

# ESS

Electronic Services System – Standards Subcommittee Meeting

## **AGENDA** **July 30, 2024** **Virtual** **9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.**

### **Welcome and Introductions**

### **April 23, 2024, Meeting Summary – Approval**

### **Iowa Recording Fee and Business Process Modernization Project**

- Project Charter
  - Review of Project Activities
  - Stakeholder Survey Results and Report
  - Fee Policy Working Group
  - Stakeholder Communications
- Continued Consideration of Statutory Policy Recommendations
  - 331.606B (formatting, required data, cover sheets, et al)
  - 331.606 (filing & indexing requirements – PINs, references, locations, time)
  - 558.49 (indexing requirements for conveyances)
  - 331.601A (page and transaction definitions)
  - 331.612 (NEW SECTION – recording of surveys) and related updates
    - 355.6A (monument preservation)
    - 331.606B (formatting)
- Pending Legislative Drafting
  - 331.604 – redraft of Recording Fee Policies
    - Recommended Fee Policy, Disposition of Funds 255 and 823, “Carve Outs”
  - ESS Enabling Legislation – NEW SECTION - Purpose, Authority & Fee Policy
    - Consolidate language from 331.604 and 331.605B, and related policies
    - Standards, “Normalization”, Integration, Redaction
  - Special Project Specific Language
    - Property Notification
    - Back the Blue Reform
    - Historic Surveys

### **Software Development Update (Time Permitting)**

- Modifications to Recorder Search Functions
- CESAPI Implementation
- ILR Cloud Migration
- County Upload API Development

Next Regular Meetings  
Thursday, October 17 - 1 to 3 PM (Virtual)

**Standards Subcommittee  
Teleconference Meeting Summary  
April 23, 2024**

**Participants**

Jayne Schultz, Winneshiek County Recorder  
Carolyn Siebrecht, Linn County Recorder  
Ashten Wittrock, Carroll County Recorder

Jolynn Goodchild, Plymouth County Recorder  
Katie Carlton, Union County Recorder  
Naomi Ellis, Marion County Recorder

**Other Participants**

Ann Ditsworth, Dickinson County Recorder  
Nancy Booten, Lee County Recorder  
ReNae Arnold, Dallas County Recorder  
Erin Canfield, Boone County Recorder  
Miranda Bills, Audubon County Recorder  
Deb McDonald, Green County Recorder

Lisa Kent, Wapello County Recorder  
Sue Meyer, Clayton County Recorder  
Travis Case, Grundy County Recorder  
Karol Kennedy, Dubuque County Recorder  
Stacie Herridge, Story County Recorder  
Cathy Voith, Calhoun County Recorder

Census Lo-Liyong, Iowa Land Records  
Phil Dunshee, Iowa Land Records  
Samantha McMahon, Iowa Land Records

Lisa Long, Iowa Land Records  
Corrie Strasser, Iowa Land Records

**Welcome**

A meeting of the ESS Standards Subcommittee was held via web conference. The participants included the regular ESS Standards Subcommittee members and other members of the Document Formatting working group.

**October Meeting Summary**

The Subcommittee reviewed the January 23, 2024, meeting summary. Carolyn Siebrecht made a motion to approve the meeting summary. Ashten Wittrock seconded, and the motion was approved.

**Iowa Recording Fee and Business Process Modernization Project**

**Project Charter**

The Standards Subcommittee received a summary of the ongoing discussion on potential changes to recording fees as part of the recording and business process modernization project, initiated by the Iowa Country Recorders Association. It was noted that joint recorder/stakeholder meetings had been held with Surveyors, Auditors and Iowa Land Title Association.

**Modernization Preliminary Survey Results**

The Standards Subcommittee and the document formatting working group discussed the preliminary results of the modernization survey. The report highlighted results with high ratings for proposals considered "Very Important." As of the meeting date, the most responses were received from the following stakeholder groups: law firms, abstractors, and surveyors. The final survey results will be shared the committees, working groups and stakeholders.

**Consideration of Statutory Policy Recommendations**

The Subcommittee was presented with a memo from the Project Manager which summarized the review of document formatting and document content requirements, and several other related policies. The memo also included the recommendations of the Project Manager. The following is a review of the primary points of discussion.

**Font Size Requirements**

A question was raised about a possible contradiction between the new policy specifying a minimum 10-point font size and other parts of the policy mentioning an 8-point font size. It was

clarified that the current policy has been amended to specify a 10-point font across the board, except for surveyor documents which can use an 8-point font size (which is consistent with current policy). The primary change in policy is the removal of references to 8-point type for pre-printed text.

### **Parcel Identification Numbers**

The Subcommittee discussed the recommendation to require the indexing of parcel identification numbers (PINs) going forward. The following points about the recommendation were clarified.

- The requirement would be day-forward and not applicable to previously recorded conveyance documents.
- Preparers and submitters would be required to include the current parcel identification numbers in the documents, as applicable.
- Recorders would be required to index the parcel identification numbers present in documents submitted for recording.
- Recorders would NOT be required to update parcel identification numbers in antecedent, previously recorded documents.
- When new parcel identification numbers are assigned by the county (such as in the case of a subdivision or a consolidation), the county would be expected to provide the updated information to the recorder (in some manner).
- Recorders would be required to ADD the new information to the index of the recently recorded conveyance document. No changes to the previously indexed PIN information would be expected.
- The additional of the new information would be required “as soon as practicable.”

Generally, the Subcommittee and working group endorsed taking steps to require the indexing of parcel identification numbers going forward. It was noted that further work would be required to clarify the definition and type of the parcel identification number so that it is consistently used by all counties and offices. The Subcommittee also identified the need to verify that local service providers could comply with the requirements for the parcel identification numbers and additional parcel identifiers.

### **Platted Land Indexing**

Participants discussed the possibility of indexing data elements typically associated with unplatted land with documents for platted land. This would be day-forward only. The idea originated from discussions with surveyors who have expressed a desire to search for records using a combination of platted and unplatted data elements. It was noted that ILR data schema already has “section” as a data element in platted land. The question was whether this could be leveraged without requiring much development work.

The Subcommittee and working group believed that this idea would be more successful if it included township and range, not just the section data. The consensus was to retain the concept in the plan for further discussion but review it further with the surveyors before finalizing anything.

### **Electronic Recording Issue**

Participants reviewed proposed changes to 331.606B, subsection 6. Concern was expressed about language which would require recorders to notify submitters of the reasons for making a fee change with respect to electronic documents. It was noted that the E-Submission system provided these notifications to the submitters, and that the communication was initiated by the Iowa Land Records system and not the county recorder's office. It was agreed that an edit would be made to the language which would clarify this.

### **Preparer Information**

The Subcommittee and working group expressed a desire to require that preparers provide either their phone number or an email address in documents submitted for recording. This would be included in Subsection 2 of 331.606B, paragraph a. The lettered paragraph would read as follows:

- a. The name, address and either the telephone number or email address of the individual who prepared the document.

### **Plat of Survey Dimension**

The Subcommittee and working group reviewed the proposed amendment to 331.606A (7) which added to the definition of "Page" a plat or survey with dimensions of eleven inches by seventeen inches or up to twenty-four inches by thirty-six inches. The discussion confirmed that the larger dimensions were limited to surveys and plats.

### **Index Legend and Other Index Information**

During previous meetings the draft legislation included provisions relating to Index Legends and their potential use beyond surveys, plats, and related documents. It was noted that the Index Legend provisions had been removed from the latest version of the draft legislation, because the idea didn't seem to have gained much traction with the stakeholder groups. It could be revisited if stakeholders show more interest going forward.

For similar reasons, ideas for indexing additional information such as notaries and notary commission numbers, or references to information in external systems such as MERS have not been included in the draft legislation. This could also be given further consideration in the future if there is sufficient interest.

### **Authorization To Decline**

The Subcommittee and working group were asked to review the proposed new introductory paragraph to Section 331.606B (1) concerning the authority to decline recording a document if it does not conform to the statutory requirements for document formatting and content, or if the form of a document or instrument prevents or inhibits the county recorder from performing their duty. The participants considered whether the term "may" or "shall" should be used in this introduction. After discussion, it was agreed that the term "may" would be used in this paragraph, given that all of the referenced requirements specified in 331.606B.

## **OTHER UPDATES**

### **ILTA Discussion**

The Subcommittee and working group received an update concerning recent conversations with representatives of the Iowa Land Title Association. A summary of a meeting held on April 4, 2024, and a Q&A document was shared.

### **ILR Data Normalization**

The Subcommittee and working group received an update on the topic of Data Normalization, referencing a memo that had been distributed on February 15, 2024. It explained that "normalization" would primarily affect the ILR database without impacting recorder systems. The goal is to standardize all data within the ILR system to make it more complete and consistent. Counties would potentially have the option to integrate this updated data into their local indexing systems.

### **Chapter 3 – Parcel Identification Numbers**

For reference, an earlier draft of a proposed amendment to chapter 3 of the ESS policies and procedures was shared. This is a draft policy concerning parcel identification numbers that was considered in prior meetings. However, it is not being advanced currently. Further action would be dependent on the outcome of the legislation discussed earlier in the meeting.

### **Achievable Modernization Project Initiatives**

The Subcommittee and working group received an update on the possible modernization ideas that seem to be gaining the most interest from stakeholders and policy makers. The following ideas are included.

- A recording alert and notification system.
- Reconnecting ILR with the Beacon property information system.
- Revisions to the "Back the Blue" policy to shield court officer personnel.
- Data Normalization.
- Providing online access to Historical Surveys and Plats.
- Updating the External Submitter API.
- Create a Multi-Jurisdiction Plat Approval Process.
- Internalizing PII Redaction Processes.
- Enhancing the Two-Factor Authentication login process.

It was noted that the "Abstract of Modernization Ideas" has help stimulate conversation among stakeholders and policy makers, even though some of the ideas may not be implemented.

### **Software Development Update**

- The ILR has successfully migrated to a cloud system.
- Enhancements to the recorder E-Submission search functions are in development.
- Ongoing software development and implementation efforts are focused on the E-Submission API and the county upload API.

Next Regular Meetings

Tuesday, July 23 - 10 AM to Noon

Thursday, October 17 - 1 to 3 PM

# MODERNIZATION SURVEY

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Search Services – Recording Services – Recording Fees

June 5, 2024

Iowa County Records Association | Electronic Services System

# **Modernization Survey**

## **Search Services – Recording Services – Recording Fees**

### **Executive Summary**

In 2024, several important milestones in recording and land records operations converged leading to a significant review of fee policies and recording practices. To begin the review, the current recording fee was examined since it had not been updated in over 40 years. Additionally, it had been 20 years since the last major update of recording standards was approved with the creation of Sections 331.601A and 331.606B in the Iowa Code concerning document formatting and recording standards. The last substantive update was prior to the inception of electronic recording.

