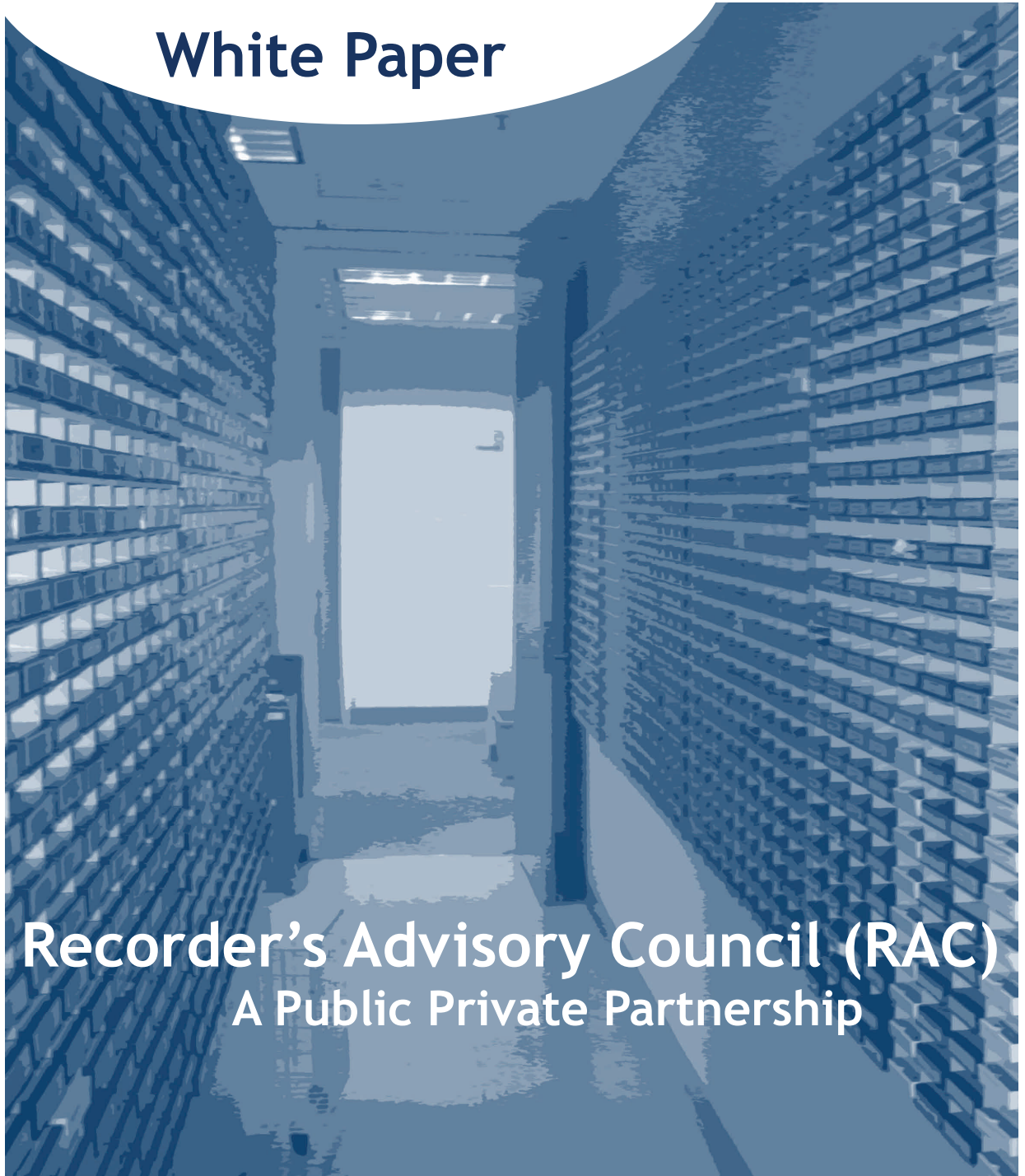


Office of the Clark County Recorder Las Vegas, Nevada



A CENTURY OF SERVICE

White Paper



Recorder's Advisory Council (RAC)
A Public Private Partnership

Office of the Clark County Recorder White Paper

Table of Contents	Page
Introduction and Summary	1
About the Recorder	2
Importance of Public Private Partnerships	3
Housing Market	4
Recorder Workload	6
Problems and Solutions	7
Creation of Recorder’s Advisory Council	7
Purpose of the Recorder’s Advisory Council	8
Accomplishments	8
Meeting Set-up	9
Plans for the Future	9

Introduction and Summary

Local government interacts with citizens and provides leadership within the community. Therefore, it is essential for government officials to do everything we can to deliver efficient services to our constituents.

