The ROD Team

- Heather Schwersenska, Register of Deeds
- Michelle Wedde, Deputy
- Brittany Harms, Deputy
Background – How we began…

- Northwest Territory law first created a County Office of Record in 1795.
- The office of the Register of Deeds was established in Wisconsin in 1836.
- In 1848, the Wisconsin Constitution established the Register of Deeds as a permanent element of county-level government.
- In 1849 statutory duties were created.
- Offices are regulated by many State statutes.
- Department operating costs are offset by fees, mostly state mandated.
ROD Fun Facts!

- Waushara County was established on February 15, 1851.
  - Oldest Land Record – dated 11/9/1850
  - Oldest Birth Record – 1/19/1831
  - Oldest Death Record – 12/7/1876
  - Oldest Marriage Record – 8/18/1852
Why is the ROD Important?

- The Register of Deeds Office holds the key that unlocks the history of each parcel of land in the County by maintaining the official Public Property Records.
- The Register of Deeds records, protects & provides access to the important/valuable documents of your families’ lives.
- WI State statutes identify records as permanent/archival documents because of their legal and historical importance.
- Property records are the foundational documents of the real estate industry.
Why is the ROD Important?

- Recording of legal documents in the Register of Deeds office puts the world on notice that something important has happened or will happen.
- Property records prove ownership in chain of title, describe legal boundaries & provide information on easements, covenants, restrictions, and liens on property.
- Provide a historic timeline to allow the act of searching records to determine clear title. The time a transaction is recorded becomes an important element in rights and relationships.
Who uses ROD Records?

- Other County Departments
- Banks
- Title Companies
- Attorneys
- Surveyors
- Builders
- Planning Companies
- Developers
- Plumbers
- Appraisers
- Residents/Citizens and more
Who uses ROD Records?
## Statistical Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2014 (YTD 5/31)</th>
<th>2015 (YTD 5/31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Records Recorded</td>
<td>6,170</td>
<td>4,996</td>
<td>1,805</td>
<td>2,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROD Fees Collected</td>
<td>$89,850</td>
<td>$87,225</td>
<td>$27,027</td>
<td>$40,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Transfer Fees Collected</td>
<td>$50,638</td>
<td>$50,869</td>
<td>$13,742</td>
<td>$19,672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20% to County)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redaction Fees Collected</td>
<td>$30,850</td>
<td>$25,360</td>
<td>$9,315</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vital Records Requested</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vital Record Fees Collected</td>
<td>$10,253</td>
<td>$11,517</td>
<td>$4,098</td>
<td>$5,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warranty Deeds Recorded</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lis Pendens Recorded</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheriffs Deeds Recorded</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Recording Fee Split

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Land Information Fees 59.72(5)(b)</th>
<th>State DOA Fees 59.72(5)(a)</th>
<th>County General Fund</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Other Revenues/Fees Collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROD Online Revenues</td>
<td>Did not have own account</td>
<td>$22,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Records Modernization</td>
<td>$40,440</td>
<td>$31,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Records Internet Project</td>
<td>$11,980</td>
<td>$9,838</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014 (YTD 5/31)</th>
<th>2015 (YTD 5/31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$12,280</td>
<td>$11,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$3,610</td>
<td>$3,980</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**ROD Hot Topics**

- **eRecordings Continue to Increase Recording Efficiencies**
  - **Waushara County**
    - 2012 – 4.8%
    - 2013 – 13.5%
    - 2014 – 19.9%
    - 2015 (YTD) – 29%
  - **Statewide** – 61% or 44 out of 72 counties
    - 2011 – 16% of docs were eRecorded
    - 2012 – 21% of docs were eRecorded
    - 2013 – 24% of docs were eRecorded
    - 2014 – 28% of docs were eRecorded

- **Wisconsin Realtors Association (WRA)**
  - 2015 April Home Sales Report (vs. April 2014)
    - Waushara Co: Sales are same AND Values are increasing
    - Statewide: Sales AND Values are increasing
ROD Hot Topics cont.