Iowa Land Records was established in 2004 as a statewide online resource for accessing land records and enabling electronic recording. Twenty years later, its operation has been significantly impacted by growing demand for more and improved services and by high inflation rates and increased costs.

To prepare for required changes, the Iowa County Recorders Association initiated the Iowa Recording Fee and Business Process Modernization project. Working groups and subcommittees were created to address different aspects of the project and to work with the various interest groups with an important stake in the Iowa public land registry system. The overall work plan called for conducting a survey of stakeholders on the following topics:

- Recording Fees
- Alternative Recording Fee Models
- Possible Enhancements to E-Submission Systems
- Possible Enhancements to Land Record Search Systems
- Possible Policy Changes to Recording Services
- Various Project Concepts for Recording Modernization

A stakeholder survey was called for in the project charter established by the Iowa County Recorders Association as a part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement with the governing board of the Electronic Services System which oversees Iowa Land Records. The survey was designed to engage and gather feedback from users of the Iowa Land Records (ILR) system and organizations and individuals interacting with county recorders.

**Survey Methodology and Response:** The survey was structured into three segments targeting different aspects of the recording system policy initiatives, document submission processes, and user search functionality. The first two sections of the survey asked the respondents to rate questions based on a level of importance using a star rating scale. In total, 542 stakeholders participated, including 32.9% attorneys, 15.99% abstractors, 14.15% surveyors/engineers, 9.92% lenders and bankers, 5.14% realtors, and 26.2% other entities.

Question 5 dictated survey logic to determine whether participants would see questions related to the Search or E-Submission practices. The question asked participants to identify themselves as a user of the Search, E-Submission, or both applications on the Iowa Land Records system. Out of the 542 participants, 268 selected Search Only, 267 selected Both Search and E-Submission and 7 exclusively selected E-Submission Only. Therefore, 535 participants reviewed the Search questions and 274 reviewed E-Submission questions. It should be noted that some participants chose to skip over some questions, which is noted in the appendices.

| SEARCH ONLY | BOTH E-SUB & SEARCH | E-SUBMISSION ONLY | TOTAL |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------|
| 268         | 267                 | 7                 | 542   |

**Findings:** The survey revealed a strong consensus on several key areas:

- **Data Integrity:** Respondents highlighted the importance of data completeness and consistency across the state.
- **System Integration and Accessibility:** There was significant support for better integration with other property information systems and the expansion of online services.
- **User Experience:** Stakeholders expressed a need for improvements in the user interface, search functionality, and more transparent communication regarding submission statuses.
- **Fee Structure:** There was broad agreement on the justification for fee increases, provided there is clear communication about how the additional funds are utilized and that they contribute to service enhancements.

### Analysis of Search Functionality Survey Results

A portion of the survey focused on the functionalities and user experience of searching Iowa Land Records, 486 users responded. The results demonstrated widespread support for several key enhancements.

There was a strong consensus on the importance of normalizing records across all 99 counties within the ILR system, with this initiative receiving the highest approval rating of 2.9 out of 3. Moreover, over 90% of respondents endorsed the need for data consistency.

The proposal to expand online records to include historical property records dating back to 1980 also received substantial support, earning a rating of 2.8. This indicates a clear demand from stakeholders for broader access to records online.

The initiative to reconnect the ILR and Beacon (and other) systems to enhance interoperability between them received a favorable rating of 2.7. Similarly, the proposal to digitize and index historical surveys, plats, corner certificates, and other property drawings was well-received, with a rating of 2.6.

Proposals to expand the use of associated document references and to improve functionality with parsed location data (such as section, township, range, lot details) both garnered positive responses, each earning a rating of 2.7.

On a proposal to improve privacy and security measures, stakeholders support the process of inspecting and redacting personal identifiable information (PII) from records before they are posted online, also rated at 2.7 out of 3. The proposal to set up a system for property transaction notification also received some support, although it was less favored with a rating of 2.2 out of 3.

### Electronic Submission Results Analysis

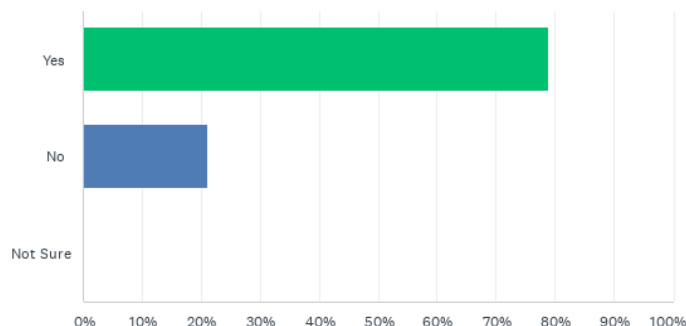
Out of the 542 participants surveyed, 228 users responded to questions about E-Submission. The survey revealed, with a rating of 2.7 and higher, that respondents value clear communication, consistent document formatting and processing practices, and the protection of personally identifiable information (PII) as crucial standards to uphold between submitters and county recorders. Participants also emphasized the importance of legible and high-quality submitted documents.

Some support was expressed for the establishment of a standard recording reference number system, and creating more efficient workflows when documents are to be reviewed by more than one government department. These received ratings of 2.5 and 2.4 respectively.

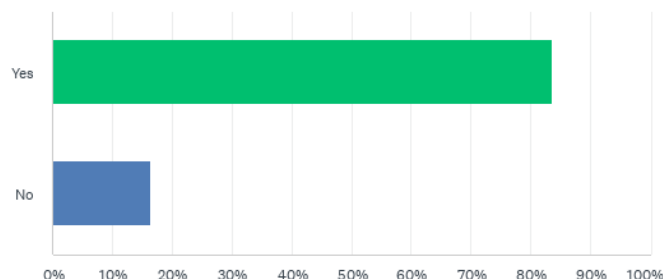
Suggestions that document preparers do more to include useful index information such as parcel identification numbers, parsed location information and associated references did not score as highly. Concepts suggesting the indexing of notary information and the recording of Declaration of Value (DOV) documents online were deemed less important by respondents.

### Recording Fees

To implement some of the more highly rated concepts and suggestions referenced in the survey, some additional resources may be needed. Survey participants were asked if they would be “willing to support a reasonable increase in the recording fee, if it is less than the inflation amount since 1985?” 79% of the respondents to this question answered “Yes”.



Survey participants were also asked this question. “Many of the possible improvements mentioned in this survey will require additional resources, a portion of which would be obtained through a reasonable recording fee increase. For the ideas you identified as being Very Important, would you consider a recording fee increase to be a good investment?” 83% of the respondents to this question answered “Yes”.



Participants were also invited to provide comments on this topic in response to the following question (48). “On behalf of yourself and your colleagues in your profession, what message would you most like to share with Iowa County Recorders and Iowa Land Records about recording fees?” Responses to this and other open-ended questions are published in this report as Appendix C. Readers are invited to review all open-ended comments to gain further insights into the opinions of professionals who use recording services and Iowa Land Records.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the survey results indicate strong support for various improvements to the Iowa Land Records system, focusing on enhanced data consistency, integration, access, and privacy. Stakeholders are particularly interested in technological advancements that can lead to more efficient and secure recording processes.

The survey results highlight the significance of Electronic Submission services and provide valuable insights into the practices and proposals that resonate most with users. Stakeholders who use the Iowa Land Records Electronic Submission application highly value communication, consistency, and legibility in document processing.

Respondents to the survey also support a reasonable recording fee increase if it is used to improve local recording and Iowa Land Records services and managed with accountability and transparency.

**Acknowledgments:** Thank you to ILR and ICRA team members Census K Lo-liyong and Kristen Delaney-Cole for their efforts to compile the information in this report.

# Synopsis of Responses to Open-Ended Questions

More than 1200 responses were collected from six open-ended questions regarding the land records search process, search display results, electronic filing, access, fees and anything else the individual chose to share. In some cases, the comments revealed the need for more user training content, but most of the comments represented a range of ideas and encouraged future improvements. Hesitation was shown toward ideas that may affect services in the real estate marketplace. The comments summarized here are presented without editing in the appendices. Open-ended comments will be considered towards a plan for ongoing improvements. The following section is a summary of the main ideas expressed in the responses to each question.

**Question 25. “Thinking about your experiences searching with Iowa Land Records, what changes or improvements would you like to make to the search interface and website?”**

## **Search Functionality Improvements:**

- Many respondents expressed a desire for more intuitive and flexible search options, including the ability to conduct partial name searches, use wildcards more effectively, and to remove search limits.
- Suggestions included enhancements in navigating search results, remembering search parameters between searches, and viewing better search tips or help prompts when searching.

## **User Interface and Accessibility:**

- Respondents called for a more user-friendly interface with simpler login procedures (e.g., less frequent token authentication), and some asked for a return to older, simpler systems they felt were easier to use.
- Better accessibility features, such as a more compact display of search results and an improved navigation back to search results after viewing document details, were also suggested.

## **Consistency Across Counties:**

- Several users noted the lack of consistency in how documents are indexed and searched across different counties. They suggested standardized procedures for document indexing and search functionalities to ensure uniformity.

## **Additional Features and Tools:**

- Suggestions for new features included interactive maps, better integration with external systems like Beacon, and enhancements in how documents related to specific parcels or properties are retrieved and displayed.

## **General System Enhancements:**

- Users highlighted the need for updates to the system that would include more historical documents, improved reliability of the search results, and ensuring the availability of the latest data from county recorders.

**Question 26. “Thinking about your experiences searching with Iowa Land Records, what changes or improvements would you like to see happen in how search results are displayed?”**

**Navigational Enhancements:**

- Many users expressed a desire for the ability to return to the same place in the search results after viewing a document instead of being taken back to the top, which disrupts their workflow.
- Suggestions included indicators to show which documents have been viewed, like color coding or check marks, to help users track their progress through search results.

**Display and Format Adjustments:**

- There were requests for more condensed and clear display formats that allow more results to be viewed on the screen at once, reducing the need to scroll.
- Some users preferred a return to the older system’s display method (a table format), while others praised the new system for showing more details at a glance.
- Users would appreciate features that allow easier printing of search results.

**Consistency and Standardization:**

- There was a notable call for more consistent and standardized indexing and display of search results across different counties to avoid confusion and improve the reliability of searches.

**Specific Features:**

- Requests for features like the ability to open documents in new tabs and to have searches and documents be more interactive, such as through maps or more integrated legal descriptions, were also mentioned.

**Question 44. “Thinking about your experiences electronically filing through the Iowa Land Records E-Submission service, what changes or improvements in the electronic filing interface and website would you like to see happen?”**

**Consistency and Standardization:**

- Many respondents requested greater consistency across counties in terms of recording practices and requirements, as differences create confusion and inefficiency. Users also noted differences in how quickly documents are recorded and how declined documents are handled.