The purpose of this White Paper is to offer a method of creating better public services through a rebalancing of the relationship between local government and frequent users to allow customers to have a voice regarding the issues that concerns them the most.

This White Paper captures the success of the collaborative partnership that has been established between the large volume customers and other members of the general public who frequent the Recorder's Office.

The White Paper outlines the important contribution towards strengthening local leadership, building stability and accountability to citizens through new executive arrangements.

RAC provides a new approach and a creative opportunity for constituents to play a role in sharing their expertise in an effort to explore efficient changes and technologically enhanced services to better meet the public's needs. Collaboration enables and empowers citizens and provides a vehicle whereby they may become engaged in formulating the services they receive.

We approach the new relationship based on conversations about what is best in terms of customer service. Often we see frequent users rising to the challenge of leading in their areas of expertise by becoming more proactive and working to create the most of the opportunities of the 21st century.



Debbie Conway
County Recorder

BUILDING BRIDGES

ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS

CREATING COLLABORATIVES

About the Recorder

Duties and Authority of the Clark County Recorder

The duties and authority of the Clark County Recorder are established by state law. The County Recorder records and indexes documents deposited in her office that are authorized, entitled or required by law to be recorded. The County Recorder collects the fees required by state law for the performance of her services. The County Recorder is not authorized to give legal advice, or to determine legal rights and responsibilities of the parties to the documents that she records.

Biography

Debbie Conway has served the public for over 20 years, and is currently Clark County's Recorder, elected January 2007. Since taking office, her focus has been on technological enhancements and services to customers; recently implementing on-line *e-Recording* and two new branch offices.

Prior to that, Debbie was the County's Business Development Manager. She directed the Summer Business Institute, a high school mentorship program which provided hundreds of students with internships and scholarships. She produced and hosted KCEP's radio talk show, "*Economic Empowerment Into the 21st Century*;" and is an adjunct instructor for the College of Southern Nevada.

Debbie served(s) on these boards: *Academy of Finance, National Association of Minority Contractors, Women in Construction, Business Development Advisory Council, Clark County Credit Union, Recorder Advisory Council, Frontier Girl Scouts Board of Directors.*

Debbie was featured in "*1997 Distinguished Women in Southern Nevada*;" Small Business Administration's "*1998 Woman Advocate of the Year*;" Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce's "*2002 Community Achievement Award in Public Service*," *In Business Las Vegas* "*2003 Most Influential Women In Business*;" and KLAS TV's "*2004 Portraits of Pride*" Award. She is also a graduate of the Leadership Las Vegas Class of 2000. She was a finalist for the 2009 *Women of Distinction Award* in the category of Philanthropy, Community, and Government Services. The Recorder and Assessor formed a collaborative partnership and are the 2009 recipients of two national awards (NACo and NACRC) for best practices in implementing the Q-Matic queue management system.

Debbie hails from the great State of Mississippi where she earned her Bachelors of Business Administration Degree from Saginaw Valley University, and Masters of Business Administration Degree from Delta State University.

Importance of Public Private Partnerships

Clark County, Nevada has always had a history of fostering and encouraging public/private partnerships. This is because county officials have a clear awareness that government does not have all the answers, and that by, working together with the citizens as well as the private sector, we can craft solutions to community challenges that result in equitable and positive solutions for everyone.

By building on each others' ideas, collectively we develop plans and programs that are frequently larger and more effective than those initiatives based solely on one point of view.

Through the use of town boards and citizens' advisory committees, and countless citizen volunteers participating on various committees, task forces, and focus groups, Clark County government has strived to constantly remain responsive and transparent to all its stakeholders. On a practical level, who better to participate in the making of plans and programs than those who must live with the results!

In our Constitution, which serves as our overriding charter, we see that the foundation of our representative democracy is based on the core principle that it is "*We the People*," who make the decisions, who are engaged, and who are committed to help mold and shape our own destiny!

With a citizen participation orientation, it

should not be surprising that the Clark County Recorder's Office would reach out to develop an effective Recorder Advisory Council (RAC).

