

## Role of Iowa County Recorders



The office of County Recorder was created by the first Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa in 1839. The basic duty of the County Recorder was to maintain official records of documents affecting title to real estate in order to preserve property rights and protect innocent third parties in real estate transactions. Since 1839, County Recorders have acquired more responsibilities such as Registrar of Vital Records, issuer of recreational vehicle registrations and hunting and fishing licenses.

### Iowa Economic System

Every parcel, building, and piece of property in your county is represented in a document that has been recorded in a County Recorder's office. Recorders protect and preserve recorded documents for future generations. These documents are a visible sign of a complex behind the scenes process that is foundational to the rest of the economy.

### Recorder Responsibilities

#### **Executive Officer**

A County Recorder has a business to run. Everyone in the county is a customer and shareholder. Many processes within a county are dependent on the processes carried out in the office of the County Recorder. On a daily basis a County Recorder works with at least four State Departments, including the Iowa Secretary of State, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Department of Revenue and some work with Passport Services on the federal level.

#### **Financial Officer**

A Recorder's office is responsible for a substantial amount of money. This money represents significant revenue to the county and state budgets. Money can be processed electronically (EFT) and is managed in a fiscally responsible manner. Funds brought in by County Recorders help support the operation of their office. The funds generated by County Recorders are a direct financial relief for county taxpayers. Millions of dollars collected by County Recorders are contributed to general funds.

#### **Information Officer**



County Recorders are the Chief Information Officer of their office. They archive all new property records in electronic format. Recorders have integrated with Iowa Land Records, the first state-wide land records system and the first state-wide E-Submission system.

With the creation of the Iowa Land Records system, County Recorders were able to create and maintain a state-wide database for county records that can be accessed 24/7, and while doing so, a disaster recovery system that all County Recorders can access was created. More than 16 million documents are accessible to the public through Iowa Land Records.

Iowa Land Records is much more than just a web site for looking up real estate records. It is also the first statewide portal for electronic recording. Since 2007 Iowa County Recorders have recorded more than one million documents through the web. On average 34% of all documents are now electronically recorded.

[www.iowalandrecords.org](http://www.iowalandrecords.org)

#### **Archive Specialist**

A Recorder's office is responsible for centuries of information that must be kept forever. These documents must be protected and be accessible for public inspection. From paper to microfilm to digitized images, it is imperative that County Recorders preserve vital records and real estate records forever. Recorders are preservationist and archivist who must be ready to adopt new technologies to maintain and sometimes convert information to formats which are accessible to businesses and citizens.

#### **Outdoor Enthusiast**

Recorders support natural resources and local economies by promoting Iowa's outdoor recreational activities. Iowa County Recorders register recreational vehicles in partnership with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Recorders also provide customers with easy access to fishing and hunting licenses.

#### **Privacy Protector**

Did you know that County Recorders are the first line of defense against fraud? By monitoring new documents for Social Security numbers and other personal information they protect their customer's private information. Personal information is redacted from public document images. Recorders enforce state laws that restrict access to military and vital records, they also monitor real estate transactions for suspicious activity.

#### **Registrar of Vital Records**

In 1997, Recorders took on the additional role of "Registrar". This duty includes management of birth records, marriage records and death records. Recorders work closely with the Iowa Department of Public Health to manage all vital records. The Department of Public Health has developed a state-wide vital records system which allows County Recorders to process electronic vital records across county lines.



## Educational Meetings

Recorders attend several educational meetings outside of their office each year. These meetings include spring and fall school with the Iowa State Association of Counties and the Iowa County Recorders Association summer school.

These meetings include training with State Departments, training and updates with the Iowa Land Records team, legislative updates and updates on all policies and standards. In addition to educational meetings, software user meetings are held twice a year for updates. Each district in the State of Iowa also holds district meetings periodically.

## ICRA Certification Program



In 2010 the Iowa County Recorders Association Executive Board appointed a task force to look into developing a formalized continuing education program to help County Recorders and Deputies fulfill their managerial duties and professional responsibilities. A small committee reached out for assistance from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. A proposal to develop a Certification Program that would lead to "Certified Status" was brought to the Association and approved in the fall of 2010.

The Iowa County Recorders Association Certification Program is a two year program which consists of earning 12 core credit hours to obtain Certified Recorder status or Certified Deputy status.

## ICRA Committees

The Iowa County Recorders Association has several Committees in place to assist with various aspects of the association. Iowa County Recorders Association Committees include the following:

- Vital Records Committee
- DNR Liaison Committee
- Certification Committee
- Records Retention Manual Committee
- Recorders Manual Committee

## ESS Committees

In addition to serving on Committees for the Iowa County Recorders Association, County Recorders also serve on various Committees relating to the Electronic Services System, also known as Iowa Land Records. The Committees and Subcommittees make a variety of decisions in relation to the state-wide Iowa Land Records system. Iowa County Recorders are represented on the following Electronic Services System (ESS) Committees and Subcommittees:

- ESS Coordinating Committee
- ESS Finance Subcommittee
- ESS Management Subcommittee
- ESS Standards Subcommittee
- ESS Marketing and Communications

## Contacting Your County Recorder



*"Recorders Produce Results"*