**User Interface and Experience Enhancements:**

- Suggestions included more intuitive navigation, easier access to frequently needed information like recording rules, and enhancements to make the interface more accommodating for surveyors and other users.

**Functional Improvements:**

- Users expressed a desire for features that allow easier resubmission of declined filings, clearer explanations of reasons for declining documents, and better communication tools such as integrated chat functions for real-time assistance from recorders.

**Security and Access:**

- Comments highlighted issues with password policies and multi-factor authentication, suggesting these could be streamlined or made less cumbersome, particularly for users who access the system multiple times a day.

**Document Handling and Submission:**

- Feedback included a need for more flexibility in image formatting, such as the ability to rotate documents or submit certain documents in landscape orientation, and improved support for different types of image formats, and an expanded list of document types.

**Additional Functional Requests:**

- Some users desired a notification system for when documents are recorded and the associated costs, the ability to pre-submit documents for cost estimation or preliminary approval, and enhancements to the PDF quality and document handling after submission.

**Question 45. “Thinking about your experiences electronically filing through the Iowa Land Records E-Submission service, what changes or improvements in accessing your electronically recorded documents would you like to see happen?”**

**Improved Accessibility and Navigation:**

- Many users expressed a desire for more intuitive access to recorded documents, suggesting the inclusion of features like direct links in notification emails, reducing the number of clicks needed to access documents, and better organization of recently recorded documents on the platform.

**Enhanced Communication and Notifications:**

- Respondents would appreciate more effective communication regarding the status of submissions, including more detailed notifications that could include direct links to the recorded documents or attachments of the documents themselves within the email notifications.

**Streamlining and Simplification:**

- There is a strong call for reducing the complexity of the login process, particularly the frequency of required password changes and the use of multi-factor authentication. Users would like to remain logged in on trusted devices to streamline repeated access.

**Standardization Across Counties:**

- Users noted inconsistencies in how different counties handle recordings and suggested standardizing practices to reduce confusion, particularly regarding the acceptance criteria for documents.

**User Interface Improvements:**

- Suggestions include creating a more user-friendly interface that allows for easier retrieval of recent and pending documents without extensive searching or remembering specific group names used during submission.

**Automation and Integration:**

- Some responses highlighted the potential benefits of automating certain processes, such as automatically emailing recorded documents to users, and integrating more data fields (like Parcel ID) during the submission process to enhance document traceability and retrieval.

**Question 48. “On behalf of yourself and your colleagues in your profession, what message would you most like to share with Iowa County Records and Iowa Land Records about recording fees?”**

**Acceptance of Fee Increases:**

- Many respondents acknowledge that fee increases may be justified, especially if they haven't been raised in a long time, but they stress the importance of keeping such increases reasonable and linked directly to service improvements and system upgrades.

**Consistency Across Counties:**

- There is a strong desire for more uniformity in recording practices and fees across different counties, which would reduce confusion and streamline processes for users who deal with multiple counties.

**Transparency and Justification of Fees:**

- Users express a need for transparency in how increased fees are utilized, suggesting that additional funds should specifically support system improvements and not go towards administrative costs or other unrelated expenses.

**Improvement in Services:**

- Alongside any fee increases, respondents expect enhancements in service, such as faster processing times, better system functionality, and enhanced access to recorded documents.

**Simplicity and User-Friendly Practices:**

- Suggestions include implementing flat fees for simplicity, reducing the complexity of fee calculations, and potentially standardizing fees to align with those of neighboring states to ease the burden on users.

**Equitable Fee Structures:**

- Some respondents suggest considering the impact of fee increases on all citizens, particularly those less able to absorb higher costs. Ideas included scaling fees based on the document type or property value to maintain fairness.

**Question 49. “On behalf of yourself and your colleagues in your profession, what message would you most like to share with Iowa County Recorders and Iowa Land Records?”**

**Consistency and Standardization:**

- Many respondents emphasized the need for consistency across all county Recorders' offices in terms of document requirements and recording processes. This consistency would streamline their work and reduce confusion, especially for those who operate across multiple counties.

**Appreciation and Acknowledgment:**

- There is significant appreciation for the efforts of the recorders and the Iowa Land Records system. Respondents praised the convenience and efficiency of electronic recording and the accessibility of records.

**System Improvements and Enhancements:**

- Users expressed a desire for ongoing improvements in the system, including better integration with systems like Beacon, more intuitive search functions, and enhanced online access to older documents. Suggestions for a more user-friendly interface were also common.

**Security and Competitiveness Concerns:**

- With increasing reliance on digital records, some respondents raised concerns about data security and suggested implementing stronger protections against fraud and unauthorized access.
- Some respondents expressed concern about the effects of providing online records access to their competitors.

**Feedback and User Involvement:**

- There is a call for continued engagement with users in the development and enhancement of the system. Users appreciate being heard and believe that their feedback is crucial in shaping a system that meets their needs effectively.

**Fee Structure:**

- While not as central as in other questions, there were mentions of recording fees, with some users indicating openness to reasonable fee increases if they support system improvements.

## **ICRA/ESS Modernization Initiative – 2025 Recording Fees and Modernization Reforms**

Recording fees are user fees that are paid to cover the cost of recording a real estate transaction and the cost of current technology and security needs. Iowa recording fees haven't been updated since 1985. Recent inflation has had a real effect on the cost of local recording and ILR services.

Times have changed and policies and practices can be modernized to reflect current and future industry practices. It is proposed that reforms and updates to the fee policy be taken together to ensure that investments in recording services produce benefits for the real estate industry. The proposed changes are described below.

The proposal calls for recording fees to be increased to a flat \$10.00 per page. The base recording fee is currently \$5.00 per page. (This would be \$14.75 per page adjusted for inflation - in 2024 dollars.)

Overall recording fees would be further simplified and would reduce the net fee increase for recording.

- Eliminating several “add-on” recording fees
  - Additional Transaction Fee (\$7.00 per transaction) – to be repealed with some reasonable constraints for multi-transaction documents
  - Non-Standard Recording Fee (\$10.00) - to be repealed
  - Additional \$1.00 Records Management Fee – to be repealed
  - Additional \$1.00 Electronic Transaction Fee - to be repealed
- Calculating recording fees would be more predictable

The service fee of \$3.00 per document for E-Submission (e-filing) would remain unchanged and would not be increased. The proposal does not address policy relating to real estate transfer taxes or the auditor's transfer fee.

Funding for county technology needs would be allocated out of the \$10.00 per page base recording fee. \$2.00 per recorded document would be allotted from the base recording fee to a new “recording technology fund” in the office of the county recorder (replacing the records management fee) to support technology investments in recording technology, image archiving and continuing education in records management and technology applications. This would replace the current \$1.00 “add-on” records management fee.

Funding to sustain operations for core Iowa Land Records services and to invest in special projects and improved services would be allocated out of the \$10.00 per page base recording fee.

\$3.00 per recorded document would be allotted to support Iowa Land Records investments in modernization initiatives such as a statewide property notification system, creating connections with other land record information systems and modernizing and normalizing land records data. This would replace the current \$1.00 “add-on” electronic transactions fee.

Sufficient funding for local recording and Iowa Land Records services would provide many important benefits to the real estate industry.

- Continuing free access to more than 23 million records statewide
- Maintaining Iowa's first-in-the-nation statewide electronic recording system
- Ensuring the use of current technology in county offices
- Realigning document formatting requirements to meet current industry practices
- Implementing key projects to provide new and better services
  - Establishing a statewide property notification system
  - Indexing more data (PIN numbers and associated references)
  - Accessing more property information in other online systems
  - Filling gaps in property location information
  - Improving search tools
  - Increasing online access to historic surveys and plats
  - Improving Back the Blue information shielding

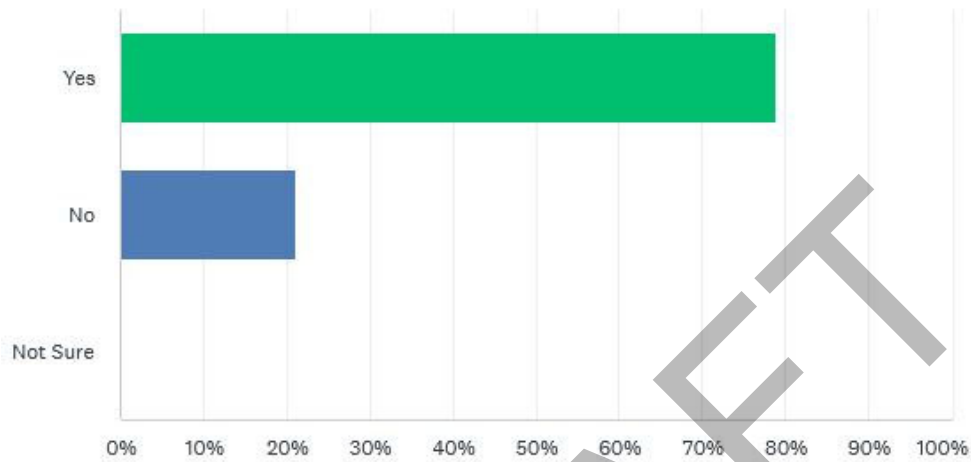
Iowa recording fees are currently the lowest in the Central U.S., and revenue from recording fluctuates with the real estate economy. Recently, recording activity has been down.

## ICRA/ESS Modernization Initiative – 2025 Recording Fees and Modernization Reforms

A recent survey of Iowa Land Records users showed support for a fee change if certain conditions were met.

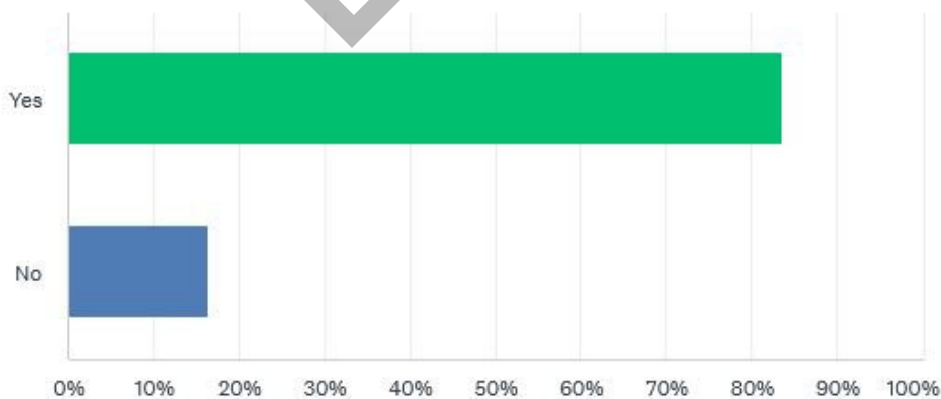
“Would you be willing to support a reasonable increase in the recording fee, if it is less than the inflation amount since 1985?”

79% said YES.