While public/private partnerships are the essential basis of our representative democracy, up until 2007, the Recorder's Office only established informal relationships with its principal customers, the title companies and other large-volume customers. Attempts were made over the years to encourage better lines of communication between the two groups.

Some previous recorders tried to increase communications by attending title companies networking groups on a regular basis. This was a great opportunity to discuss issues and exchange ideas, and it was well-received as these recorders attempted to improve communications to address the needs of large-volume customers. It was still rather informal, and did not allow for ample opportunity to discuss what was happening within the Recorder's Office.

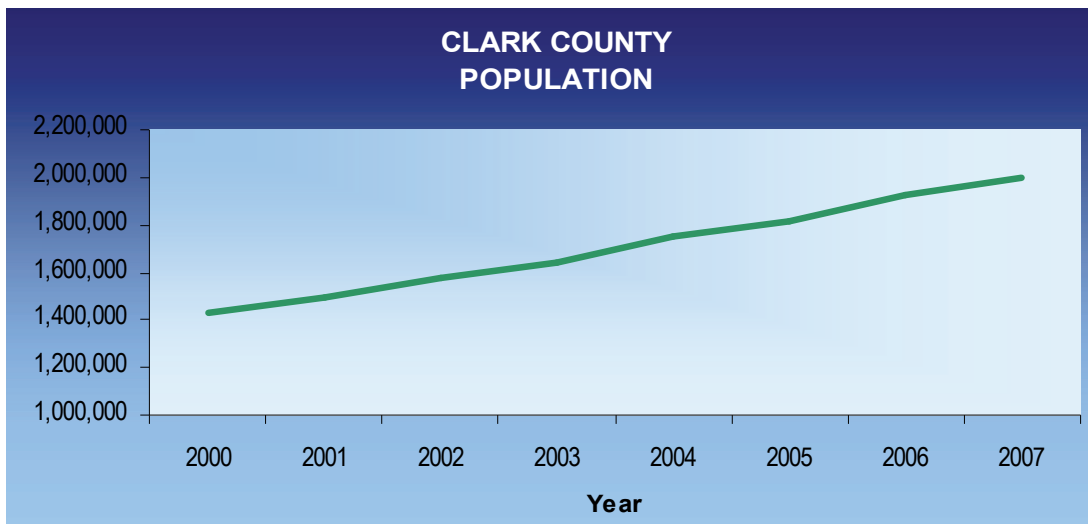


Recorder Conway at the first RAC Meeting, August 30, 2007.

Housing Market

Previous recorders also attempted to encourage better relationships by simply phoning and meeting with individual title companies and the large-volume customers. Inclusiveness was always the ultimate goal, yet there was still the potential for unequal representation, because it was not possible to grant everyone the same access to speak with the Recorder on a regular basis.

Because there were not large fluctuations in the housing market; these methods of regular information exchange between the different parties, while not perfect, continued to be used. The population in the Las Vegas Valley and Clark County as a whole has been increasing at an average rate of about 5,000¹ newcomers per month for at least 20 years now, so that steady rise was easy to predict and not surprising.



¹ Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning Demographics—Historical Population http://www.accessclarkcounty.com/depts/comprehensive_planning/demographics/Documents/CCHistoricalPopSummaryWorksheet1990toPresent.pdf

² Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning Demographics-Clark County's Resident and Visitor Population http://www.accessclarkcounty.com/depts/comprehensive_planning/demographics/Documents/2008ResidentVisitorPop.pdf
Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority <http://www.lvcva.com/getfile/Historical%201970%20to%202008.pdf?fileID=80>

During the 1990s, Clark County had a healthy economy, with the opening of many new resort casinos on the Las Vegas Strip. This was a time of transformation as many of the older casino resort properties of the 1950s and 1960s were torn down to make way for a new, more glitzy Las Vegas.