- Marriage Licenses/Certified Copies issued online
- Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB) Changes (effective 8/1/2015)
  - Lenders become responsible for paying high fines based on the errors of their vendors.
  - Largest effect on Title Companies, Attorneys and other Closing Agents and Lender Vendors
  - Addresses issues with settlement processes (i.e. timely recording and tracking of rejections…)
  - Predicted that # of eRecordings will increase*
  - Other states will adopt uniform recording fees*
  - Having records available online will be even more important*

* Waushara and many other Wisconsin Counties are already ahead of the game in these areas!!
ROD Projects

- Software Conversion Follow Up
  - Went LIVE week of July 7th
  - Index No Image records (12,632)
  - Conversion Exceptions (20,554)
- Added a 3rd eRecording Vendor
  - $0 cost to County
  - Improved Recording Process
    - Directly into AVID
    - Communicates with DOR
- Rolled Out Property Fraud Alert
Continuous ROD Projects

- Back Indexing Real Estate Records*
  - 2013 – 5,000 docs @ .70 = $3,500
  - 2014 - 10,869 docs @ .70 = $7,608
  - 2015 (YTD) – 17,539 docs @ .70 = $12,277
  - 180,000 + to go😊

- Indexing Tract Indexes*
  - 15,000 images

*Both increase the value of our online resources & generate additional revenues.
What has the ROD been up to?

- **Active in WRDA**
  - Attend Conferences (3 annually)
  - Handbook Committee, Chair
    - Reviewed & Updated WRDA Handbook
  - Indexing & Forms Committee

- **Fidlar Educational Symposium** (May 2015)
  - eReturning docs, Increase indexed data consistencies, CFPB changes, Property Fraud Alert, Importance of electronic records

- **Enrolled in Certified Public Manager program offered through UW Madison**
  - Covers all aspects of leadership (i.e. communication, writing, problem solving, strategic planning & thinking)
ROD Department Plan Outline

- Mission Statement
- S.W.O.T. Analysis
- Strategic Initiatives
- Style Assessments
  - Learning
  - Communication
  - Personality
ROD Mission Statement

- To provide and protect the integrity of the official county repository for Real estate records and Vital records.
- To provide safe archival storage and convenient access to these public records.
- To implement statutory changes, system modernization, program and procedure evaluation and staff development to assure a high level of timely service for our citizen-customers.
## ROD S.W.O.T. Analysis

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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ROD Strengths

- **Staff**
  - Team players, willing to learn new things, experienced, empathetic, great work ethic

- **Strong Customer Service**
  - Acknowledge customers, friendly and helpful, quick service (vs DMV)

- **Knowledgeable about other Departments**
  - Point customers in right direction

- **Strong Staff/Supervisor Relationship**
ROD Weaknesses

- Little continuing education for Deputies
- Inability to issue State-wide vital records
- Document indexing inconsistencies (i.e. Easement conveyances or lack thereof)
- Sharing of staff between departments
ROD Opportunities

- Current Software System
  - Ability to generate addn’l revenues
  - Ability to standardize indexing
- More scanned/indexed records (helps public search remotely)
- Increase in recording count
  - Upswing in economy would result in increase of property purchases & refinances
  - Purchase/development of vacant lands by business would attract people to Waushara Co
  - Population increase would increase land sales and vital records
- State-wide issuance of vital records (addn’l revenue generator)
ROD Threats

- Budget Restraints
- Possible lack of support from committees
- Tighter bank regulations reduced the # of recordings
- Downswing in economy reduced # of property purchases & recordings
ROD Strategic Initiatives

- Embracing our Mission, Vision and Core Values
  - Strong customer service, friendly, helpful and knowledgeable
  - Add Mission to email signatures and letterhead
  - Sign(s) in office and/or have small cards at our desks

- Creating Collaborative and Sustainable Plans
  - Seek input from and provide information to all affected departments when making changes to procedures, software, etc.
  - Seek input from and communicate changes with external customers

- Ensuring Fiscal Responsibility
  - Review item lines of budget carefully
  - Set a sustainable budget
  - More records online = more revenues generated
ROD Strategic Initiatives Cont…

- **Sharing Our Successes**
  - Compliment and recognize one another consistently (other departments too)
  - “You’re Amazing” cards
  - Experienced staff that supports one another and embraces change

- **Commitment to Continuous Improvement**
  - **Education**
    - Deputies to attend one training/education class per year (i.e. communication, leadership, ROD skills/statute regulations)
    - ROD attends WRDA conferences regularly and is enrolled in CPM Program
  - **Process Improvement**
    - Utilize software to increase efficiencies in how we do work
Questions and Comments