“Many of the possible improvements mentioned in this survey will require additional resources, a portion of which would be obtained through a reasonable recording fee increase. For the ideas you identified as being Very Important, would you consider a recording fee increase to be a good investment?”

83.5% said YES.



May 30, 2024

To: ESS Coordinating Committee

From: Phil Dunshee, ILR Project Manager

Re: Modernization of Document Formatting and Related Policies

### **Background**

In conjunction with the role of the ESS Standards Subcommittee, a working group was formed in February 2023 to review document formatting requirements as provided in Section 331.606B of the Iowa Code. It was noted that the standards were last updated in 2004 (Senate File 371, 2004 Actions, Chapter 1069). This was prior to the inception of electronic filing and recording. Document formatting requirements were primarily developed for traditional recording practices (paper documents). The Subcommittee and working group were also presented with several topics for future consideration.

The Subcommittee and working group reviewed a matrix of the current standards and the companion ILR policy and procedures to help guide the discussion. They also conducted a systematic review of Section 331.606B, and on July 18, 2023, recommended approval of several updates to Section 331.606B, subsection 1 relating to formatting requirements. As the year continued the Subcommittee and working group proceeded with discussions about Section 331.606B and other related topics to ensure appropriate opportunities were provided for conversation and input. Results from a 2022 stakeholder survey associated with the effort to modernize the Iowa Land Records search engine were also reviewed. For example, stakeholders were asked "Do you think it would be helpful or beneficial if counties formatted their index information more consistently." Seventy-four percent of the respondents answered "Yes."

In the fall of 2023, the Iowa County Recorders Association approved the initiation of an Iowa Recording Fee and Business Process Modernization Project. Recording fees had not been updated since 1985, and it was thought that a fee increase request should be paired with a "modernization" plan which would show benefits and a "return on investment". Numerous modernization projects ideas were developed and explored, and the modernization of document formatting and related formatting policies fit well with the overall initiative.

As the planning process for the Iowa Recording Fee and Business Process Modernization Project approaches completion, it was timely for the Standards Subcommittee and the document formatting working group to complete the review of the issues and ideas that have been studied, and to make recommendations for the adoption of statutory policies.

The Standards Subcommittee and the document formatting working group met via web conference on April 23, 2024 to give further review to a number of policy changes relating to document formatting, document content, and the indexing of those documents by county recorders

It is in this context that I wish to present to you a package of recommended changes to be included with any proposal for changing recording fees.

The following is a summary of the topics and the recommendations for action. Attached are the suggested statutory amendments. Thank you for this opportunity.

## Document Formatting

1. Advance the formatting changes as previously approved by the Standards Subcommittee and working group. These changes were applicable to 331.606B, subsection 1, paragraphs a through e as summarized here.
  - a. Clarified the meaning of “continuous form” and clarified that certain requirements could only logically apply to “physical” documents (permanently bound, stapled, taped, clipped, and labeled).
  - b. Removed the reference to “preprinted” text, and established standard for a legible font with a minimum ten-point size. Archaic references to “typewritten” text were removed. The exception to allow an eight-point font for surveys was retained.
  - c. Clarified that if all or a portion of a document was illegible then the legible copy of the text should be provided as an attachment. Also removed is the archaic reference to “typewritten” copy.
  - d. Clarified language concerning standard white paper, replaced the word “inclusions” with the term “markings” and substituted the word “legibility” for the phrase “color and clarity.”
  - e. Removed archaic references to “type” and changed the requirement for signatures from “readable” to “clear and discernable.”

Generally, these changes could be considered technical and noncontroversial

2. Change the requirement for the top margin of the first page as specified in 331.606B, subsection 1, paragraph f. The change would simply require a “blank rectangular space at the top of the first page which shall be three and three-fourth inches in width and two and one-half inches in height reserved and delineated for the county recorder’s use.” The actual top margin requirement would be changed to one-half inch.

This change is consistent with the theme of focusing the formatting requirements that are required for the recording process, which in this case is to provide sufficient space for the recorder’s stamp. Further, this resolves the issue of handling certain documents which have a minor amount of information spilling into the top three-inch margin. Most recorders are recording these documents, and the policy change would align the Iowa Code with current and accepted practice.

3. Authorize the recording of documents which may include personally identifiable information (PII) when the document is subjected to a redaction process. This modification would align 331.606B Subsection 1, paragraph g with current practice.
4. Code section 331.606B, subsection 2 requires certain information to be provided on the first page of a document. This subsection helps ensure that the recorder is provided with the information they need to index a document and otherwise perform their recording duties. During the review process various versions of this section were explored for the purpose of clarifying and simplifying things. Changes to requirements for a return address and preparer information were considered. Notably, the recommendation presented here retains the requirements for a return address and preparer information.

The following changes are recommended.

- a. Clarify that the required information can be provided on the first page or on a cover sheet. The reference to the top three-inch margin is removed (see item 2 above).
- b. The requirement for preparer information is retained, and the reference to a telephone number OR an email address is retained. [A provision for contact information is added elsewhere in the section.]
- c. For clarity, the term “type” is added to the requirement for a “title” to a document. Type is the term predominantly used in industry today.
- d. A requirement for “parsed” location information (the quarter section, section, township, and range, or the section, lot, block, subdivision name and city, town or county as applicable). A weakness in the land records database is the inconsistent presence of this information – which is the basis for indexing and searching by location. Specifying more clearly the requirement for this “parsed” information, in addition to the full legal description can aid the indexing process and improve the quality of data. This practice

with surveyors has been well received since Index Legends came into use in 2016. The Subcommittee asked that the language regarding the “full legal” and the “parsed” location information be combined. This change was made. Note that “section, township, range” has been added to the list of platted data elements. This modification is included, but it should be noted that further review is recommended.

- e. A more clearly stated requirement for Associated References, when applicable. This change can aid the indexing process and improve the quality of data in the land records database. It seems to be the intent of the current language, 331.606B, subsection 2, paragraph i, which requires “A document or instrument number for statutory requirements, if applicable.” The proposed language states “A recording reference number of an associated, recorded document or instrument ...”
- f. The requirement for a “parcel identification number, as applicable” is retained, but moved to a separate lettered paragraph.
- g. In addition to the preparer and return address information, organizations would be encouraged to provide contact information for the person who is best able to address any issue affecting the recordability of the document or instrument. In this version, it is presented as option in a concluding, unlettered paragraph.
- h. A concluding statement of purpose is provided.

Notably, a recommendation to explicitly authorize the use of an “Index Legend” for all document types is not included in this recommendation. While this idea may merit further consideration in the future, further input and demonstrated interest from the stakeholders is needed.

Note: Instrument Date is no longer included in the recommended list based on discussions of the Standards Subcommittee and working group.

- 5. Current law includes only a passing reference to the use of “cover sheets”. It would be beneficial to both recorders and stakeholders to insert language in the Code of Iowa to officially authorize their use and to set some uniform expectations. A modification to 331.606B, subsection 3 is proposed to do the following.
  - a. Continue to authorize the use of a page reference if insufficient space exists for all the information described in subsection 2 on either the first page or in a cover sheet.
  - b. Explicitly authorize the use of a cover sheet which must conform to the formatting requirements in 331.606B, Section 1
  - c. Clarify that a cover sheet would be included as a part of the recorded document.
  - d. Clarify that a cover sheet should not include information intended to have a legal effect.
- 6. No changes to 331.606B, subsections 4 and 5 are recommended here. However, The Standards Subcommittee should be aware that a working group of surveyors and recorders is working to develop some new language – perhaps as a new Code section which would exclusively apply to surveys and related documents. Section 331.606B, subsection 4, and language concerning the minimum font size for surveys in 331.606B, subsection 1, paragraph b could be moved to the newly created subsection.
- 7. Current law requires that “a document or instrument rejected for recording by a recorder shall be returned to the preparer or presenter accompanied by an explanation of the reason for rejection.” This language reflects the physical world and does not adequately address the processes associated with electronic documents. It also carries a negative message with use the term “rejected.” Section 331.606B, subsection 6 needs to be “modernized.”

Language is proposed to indicate that when a physical document is declined by a recorder, it should be returned to the submitter or preparer. However, when an electronic document is declined by a recorder, the submitter or preparer should simply be “notified.” This reflects the current business processes in the ILR E-Submission service. Additional language is added to suggest that recorders should advise of corrective actions. Reasons for fee changes with respect to electronic documents are to be provided, when applicable. This is intended to reflect positive and constructive communication between the customer and the recorder.

8. Returning to 331.606B, subsection 1, a new introduction is proposed. The change is for the following purposes:
  - a. To communicate that an important purpose of formatting standards is to ensure that the archive of recorded documents is accessible, legible, and searchable.
  - b. To communicate that an important purpose of formatting standards is to help the recorder perform their duty to effectively record and index the required information.
  - c. To clarify that the recorder has the clear authority to decline documents and instruments if the form or content of a document or instrument prevents the recorder from fulfilling their duty to record.

The operative sentence regarding the authority of the recorder to decline a document, as presented in this recommendation, reads as follows:

“If the content of a document or instrument does not conform to the requirements of this section, or if the form of a document or instrument prevents or inhibits the county recorder from performing their duty, the county recorder may decline to record a document or instrument.”

The Standards Subcommittee, the formatting working group, and the ESS Coordinating Committee in different discussions considered whether the appropriate term should be “may” or “shall” in this sentence. At the January meeting of the Standards Subcommittee and working group, the preference for “shall” was expressed. At the February meeting of the ESS Coordinating Committee, differing views were expressed. Most recently, the Standards Subcommittee and the formatting working group opted to use the term “may.”

Here’s why.

- The standards themselves consistently say “shall.”
- Recorders should clearly have the authority to decline a document. If a document is missing required information, or if a document is illegible, it probably should be declined and there should be no question about the authority of the recorder to do so. Hopefully, with the modification of the formatting standards, this will be handled consistently across all counties.
- Recorders should not be faced with the question of declining a document because the statute says “shall”. The important issue is whether the document is recordable. Is the document legible? Is the required content present? Is there room for the recording stamp? If the answers are “yes”, then the decision to record or decline should default to “record”.

In the context of the overall modernization initiative, this seems to be the right position to take.

9. 331.606B, subsection 7 is recommended for repeal. Subsection 7a conflicts with the very idea of having document formatting standards and the proposition that a decision to record or decline should favor recording if the document is recordable. If a document is not recordable, it should be declined, even if a customer would be willing to pay an extra \$10.00.

Subsection 7b is unnecessary if the other recommendations contained herein are adopted. County recorders will clearly have the necessary authority to decline documents when appropriate (see the updated introductory paragraph to 331.606B, subsection 1).

## **Indexing Requirements**

With the suggested revisions to 331.606B, subsection 2 concerning the required content to be included in documents submitted for recording, it may be appropriate to make corresponding changes to the language in Section 558.49 which relates to indexing conveyance records. The following changes are recommended.