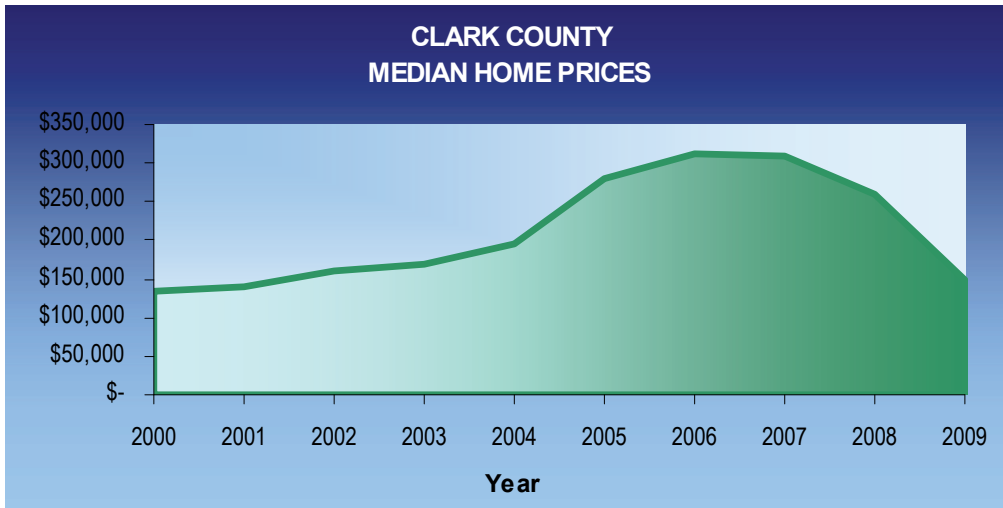
The catastrophic events of September 11th had an immediate economic ripple effect throughout the nation, and most critically on this tourist based community as less people traveled.² While our local economy suffered, it did quickly rebound as the fear of flying faded and Las Vegas was once again strong at the end of 2003.

Then the real estate construction began to escalate. With less enforced mortgage lending regulations, the existence of exotic mortgage instruments available to purchase a home, and ever

higher prices occurring, people strived to buy new homes before they were priced out of the market. Housing demand took off in the early 2000's, beginning an upward spiraling climb that lasted for the next few years.

It was unprecedented.

Prices climbed as bidding sometimes took on a life of its own, in many instances over the asking price. Potential buyers would be parked in front of a home for hours, waiting for their agent who would call to tell them that another offer had been accepted.

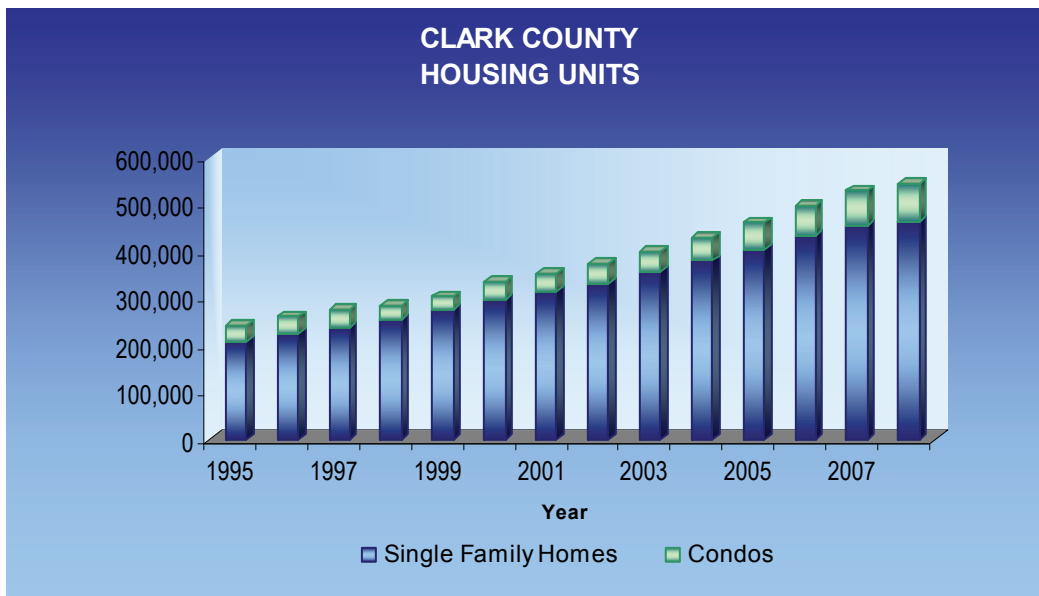


The median home price stayed relatively stagnant for over a decade, then increased by over \$200K³ in a period of two years, peaking at \$313K in 2006.

There was a surreal feel to it, which had everyone in the real estate business, from agents to development company owners shaking their heads wondering what was happening. Las Vegas was the classic example of a real estate bubble, reflecting the phrase, “*Irrational Exuberance*,” which was coined by Alan Greenspan, then Chairman of the Federal Reserve. “*Irrational Exuberance*” had clearly affected Clark County as well as the rest of the nation.

