiffmeyer (R-Big Lake Township) is Minnesota’s 20th Secretary of State and President of the National Association of Secretaries of State. Downloadable press photo available at <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/office/bio.html>.

###