1. Section 558.49, subsection 3 should be amended to reflect the date and time a document is recorded, not when it is filed (or submitted to) the recorder. An accepted practice is to use the recording date and time in the context of the race/notice process. This is simply intended to align language in the Code with accepted practice.
2. Section 558.49, subsection 4 currently states that the “date of instrument” must be indexed. This seems to relate to the date on which the parties executed or signed the instrument. If so, perhaps it should be plainly stated. Additionally, it is possible that the parties to a document may not all execute or sign the document on the same date – raising the question of what date should be indexed. A suggested amendment is to specify that the most recent date be indexed.
3. Section 558.49, subsection 5 currently states that the “nature of the instrument” must be indexed. This seems to relate to the document title or “type” such as a deed, mortgage, etc. A suggestion is made to how this could be more plainly stated.
4. Section 558.49, subsection 7 currently states that the “description of the real estate affected by the instrument” must be indexed. A substantive amendment is suggested to state that the “parsed” location information must be indexed “as indicated by the location information associated with a property including the quarter section, section, township, and range, or the lot, block, subdivision name, section, township, range, and city, town or county, if platted.” This addition is intended to clarify that counties must consistently index location information using these data elements. It is unclear whether recorders should be required to index a “full” legal description. It should again be noted that “section, township, range” has been added to the list of platted data elements. This modification is included, but further review is recommended.
5. If the suggested amendment to Section 331.606B, subsection 2, paragraph i. is adopted, document preparers and submitters would more clearly be required to provide associated references to previously recorded documents. It is proposed that section 558.49 be amended to add associated references to the list of elements required in the recorders index. The inclusion of this information in the recorder’s index would enable people to search for and retrieve associated documents more easily.
6. Section 331.606B requires that preparers and submitters include parcel identification numbers (PIN), if applicable (or required). It is proposed that section 558.49 be amended to add parcel identification numbers to the list of elements required in the recorders index, as applicable. The inclusion of this information in the recorder’s index would enable people to search more easily for documents and instruments using the PIN.

It is anticipated that real estate attorneys and other stakeholders will wish to examine this legislative language more closely. At this writing, we understand that a committee for Iowa Docs is reviewing the draft changes. The general idea is simply to better align the requirements of what is to be included in documents submitted for recording with the requirements for indexing those records.

### **Indexing Requirements - Continued**

With the suggested revisions to 331.606B, subsection 2 concerning the required content to be included in documents submitted for recording, it may be appropriate to make some corresponding changes to the language in Section 331.606 which relates to general filing requirements.

1. Language is added to 331.606, subsection 1 to cross reference the requirements of this section with section 331.606B(2) and section 558.49. Some terminology is modified to align with current practices.
2. A very visible demonstration of modernization would be to, on a future date certain, align the recording reference numbers used by counties to be in the same format. Language is suggested to combine the county two-digit identification number with the calendar year followed by a sequential eight-digit number. Letters and special characters would be prohibited, and counties could continue to also use book/page references along with the standard reference number, if desired.

*Note: Alternative reference number schemes may be considered. The symbolic and tangible importance is associated with a decision for every jurisdiction to use the same scheme.*

3. As with the suggested changes to 558.49, indexing of associated references, parsed location information, and parcel identification numbers would be required. A suggestion that other county offices who manage parcel identification numbers be responsible for informing recorders of PIN changes is included. The language requires that the PIN updates should be added to the index for recently recorded documents "as soon as practicable."
4. Recording times going forward would be required to the second in all recording jurisdictions. It may be appropriate to consider accuracy to the millisecond.

It is expected that further work on the language and implementation details will be needed for these items. However, adoption of these concepts as a part of the modernization initiative is recommended.

### **Additional Technical Amendments**

While reviewing Iowa code sections relating to document formatting, and indexing, a few possible technical updates were identified in Section 331.601A which provides various definitions.

1. The definition of a “page” is provided in section 331.601A, subsection 7. The dimension of a page in this definition is limited to “not larger than eight and one-half inches in width and fourteen inches in length.” For about a decade ESS policy has required the acceptance of documents with a dimension of eleven inches by seventeen inches in physical or electronic format, and up to twenty-four inches by thirty-six inches in electronic format. This statutory definition should be updated to include these larger dimensions.
2. The definition of a “transaction” is provided in section 331.601A, subsection 9. ESS policy (Section 3.14) was changed in 2018 state that “A simple reference to a prior action which is not associated with an originally recorded document shall not be subject to the additional transaction recording fee.” The statutory definition of a “transaction” should be updated to state that “A simple reference to a previous action which itself takes no subsequent action is not a transaction.”

**Requested Action:** Review the recommendations of the Standards Subcommittee and the document formatting working group. Further refinements to these policies are expected as they are examined by the various stakeholder groups.

**Section 331.606B, is amended to read as follows.**

**331.606B Document or document formatting standards.**

1. ~~Except as otherwise provided in subsection 7, the county recorder shall refuse any document or instrument presented for recording that does not meet the following requirements:~~  
The purpose of document or document formatting standards is to ensure that the documents and associated images are legible and contain the necessary information for the county recorder to perform their duty to create a permanent, unaltered archive and to index information that is accessible and searchable by the citizens of Iowa and by commercial and government organizations. If the content of a document or instrument does not conform to the requirements of this section, or if the form of a document or instrument prevents or inhibits the county recorder from performing their duty, the county recorder may decline to record a document or instrument.

The standards may relate to the physical processing or handling of a paper document, the processing of an electronic document, or the content of a document, and they are enumerated as follows.

- a. ~~Each document or instrument shall consist of one or more individual pages not permanently bound or in a continuous form. For the purposes of this section, continuous form shall mean individual one-sided pages. The A document or instrument in a physical form shall not be permanently bound, have any attachment stapled, taped, or otherwise affixed to any page except as necessary to comply with statutory requirements, or contain text or graphics on the back side of a page. However, the individual pages of a document or instrument in a physical form may be stapled clipped together for presentation for recording. A label that is firmly attached to a document or instrument in a physical form with a bar code or return address may be accepted for recording.~~
- b. ~~All preprinted text shall be in a legible font of at least eight ten point in size and no more than twenty sixteen characters and spaces per inch. All other text typed or computer generated, including but not limited to all names of parties to an agreement, shall be at least ten point in size and no more than sixteen characters and spaces per inch. If a document or instrument, other than a plat or survey or a drawing related to a plat or survey, presented for recording contains type smaller than eight point type for the preprinted text and ten point type for all other text, the document or instrument shall be accompanied by an exact typewritten or printed copy that meets the requirements of this section. However, a plat or survey or a drawing related to a plat or survey may contain text in a legible font of at least eight point in size.~~
- c. ~~Each document shall be of sufficient legibility to produce a clear reproduction. If all or a portion of a document or instrument, other than a plat or survey or a drawing related to a plat or survey, is not sufficiently legible to produce a clear reproduction, the illegible portion of the document or instrument shall be accompanied by a legible copy as an attachment an exact typewritten or printed copy that meets the type size requirements of paragraph "b" and which shall be recorded contemporaneously as additional pages of the document or instrument.~~
- d. ~~Each document or instrument, other than a plat or survey or a drawing related to a plat or survey, shall be on standard white paper of not less than twenty pound weight without watermarks or other visible inclusions markings. All text within the document or instrument shall be of sufficient color and clarity legibility to ensure that the text is readable when reproduced from the record.~~
- e. ~~All signatures on a document or instrument shall be in black or dark blue ink and of sufficient color and clarity to ensure that the signatures are readable clear and discernable when the document or instrument is reproduced from the record. The corresponding name shall be typed, printed, or stamped beneath the original signature.~~

The ~~typing or~~ printing of a name or the application of an embossed or inked stamp shall not cover or otherwise materially interfere with any part of the document or instrument except where provided by law. Failure to print ~~or type~~ signatures as provided in this paragraph does not invalidate the document or instrument.

- f. The first page of each document or instrument, other than a plat or survey or a drawing related to a plat or survey, shall have a top margin of at least ~~three inches~~ one-half inch of vertical space from left to right, ~~and with a blank rectangular space at the top of the first page which shall be three and three-fourth inches in width and two and one-half inches in height reserved and delineated for the county recorder's use, unless the document is accompanied by a cover sheet. Which shall be reserved for the recorder's use.~~ The stamp area shall be adjacent to the top margin. All other margins on the document or instrument shall be a minimum of three-fourths of one inch. Nonessential information including but not limited to form numbers, page numbers, or customer notations may be placed in a margin except the top margin. The recorder shall not incur any liability for not showing a seal or information that extends beyond the margin of the permanent archival record.
  - g. Each document or instrument presented for recording shall meet the requirements of section 331.606A, subsection 2. However, a document which includes personally identifiable information shall be recorded provided that the document is subjected to a redaction process as specified in Section 331.606A, section 3.
2. Each document or instrument, other than a plat or survey or a drawing related to a plat or survey, that is presented for recording shall contain the following information on the first page or on a cover sheet or page as described in subsection 3 below the three-inch margin:
- a. The name, address, and either the telephone number or email address of the individual who prepared the document.
  - b. For any instrument of conveyance, the name of the taxpayer and a complete mailing address.
  - c. A return address.
  - d. The title or type of the document or instrument.
  - e. All grantors' names.
  - f. All grantees' names.
  - g. Any address required by statute.
  - h. The legal description of the property ~~and parcel identification number~~, if required. When a legal description is required, the parsed location information shall also be provided including the quarter section, section, township, and range, or the lot, block, subdivision name, section, township, range, and city, town or *county* as applicable.
  - i. A document or instrument number for statutory requirements, if applicable. A recording reference number of an associated, recorded document or instrument as required by the county land record information system, or for other statutory requirements, as applicable.
  - j. The current parcel identification numbers, as applicable.

A document or instrument may also contain the contact information of the person who is best able to address any issue affecting the recordability of the document or instrument.

The information specified in this section is for the purpose of providing the information necessary for recording and indexing a document or instrument and to facilitate public access to information. Document information necessary to execute a transaction or to have legal effect shall be included in a document as determined by the parties in accordance with established legal standards.

3. ~~If insufficient space exists on the first page for all of the information described in subsection 2, the page reference of the document or instrument where the information is located shall be noted on the first page. The information specified in 331.606B, Section 2 may be provided in one of the following forms.~~
- a. As a part of the first page of a document or instrument.
  - b. As a cover sheet or page accompanying a document or instrument in a format approved by the county land record information system. A cover sheet shall be recorded contemporaneously as an additional first page to the document or instrument. A cover sheet shall conform to Section 331.606B, Section 1
  - c. If insufficient space exists on the first page or a cover sheet for all of the information described in subsection 2, the page reference of the document or instrument where the information is located shall be noted on the first page or coversheet.
  - d. An attestation statement, or any information intended to have legal effect shall not be included on the Cover Sheet.

Note: No changes to 331.606B, subsections 4 and 5 are recommended at this time.