Developers tried to keep up with the extraordinary demand for housing by building in unparalleled numbers. During the 1990s, the average number of homes and condominium units built was around 15,000⁴ per year, keeping in stride with the steady population growth that the Las Vegas valley experienced.

Then, the upward spiral began. Between 2000-2003, the average number of new homes and condos built jumped from 15,000 per year in the 1990’s to 23,000 per year. From 2004-2007, the average number of homes built soared again to 32,000, more than doubling the average number of housing units built annually over the previous decade.



³ City Data.com
http://www.city-data.com/county/Clark_County-NV.html

⁴ Clark County Comprehensive Planning Department—Demographics
http://www.accessclarkcounty.com/depts/comprehensive_planning/demographics/Documents/HistoricalClarkPop.PDF

By 2007, as the economy changed, the growth was clearly unsustainable, but until then, the Recorder's Office, while working hard to keep up with the rapid escalation of recordings, was at times amazed at the constant volume of documents received on a daily basis.

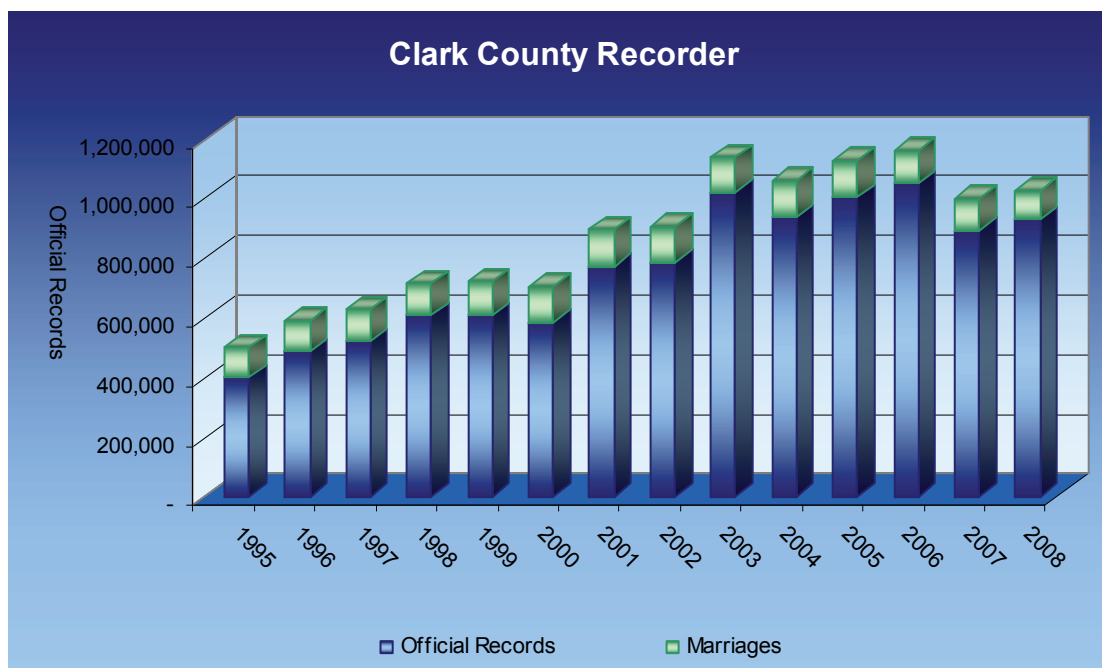
Recorder Workload

The incredible amount of new construction and the rapid selling of resale properties in a highly speculative real estate market created a paper tidal wave in official property recordings in the Recorder's Office. In 2003, for the first time in history, the number of official records documented surpassed one million⁵. The technology that had worked fine through the 1990s was no longer adequate to support this recording explosion, and backlogs of weeks and months became the norm.

Wait time for customers was anywhere from one to three hours, and customers from large-volume businesses paced the lobby in a race to record their documents. During the "Suitcase Era," customers of title companies and large-volume businesses brought volumes of documents to be recorded in suitcases, sometimes using them to sit on when chairs were not readily available, as they brought in any document that was remotely ready to be recorded. Any and every staff member who knew how to record, did record. Tables were set up in the back areas to record anywhere and everywhere there was space.

As the Recorder's Office became inundated and the large-volume customers became increasingly impatient, the on-going relationship between the two entities became acrimonious. The Recorder's Office was not prepared for the workload, and got even further behind. The

high-volume customers' reaction was that the Recorder's Office was not appropriately responding with improved technology and customer service to address this situation.