6. ~~A document or instrument rejected for recording by a recorder shall be returned to the preparer or presenter accompanied by an explanation of the reason for rejection.~~  
A physical document or instrument declined for recording by a recorder shall be returned to the submitter or preparer accompanied by an explanation of the reason for the action to decline the document. When an electronic document or instrument submitted through the county land record information system is declined for recording by a recorder, the recorder shall notify the submitter of the reason for the action to decline the document.

Whenever practicable, the recorder shall also advise the preparer or submitter of any actions necessary to correct the document or instrument.

When a recording fee for an electronic document is adjusted to correct an error in the calculation of a fee, the submitter shall be notified of the reason and basis for adjusting the recording fee.

Section 331.606B, subsection 7 is repealed.

**Section 331.606 is amended to read as follows.**

**331.606 General filing requirements.**

1. In addition to the information specified in section 331.606B(2), section 558.49 and other requirements specified by law, the recorder shall note in the county land records management system the date of filing of each instrument, the number, type or title, and character of the instrument, and the name of each grantor and grantee named in the instrument. In numbering assigning reference numbers to the documents or instruments, the recorder shall ~~may start with the number one immediately following the date of annual settlement with the board and continue to number them consecutively until the next annual settlement with the board or the recorder may start with number one on the first working day of the calendar year and continue to number the instruments consecutively until the last working day of the calendar year.~~ Reference numbers shall not include letters or special characters. Reference numbers shall include the county two-digit numeric prefix and the four-digit year preceding each reference. In addition to the standard reference number, the recorder may also assign a book and page reference to a document or instrument.

. When present in a document, associated recording references shall be indexed with the recorded document and with **any referenced** antecedent documents. References shall also be indexed for concurrently recorded associated documents.

. When a recorded document includes a legal description, parsed location information shall be indexed. For platted land, the indexed location information shall include the lot, block, subdivision name, the name of the applicable city, town or county, and section, **township and range** numbers. For land which is not platted, the indexed location information shall include the section, township, range and quarter section. Indexing of **a quarter quarter** section is recommended but not required. If a county department uses an additional parcel identifier such as a capitalized alphabetic character, or a character string of numbers separated by a hyphen, it shall be indexed **as an additional parcel identifier** as specified by the county land record information system.

. When present in a document **or instrument submitted for recording**, parcel identification numbers shall be indexed. If a parcel identification number is modified by the county, such as for a subdivision or a consolidation of a parcel, the county auditor shall timely provide **any updated** parcel identification number information to the recorder which shall be **added to the index of the applicable** recently recorded document **as soon as practicable**.

. The parcel identification number index information for **previously recorded** antecedent documents shall not be modified unless it is for the purpose of correcting an error.

2. The recorder shall also note in the index the exact time of the filing of each instrument which shall be accurate to the second.

3. The county recorder may give the county sheriff the records filed under this chapter pertaining to the sale and registration of weapons or may dispose of those records if the sheriff does not wish to receive the records.

4. The recorder shall permanently archive an unaltered version of each recorded document or instrument. A document or instrument may be archived in its original format, as an electronic document, or in another format suitable for preserving information in the document or instrument. A person may view and copy an original or unaltered document or instrument in the office of the recorder.

By numbering and renumbering as necessary.

June 18, 2024

To: Hayley Rippel, Adam Wedmore, Becky Bissell, Karla Weiss  
Nancy Booten, Travis Case, Erin Canfield, Katie Carlton

From: Phil Dunshee, ILR Project Manager

Re: Parcel Identification Number Background and Options

Per recent conversations on June 10, Adam Wedmore suggested that we write something up and distribute it to the group for discussion. Apologies for the delay in getting this done as I was sidetracked by some other issues.

### **Background**

ILR has determined via surveys and various communications with our stakeholders that they wish to be able to perform record searches using parcel identification numbers. This is difficult to do today due to variability in indexing practices among Iowa counties. Recorders will need to consistently index parcel identification numbers to make this possible. Consistency in the parcel identification numbers themselves will also be important.

A related objective is to use the parcel identification number as the “key value” when integrating with other land record information systems such as the Beacon system published by Schneider Corporation. Our users have strongly indicated that they would like to see the integration between ILR and Beacon re-established.

Including existing parcel identification numbers in conveyance documents submitted for recording is currently required by Iowa law. Section 331.606B requires that “Each document or instrument ... that is presented for recording shall contain the following information on the first page ...

h. The legal description of the property and the parcel identification number, if required. ...”

Iowa recorders and the Iowa Land Records (ESS) system are considering the introduction of legislation which would further clarify this requirement.

Further, legislation is planned to clarify that parcel identification numbers and any additional parcel identifiers must be indexed in the county recording system if the information is present in the documents submitted to them.

Going forward, if document preparers are consistently including current PIN numbers in their documents, and if recorders are consistently indexing that information, then it becomes possible to use the parcel identification number as a search element AND it becomes possible to use the PIN as a key element to link with other land record information systems such as Beacon.

In addition to these steps, it will be important to fully understand the format and meaning of each county’s parcel identification numbering system. We understand the practical fact that the format, meaning and usage of parcel identification numbers may be different from county to county, and that may not be possible to change. But we can use what exists provided we understand the practices in each county.

### **Additional Information Gathering**

Based on the initial examination of parcel identification numbers referenced in the Beacon system we have observed the number of characters used ranges from 8 to 15, and there is some usage of hyphens and alphabetical characters. We are unsure if these numbers are the same as the “permanent real estate index number” referenced in 354.2 and 441.29, or whether these numbers use the two-digit county number as specified in 441.29(2).

Thinking about the requirements for the preparation of documents for recording, when we communicate with our customers and users, how should we instruct them? To make all this work we think we need to be able to tell them the following.

When preparing documents for recording, if it is a conveyance document, the parcels referenced in County A should conform to the following standard.

#### **County A**

- Parcel Identification Number is (define). It can be found [here]. If you have questions contact [name]
- The number of characters should be ...
- The format should be as follows [no spaces OR data elements separated by periods or hyphens]
- The meaning of each group of numbers/characters is as follows: ...
- County A DOES/DOES NOT use additional parcel identifiers
- If additional parcel identifiers are used by County A, then it should be in one of the following formats: Parcel A or 77-1234 (whatever it may be)

This is still a discussion, and we are not making a request now. We’re hoping you can provide us with guidance. Based on what we learn from you, I can foresee a survey of counties which would help document all of this for each county (unless it already exists somewhere).

One last thing for today, in addition to communicating with customers and users about including “current” PIN information in their documents, there is also a need for the recorder to timely receive and index “new” PIN information when there is a subdivision or consolidation. There needs to be a timely report to the recorder’s office about the new numbers so they can be indexed with a recently recorded conveyance document. If new numbers are not indexed, then it won’t be possible to use them as a search element. We presume information about new PIN numbers would need to come from the auditor’s office.

Please give this some thought and perhaps we could arrange a sidebar conversation sometime. It is not our desire to have unnecessary meetings. As I mentioned earlier, our customers and stakeholders are very interested in this, and it would be desirable to move forward as preparations are made for the 2025 legislative session. I’ll follow up with you sometime after July 4.

Best regards. Have a great summer!

pd

**Section 558.49 is amended to read as follows:**

558.49 Index records.

The recorder must shall keep index records to show the following:

1. Each grantor.
2. Each grantee.
3. The date and time when the instrument was ~~filed with~~ recorded by the recorder.
4. The date of the on which the document or instrument was executed by the parties, to the extent practicable. If there is a variance in the date of execution by the parties, the most recent date shall be indexed.
5. The nature of the instrument, as indicated by the title or type of the document or instrument.
6. The document reference number where the record of the instrument may be found.
7. The parsed description of the real estate affected by the document or instrument, as indicated by the location information including the quarter section, section, township, and range, or the lot, block, subdivision name, **section, township, range,** and city, town or county, if platted.
8. Any recording reference number of an associated, recorded document or instrument, when present on a document submitted for recording.
9. The parcel identification number, when present on a document submitted for recording. **Updated parcel identification number information shall be added to the index of any recently recorded conveyance document.**

**Section 331.601A, Subsection 7, is amended to read as follows.**

331.601A Definitions.

As used in this part, unless the context otherwise requires:

7. "Page" means a writing, printing, or drawing, other than a plat or survey or a drawing related to a plat or survey, occurring on one side only and covering all or part of such side, and not larger than eight and one-half inches in width and fourteen inches in length. For the purposes of a plat of survey or a drawing related to a plat of survey, "Page" also means a writing, printing, or drawing occurring on one side only and covering all or part of such side, and with dimensions of eleven inches by seventeen inches or up to twenty-four inches by thirty-six inches.

**Section 331.601A, Subsection 9, is amended to read as follows.**

331.601A Definitions.

As used in this part, unless the context otherwise requires:

9. "Transaction" means a specific legal action in the form of or evidenced by one of the following:

a. A title or caption including but not limited to a deed, deed of trust, mortgage, or power of attorney representing an action such as the conveyance of property, the provision of financing, or the power to act on behalf of another person.

b. A subsequent ~~action reference~~ referring to an original action as represented by a document or instrument including but not limited to an assignment or release or satisfaction of mortgage. A simple reference to a previous action which itself takes no subsequent action is not a transaction.

**1. Section 331.606B (4) is repealed.**

**2. NEW SECTION 331.612 Recording of Surveys**

**331.612 Recording of Surveys**

1. As used in this part, unless the context otherwise requires:
  - a. Parcel Identification Number means the unique identification number designated to each piece of real estate as recorded in the book of plats under section 558.63.
  - b. Additional Parcel Identifier means a capitalized alphabetic character, or a character string of numbers separated by a hyphen used to identify a proposed separate piece of real estate represented on a plat or survey or a drawing related to a plat or survey.
2. Documents and Instruments. Notwithstanding the document formatting standards specified in Section 331.606B, this section shall apply to each document or certificate prepared and signed by a licensed professional land surveyor which is submitted for recording.
3. Formatting Surveys for Recording. Any survey document which is submitted to a county for recording as described in this section shall conform to the following requirements.
  - a. Contain text in a legible font of at least eight-point in size.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. Provide font colors, signatures and drawings which have sufficient weight, contrast and darkness to be reproducible.<sup>2</sup>
  - c. Physical documents submitted to a county for recording shall be on standard white paper without watermarks or other visible markings and shall have a dimension which is no greater than eleven by seventeen inches.
  - d. Notwithstanding the dimensions specified for physical documents in this section, a physical document with a dimension of up to twenty-four inches by thirty-six inches may be submitted to the county if the county is able to scan or digitize the document while maintaining the original scale and quality of the document as specified in paragraphs a through c in this section.

<sup>1</sup> References to font size for a plat of survey would be removed from 331.606B (1b).

<sup>2</sup> References to legibility and being reproducible with respect to a plat of survey would be removed from 331.606B (1c).

- e. Electronic documents submitted to a county for recording through the county land record information system shall have a dimension which is no greater than twenty-four inches by thirty-six inches.
  - f. Provide an Index Legend which includes information required for indexing and recording by the county recorder as specified in section 4.
  - g. Provide a blank rectangular space three and three-fourth inches in width and two and one-half inches in height reserved and delineated for the county recorder's use, unless the document is accompanied by a cover sheet approved by the governing board of the county land record information system.
4. Index Legend Content. An Index Legend shall be presented as a compact table or grid with lines and a reasonable separation of the data elements.
- a. For all survey documents the following data elements are required in the index legend.
    - i. County Name
    - ii. Parsed location description:  
 If not platted: Section, Township, Range, Quarter Section, and Additional Parcel Identifier if applicable. The quarter quarter section is optional.  
 If platted: Lot/Unit, Block, Subdivision Name (without abbreviation), Town/City/County as applicable, Section, Township and Range<sup>3</sup>, and Additional Parcel Identifier, if applicable
    - iii. The current Parcel Identification Number
    - iv. Proprietor: Name (if applicable and if multiple proprietors – only one is required)
    - v. Requested By: Name
    - vi. Any known Associated Reference to a previously recorded survey document for the property
    - vii. The surveyor's name, mailing address, and phone number or email address
    - viii. Information necessary for the county recorder to return the survey document
    - ix. Additional information if the survey document is a monument preservation certificate including the following
      - 1. The name of the government entity or other organization under which the surveyor provided the professional service
      - 2. The name of the government entity or other organization requesting the monument preservation certification as provided in 355.6A

<sup>3</sup> Section, Township and Range are added as required data elements for platted land.

### **3. 355.6A Recording Monument Preservation Certificates<sup>4</sup>**

**Section 355.6A (4a) is amended to read as follows:**

4. a. The monument preservation certificate shall be filed with the county recorder pursuant to section ~~331.606B, subsection 5,~~ no later than thirty days after the certificate is signed by the surveyor.

**Section 355.6A (4b) is amended to read as follows:**

b. The county recorder shall index the monument preservation certificate according to the township, range, section number, and quarter section ~~on~~ **in** which the monument is located ~~within~~. If the monument is located within an official plat, the county recorder shall **also** index the certificate alphabetically by **the official plat** name

**Section 355.6A (4c) is repealed.<sup>5</sup>**

### **4. 355.10 Record (no change?)**

The surveyor shall record a plat and description with the county recorder no later than thirty days after signature on the plat by the surveyor if the survey was made for one of the following purposes:

- a. To correct boundaries and descriptions of land.
  - b. For the division of land.
  - c. To retrace an existing recorded description of a parcel or tract of land.
2. The plat and description shall show distinctly what piece of land was surveyed, the surveyor, and the date of the survey.
3. The thirty-day requirement shall not apply to subdivision plats.

### **5. Amend 355.12 to read as follows**

#### **355.12 Indexing of survey documents by recorder**

The recorder shall index survey documents and United States public land corner certificates pursuant to section 331.612 by township, range, and section number. If the survey is in a recorded subdivision, the recorder shall also index the document alphabetically by **subdivision** name.

<sup>4</sup> 355.6A(4a) is retained

<sup>5</sup> This language is no longer needed as it would now be addressed in the new 331.612 (4) relating to index legend content.

### **354.18 Recording of plats. (Needs further review)**

1. A plat of survey prepared pursuant to this chapter and a subdivision plat, with attachments, shall be recorded in the office of the county recorder, and an exact copy of the plat shall be filed in the offices of the county auditor and assessor. A replat of any part of an official plat pursuant to section 354.25, or a recorded subdivision plat of any part of an existing official plat shall supersede that part of the original official plat, including unused public utility easements.

2. The recorder shall examine each plat of survey and subdivision plat to determine whether the plat is clearly legible and whether the approval by the applicable governing body and the other attachments required by this chapter are presented with the plat. The recorder shall also keep a reproducible copy of the plat from which legible copies can be made. The recorder may specify the material and the size of the plat, not less than eight and one-half inches by eleven inches and not greater than a page as defined in Section 331.601A, subsection 7 that will be accepted for recording in order to comply with this section. The recorder shall not record a subdivision plat that violates this chapter.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **331.601A Definitions.**

As used in this part, unless the context otherwise requires:

7. "Page" means a writing, printing, or drawing, other than a plat or survey or a drawing related to a plat or survey, occurring on one side only and covering all or part of such side, and not larger than eight and one-half inches in width and fourteen inches in length. For the purposes of a plat of survey or a drawing related to a plat of survey, "Page" also means a writing, printing, or drawing occurring on one side only and covering all or part of such side, and with dimensions of eleven inches by seventeen inches or up to twenty-four inches by thirty-six inches.

**331.604 Recording and filing fees.**

1. Except as otherwise provided by state law, [subsection 4](#), or [section 331.605](#), the recorder shall collect a fee of [five](#) dollars for each page or fraction of a page of an instrument which is filed or recorded in the recorder's office. [If a page or fraction of a page contains more than one transaction, the recorder shall collect the fee for each transaction.](#)

2. *a.* The recorder shall also collect a fee of one dollar for each recorded transaction for which a fee is paid pursuant to [subsection 1](#) to be used exclusively for the purpose of preserving and maintaining public records. The treasurer, on behalf of the recorder, shall establish and maintain a county recorder's records management fund into which all moneys collected pursuant to [this subsection](#) shall be deposited. Interest earned on moneys deposited in the fund shall be credited to the county recorder's records management fund. The recorder shall use the moneys deposited in the fund to produce and maintain public records that meet archival standards, and to enhance the technological storage, retrieval, and transmission capabilities related to archival quality records. The recorder may cooperate with other entities, boards, and agencies to establish methods of records management, and participate in other joint ventures which further the purposes of [this subsection](#).

*b.* Fees collected pursuant to [this subsection](#) shall be used to accomplish the following purposes:

- (1) Preserve and maintain public records.
- (2) Assist counties in reducing record preservation costs.
- (3) Encourage and foster maximum access to public records maintained by county recorders at locations throughout the state.
- (4) Establish plans for anticipated and possible future needs, including the handling and preservation of vital statistics.

3. *a.* Each county shall participate in the county land record information system and shall comply with the policies and procedures established by the governing board of the county land record information system.

*b.* (1) The recorder shall also collect a fee of one dollar for each recorded transaction, regardless of the number of pages, for which a fee is paid pursuant to [subsection 1](#) to be used for the following purposes:

- (a) Establishing and implementing standards for recording, processing, and archiving electronic documents and records.
- (b) Maintaining the statewide internet site and the county land record information system.
- (c) Integrating information contained in documents and records maintained by the recorder and other land record information from other sources with the county land record information system.
- (d) Implementing and maintaining a process for redacting personally identifiable information contained in electronic documents that are displayed for public access through an internet site or that are transferred to another person.

(2) The fee collected by the recorder under [this subsection](#) for recording a plat of survey is one dollar, regardless of the number of pages. For purposes of this subparagraph, "plat of survey" means the same as defined in [section 355.1, subsection 9](#).

(3) Fees collected in excess of the amount needed for the purposes specified in [this subsection](#) shall be used by the county land record information system to reduce or eliminate service fees for electronic submission of documents and instruments.

*c.* The county treasurer, on behalf of the recorder, shall establish and maintain a county recorder's electronic transaction fund into which all moneys collected pursuant to paragraph "b" shall be deposited. Interest earned on moneys deposited in this fund shall be computed based on the average monthly balance in the fund and shall be credited to the county recorder's electronic transaction fund.

*d.* The local government electronic transaction fund is established in the office of the treasurer of state under the control of the treasurer of state. Moneys deposited into the fund are not subject to [section 8.33](#). Notwithstanding [section 12C.7](#), interest or earnings on moneys in the local government electronic transaction fund shall be credited to the fund. Moneys in the local government electronic transaction fund are not subject to transfer,

appropriation, or reversion to any other fund, or any other use except as provided in [this subsection](#). On a monthly basis, the county treasurer shall pay the fees deposited into the county recorder's electronic transaction fund to the treasurer of state for deposit into the local government electronic transaction fund. Moneys credited to the local government electronic transaction fund are appropriated to the treasurer of state for the payment of claims approved by the governing board of the county land record information system. Except as otherwise provided in [this subsection](#), expenditures from the fund shall be for the purpose of planning and implementing electronic recording and electronic transactions in each county, developing county and statewide internet sites to provide electronic access to records and information, and to pay the ongoing costs of integrating and maintaining the statewide internet site.

e. The recorder shall make available any information required by the county auditor or auditor of state concerning the fees collected under [this subsection](#) for the purposes of determining the amount of fees collected and the uses for which such fees are expended.

f. The county land record information system agreement may be amended by a vote of the boards of supervisors on behalf of the respective county recorders, pursuant to the terms of the agreement, to provide for the ongoing implementation of the county land record information system. As used in this paragraph, "county land record information system agreement" means the agreement entered under [chapter 28E](#) between the counties as required by [2005 Iowa Acts, ch. 179, §101](#), as amended by [2021 Iowa Acts, ch. 126](#).

g. (1) Upon request by a peace officer, as defined in [section 801.4](#), civilian employee of a law enforcement agency, or state or federal judicial officer or state or federal prosecutor, the county assessor or the county assessor's staff, or the county recorder or the county recorder's staff, shall redact the requestor's name contained in electronic documents that are displayed for public access through an internet site.

(2) Upon request by a former peace officer, as defined in [section 801.4](#), or a former civilian employee of a law enforcement agency, the county assessor or the county assessor's staff, or the county recorder or the county recorder's staff, may redact, upon the presentation of evidence that a compelling safety interest is served by doing so, the requestor's name contained in electronic documents that are displayed for public access through an internet site.

(3) This paragraph does not apply to a requestor holding or seeking public office.

(4) The county assessor and the county recorder shall implement and maintain a process to facilitate requests pursuant to this paragraph.

(5) A fee shall not be charged for the administration of this paragraph.

4. A county shall not be required to pay a fee to the recorder for filing or recording instruments. However, a county treasurer is required to pay recording fees pursuant to [sections 437A.11 and 437B.7](#).