The Recorder's Office made history in 2003 when it documented over one million official records. Recordings surpassed the one million mark through 2006.

⁵ Clark County Recorder's website
http://www.accessclarkcounty.com/depts/Recorder/Pages/Statistics_Year.aspx

Problems and Solutions

A formal infrastructure was needed to make improvements. In addition to the physical layout issues, frequent users had other vital concerns with the office:

1. **No direct lines of communication.** Only a fraction of the large volume customers had direct lines of communication with the Recorder, while those who did not were left to find other means to gain information.
2. **Unequal representation.** Only a fraction of the large volume customers had access to have their voice heard, which created an unfair advantage for those who did not.
3. **Inconsistency in application of standard recordation procedures.** Large volume customers were perplexed when the recording requirement review process was inconsistent on similar types of documents.
4. **Lack of input into technological and procedural changes.** While procedural and technological changes were made, large volume customers were not kept up to date on what those were, and the impact it would have on them was not solicited.

A networking system was needed to open up direct lines of communication for all who desired it, and allow everyone equal access to the Recorder's Office. It was incumbent upon the Recorder's Office to be the principal lead by ensuring that all large-volume customers' concerns were heard, and that they in turn were privy to information of what was happening in the Recorder's office.

Creation of the Recorder Advisory Council (RAC)

When Debbie Conway became the Recorder in January 2007, she noted that there was an absence of an effective stakeholder and citizen advisory process. As Clark County's prior Business Development Manager for the Department of Finance and a major project manager, she had previously initiated the Clark County Business Development Advisory Council (CC-BDAC) and the Clark County Regional Business Development Advisory Council (CC-RBDAC) to ensure that underrepresented groups in the community had better access to government procurement opportunities. Her work resulted in minority, women, and other disadvantaged businesses being able to secure millions in government contracts to provide goods and services to the citizens of this community.

Moving forward, Recorder Conway and the Recorder's staff initiated core discussions with the key stakeholders who use the Recorder's Office daily. Beginning in August 2007, regular meetings of the Recorder's Advisory Council (RAC) began and the quarterly meetings have continued to provide a positive forum to receive suggestions from key stakeholders and citizens about ways to improve the efficiency of the office and to discuss office policies and new initiatives already being planned.

This public forum has proven to be an effective two-way mechanism to solicit public input and to provide information about upcoming policies designed to improve the efficiency of services provided to the public and to make government more transparent and accountable. By merging with the key stakeholders, this partnership provided an opportunity to resolve problems and concerns in a timely manner, and increased awareness between all parties involved.

Purpose of the Recorder's Advisory Council (RAC)

The RAC Council is an advisory committee created for the following purposes:

- To promote a better understanding of the Recorder's Office.
- To inform customers on how to access the services of the Recorder's Office.
- To provide information highlights of general interest.
- To enhance two-way communications and provide a mechanism to be able to reach out to both individual and large-volume customers.
- To generate ideas that lead to the implementation of innovative technological enhancements.
- To solicit customers' feedback as to ways to make the recording process more user friendly.
- To address customers' concerns and create an avenue to respond.
- To apply citizens input in creating solutions.
- To provide a forum for disseminating information regarding legislative measures that impact the Recorder's Office and its users.



RAC members and Recorder discussing mission of RAC and how better to improve communications.

Accomplishments

By compiling an efficient plan and anticipating the future, the RAC and the Recorder's Office have been collaboratively engaged in taking the services of the Recorder's Office through a complete metamorphosis. Changes have taken place to reflect what is occurring across the country and has brought improved technology to users and has increased service delivery while remaining cost effective.

Accomplishments include the following:

- Changed office hours from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Reduced document turn around time from 30 days to 1-3 days
- Opened two branch offices
- Electronic recording (eRecording)
- Consistent definitions of policies and procedures
- Improved website and search functions
- Installation of Q-Matic queue management system
- Wi-Fi System capability for public access
- Expanded public research access area
- Online ordering for marriage certificates and official records
- Installation of new recordation system
- Provided document drop-off option for recording
- Accepting Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express
- Developed Fraud Awareness Initiative
- Installed additional security enhancements
- Provided classes on records research (in-house and at businesses and other government agencies)
- Established trust or escrow holding accounts for large volume customers.