[C51, §2534; R60, §4143; C73, §3792; C97, S13, §498; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §5177; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §335.14; S81, §331.604; [81 Acts, ch 117, §603](#)]

[84 Acts, ch 1124, §1](#); [91 Acts, ch 191, §13](#); [92 Acts, ch 1005, §1](#); [92 Acts, ch 1212, §33](#); [2009 Acts, ch 27, §6](#); [2009 Acts, ch 159, §3](#); [2013 Acts, ch 90, §257](#); [2013 Acts, ch 94, §2, 35, 36](#); [2021 Acts, ch 126, §1](#); [2021 Acts, ch 164, §1](#); [2021 Acts, ch 183, §7](#)

Referred to in [§10A.108](#), [96.14](#), [124C.4](#), [331.602](#), [331.605B](#), [331.609](#), [359A.10](#), [359A.12](#), [422.26](#), [437A.11](#), [437A.22](#), [437B.7](#), [437B.18](#), [468.628](#), [499A.1](#), [499B.3](#), [501.105](#), [501B.7](#), [547.3](#), [557.24](#), [557.26](#), [558.66](#), [558.69](#), [598.21](#), [633.481](#), [674.14](#)

**331.605B Fees collected — audit.**

1. The recorder shall make available any information required by the county or state auditor concerning the fees collected under [section 331.604, subsection 2](#), for the purposes of determining the amount of fees collected and the uses for which such fees are expended.

2. A recorder or the governing board of the county land record information system shall collect only statutorily authorized fees for land records management. The governing board of the county land record information system shall not collect a fee for viewing, accessing, or printing documents in the county land record information system unless specifically authorized by statute. [The governing board of the county land record information system may collect a fee of not more than three dollars per recorded document for using the system to process electronic documents for recording. An additional service charge may be added for credit or debit card payments. Fees collected for the processing of electronic documents for recording may be used for the purposes specified in section 331.604 and for the purposes of development, operation, and maintenance of the county land record information system and internet sites, systems for electronic filing for recording, associated payment systems, security systems, the land records databases, methods for searching the databases, processes for the redaction of personally identifiable information posted for public online access, and processes for the integration of land records information with other property information systems.](#)

[93 Acts, ch 151, §2; 2006 Acts, ch 1158, §4; 2009 Acts, ch 27, §7; 2009 Acts, ch 159, §4; 2021 Acts, ch 164, §2](#)

## **ESS Citizen Notification System**

### **Requirements and Operating Procedures**

**Service Summary:** Individuals or companies would have access to a notification service which will inform them of actions relating to property located in the State of Iowa. Property notifications would be based on either a name of a party (person or company) or a specific document recorded in an Iowa county.

- **Name Notification Service.** A user would enter a name(s) into an interface. The name could be a person or a company/organization. An email notification would be sent to the user if a document was recorded in any county in the State of Iowa which had a party name matching the name(s) provided by the user. The notification would include the following information: county name, recording date, recording reference number document type.
- **Associated Document Service.** A user would enter a reference number and date of recording for a particular document (such as a deed) recorded in an Iowa county. An email notification would be sent to the user if any subsequent document which has an associated reference to the specified document is recorded by the county.

**Central Authentication System (CAS):** ESS administers a central authentication system to manage the users of any ESS service. Users of the Citizen Notification System will be required to register with ESS CAS, and they will be required to have a user ID and password. Users of the Iowa Land Records search system will be automatically eligible to participate in the notification system. Organizations will also be able to access the notification system, and their users may be granted access to the notification system as well – subject to the approval of their organization's administrators.

**Individual User Workflow:** An individual user would log in to the CAS system and if set up for participation in the notification service, they would be presented with a welcoming landing page with an option to set up notifications by either name or document. The user would be asked to select the notification type.

If the user selected notification by name, the user would be asked to enter a person's last name/first name or an organization's name. Search conventions used by ESS and Iowa Land Records would apply. This means that the user would be instructed to enter a character string showing what the last name and then first name "starts with" or alternatively, showing what the organization name "starts with". A search "wild card" would be enabled and the user would be encouraged to enter the wild card (the asterisk "\*") character at the end of the character string. Behind the scenes the system would search for documents which match the name(s) entered on documents recorded after setting up the notification rules.

If the user selected notification by document, the user would be asked to enter the county name, the recording reference number and the date on which the document referenced document was recorded. The reference number (or book and page) must match exactly, and no "wild card" will be allowed.

**Individual Search Users:** Individuals who are registered users of the Iowa Land Records search application could be enabled for the notification service at the time of their initial

## **ESS Citizen Notification System**

### **Requirements and Operating Procedures**

registration, or the service could be added at a later time by adding the notification “permission” to their registration. This would be handled through CAS user management functions. Registered Search users could easily search for the document. A function could be added to the search results to “copy” the information for use in the notification system, or to “mark” a record for monitoring. As noted previously, once “marked”, the user would receive an email notification when any subsequent document which has an associated reference to the specified document is recorded by the county.

**Organization Users:** ESS provides search and e-filing services to organizations with professional responsibilities in the real estate industry. Administrators for those organizations may choose to enable their organizations to participate in the notification system to monitor recording activity associated with names or with certain documents. Those administrators may also grant permissions to their employees to access the notification system. However, an organization’s users would not be permitted to use the service for personal reasons. In this situation, the users would be expected to use the notification system for only business purposes such as monitoring when a satisfaction of mortgage is recorded for a specified mortgage. For personal use they could set up an individual user account.

**Usage Requirements:** ESS implements various rules and requirements to ensure that services are not abused. For example, individual search users have certain limits on how many document images can be viewed in one day. The limitations presume that an individual might want to look up their own records but have no need to view hundreds of records each day. Similarly, it is presumed that an individual notification system user would wish to monitor their own records or the records of a close family member.

On the other hand, an organization user who is responsible for many different transactions might have a greater need for monitoring more records - perhaps for a shorter period of time.

For these reasons the following usage requirements might be applied.

- Individual notification users would be limited to no more than five notification profiles.
- Users would be encouraged to choose their notification criteria carefully in order to maximize the utility of the system. For example, a profile searching for a name using a wild card might be more useful than a singular spelling of a name.
- Users would also be encouraged to use the regular search tools to look up other information of interest.
- Notification profiles could be modified at any time by an individual user, including extending the expiration date – but for no more than four years.
- Notification profiles would, by default, be set to remain active for four years, but users could modify it to be something less.
- Users with notification profiles approaching the expiration date would be sent a reminder email 30 days prior with instructions on how to renew.
- Individual users should be aware CAS accounts are automatically deactivated if they do not log in at least once every 120 days. Accounts can be reactivated by contacting an ESS administrator.
- Notifications will remain active even when a user account has been deactivated.

## **ESS Citizen Notification System**

### **Requirements and Operating Procedures**

- Individual users are responsible for maintaining their user email addresses to ensure that communications are successful.
- Organization notification users would be limited to no more than one hundred twenty notification profiles.
- Notification profiles could be modified at any time by an authorized organization user.
- Notification profiles for organization users would be set to remain active for up to one month. However, the duration could be extended for additional one-month periods
- Organization user CAS accounts are also automatically deactivated if they do not log in at least once every 120 days. Accounts can be reactivated by contacting an ESS administrator.
- Notifications will remain active even when a user account has been deactivated.
- Organization administrators and users are responsible for maintaining their user email addresses to ensure that communications are successful.

All users are required to comply with the ESS terms of service, and accounts may be deactivated if users do not comply with the requirements and terms.

**Accessing Notification Information:** As noted in the Service Summary (introduction), notification information would be provided via email. For individual users, a matching name notification would provide the county name, recording date, recording reference number and document type of the newly recorded document(s). If there were multiple documents the email should include a table showing each.

A matching associated reference in a county would result in an email with the county name, recording date, recording reference number and document type of the newly recorded document(s)

In both cases users would be instructed to contact the county recorder for more information, or to subscribe to the search application for easy access.

For organization users who have permission to use the Search application, notification would also be provided via email. However, the table of matching records could include a hyperlink to the search application, and if logged in, the user would be directed to the record of notice. The user would be prompted to log into CAS if not already logged in.

If sufficient resources are available, SMS messaging could be added as a notification method.

# Historic Surveys Project

## DRAFT Workflow and Specifications

**Project Purpose.** To assemble unrecorded surveys and railroad strip maps dating back to 1990, to digitize and preserve them in PDF format, and to document information necessary to create a searchable database of the historic records. Once digitized and indexed, load the records into a searchable database in collaboration with Iowa Land Records.

**Task 1 – Digitization.** Retrieve or borrow the records in their current form (paper or electronic). Paper records would be scanned and digitized with a resolution between 300 and 600 DPI, sufficient to produce a high quality and legible image. File sizes should be no greater than 1 MB and generally in the range of 100-300 KB.

It is anticipated that digitization would be performed voluntarily by surveyors and uploaded to a shared drive hosted by the Society of Land Surveyors of Iowa (SLSI).

**Task 2 – File Names.** Digitized Images, when created, would be expected to follow a standard naming convention for the electronic document files. It is suggested that the naming convention be a name (such as an surveyor name and a five digit sequential number). To the extent practicable, the files should follow a chronological order with the oldest record having the first sequence number. The name would not necessarily be a full name, but rather a recognizable but unique surname or primary company name.

**Task 3 – Basic Indexing.** For each set of digitized images, an index file should be created with basic information about each document. This should be a csv file which contains the following information about each file (PDF).

File Name – then name assigned to each digitized image in Task 2

County Name

Surveyor First Name

Surveyor Last Name

Surveyor/Engineering Firm Company Name

Requesting Company Name: (if applicable) (Railroad Name?)

Document Type: (Survey and Plats OR Railroad Map)

Date of Survey: (typically, date of surveyors signature)

Section (numeric only?)

Township (numeric only?)

Range (numeric only?)

Lot

Block

Subdivision Name (no abbreviation)

City/Town/County Name (no abbreviation)

~~Parcel Identification Number (if present)~~

~~Additional Parcel Identifier (if present)~~



**Task 4 – Import Into ILR Database.**

**Task 5 – Determine Design and Content of Indicia.**

Create “Not Recorded” indicia or watermark and affix indicia to image (First Page or all pages?)

# Historic Surveys Project

## DRAFT Workflow and Specifications

**Task 6 – Define Search Method.** Determine and create method of searching for unrecorded surveys or railroad strips.

**Workflow Example 1** – Data Images incorporated with ILR land record database and a data element is created to designate that the record is “unrecorded”

User logs into Search

User accesses any one of the search options and performs a search

Unrecorded Symbol Displayed

If an unrecorded survey or railroad strip appears in the results, the initial search results will show a symbol in the area with other symbols (show index, download pdf, report issue and associated reference) indicating that it is not recorded.

Unrecorded Indicia Displayed

The image will display an indicia indicating that it is unrecorded.

**Workflow Example 2** – Data Images into a separate “unrecorded” ILR land record database and parallel search tools are created.

User logs into Search

User Interface modified to include a selection whether a user wishes to search recorded documents or unrecorded documents. Recorded documents are selected by default

User selects the unrecorded documents option (probably a radio button)

Search tools all operate the same as for recorded documents

User accesses any one of the search options and performs a search

Unrecorded Message is Displayed

A message appears adjacent to the “showing page” information which states something like “Notice: Records Displayed Here Not Recorded”

Unrecorded Indicia Displayed

The image will display an indicia indicating that it is unrecorded.