Awards:

The Recorder's Office received the 2009 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award and the National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks (NACRC) Best Practices Award for the Q-Matic queue management system.

Meeting Set-Up

The Recorder's Advisory Council (RAC) Committee meets once a quarter (every three months) on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 10:30 AM to discuss pertinent issues regarding enhanced technologies and ways to improve customer service.



Plans for the Future

The only thing guaranteed in life is change. Not comfortable to rest on our laurels, the Recorder's Office is looking to the future to continue and improve upon the technology and organizational processes of the office. These include:

- Participating in state and national conferences showcasing new technology
- Expanding by partnering with existing governmental agencies to provide additional branch offices
- Securing, validating, and verifying signatures
- Redacting personal information
- Placing images on the webpage for viewing
- Making services more accessible by placing full service kiosks throughout the community
- Digitizing Microfilm

Engaging in other visionary and innovative methods of recording and obtaining copies of marriage certificates and official records.

White Paper Subcommittee

Chairman

Jack Woodcock, Prudential Americana Group, REALTORS



Jack Woodcock is the Founder-Broker, CCIM, CRS, GRI, for Prudential Americana Group, REALTORS. He has been recognized as REALTOR of the year on a statewide level and received the Gene Nebeker Memorial Award for contributing to and maintaining high standards of professionalism in the real estate industry. Jack is an active member of the Las Vegas Community: Las Vegas Chamber of

Commerce, Southwest Rotary Club, and many other organizations.

As a member of the RAC, Jack has greatly contributed to the collaboration between government and businesses. Jack states, "The RAC is an excellent example of how government can proactively address any public concerns with service delivery and to reach out in continuous improvement to ensure that the Recorder's Office stays current and progressive over time. The working relationship has proven to be extremely successful; definitely something the government can look upon, embrace, and continue to utilize as a "Best Practice" for others to emulate in other areas of government."

Vice-Chair

Keith Kelley, Kelley and Associates Real Estate



Keith Kelley has been a resident of Las Vegas since 1970. He began his real estate career in 1986 and since then has been a full time REALTOR. Keith is the Broker of Kelley and Associates Real Estate. He has been very active in the real estate profession and is the 2009 Regional Vice President for the National Association of REALTORS Region 11. The region includes the States of Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona and Nevada. Keith was the

1997 President of the Greater Las Vegas Association of REALTORS and the 2004 President of the Nevada Association of REALTORS. Keith is also active on several REALTOR Political PAC's and is a certified instructor for Nevada and Nationally. He also served on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Regional Transportation Commission.

Keith has enjoyed serving on the RAC and working with Recorder Debbie Conway and her Staff as well as working with the Title and Escrow Companies. Debbie and her Staff have done an amazing job providing new and innovative ways to serve the citizens of Clark County.

RAC Members:

Martin Bessler, Chicago Title
Debra Pomponio, Commerce Title Company
Carmen Vojtasek, Community Title Services of Nevada
Tracey Keller, DHI Title
James Orate, Document Processing Solutions, Inc.
Jon Morgan, Equity Title of Nevada
Valerie Connor and Paulette Baker, First American Title Company of NV
Caesar Espinosa and Tobi Hess, FNTG Las Vegas Title Group
Sue Naumann and Paul Bell, Greater Las Vegas Association of Realtors
Ellie Lumsden, Keller Williams—Market Place
Keith Kelley, Kelley and Associates Real Estate
Steve Dover, Lawyers Title
Laurie Quigley and Ted Tube, Legal Wings
Robert Sherratt and Annie Frehner, Mesquite Title Company
Philip Bouchard, National Title Company
Rene Espinosa, Rosie Moreno, and
Nikki Lopez, Nations Title Company of NV
Cyndi Riska, Nevada State Title
Robbie Graham, Sue Dudzinski, Amanda Terrill, and Lisa Forbes,
Nevada Title Company
Charles Clawson, Noble Title
Nick Nicholson, North American Title Company
Kehau Haia and Trini Maldonado, Old Republic
Jack Woodcock, Prudential Americana Group
Patricia Persico, Prudential Americana Group
Jerry Smith, Realty One Group
Brad Berrett and Carolyn Paige, Republic Services
Tracy Sabol, SPL, Inc.
Ann Stuart and Diana Andersen, Stewart Title of Nevada
Cheri Morris and Norma Spaeth, Title One of Las Vegas, Inc.
Robert Rosales and Troy Hicks, Public Members

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