

LGFCU Excellence in Innovation Award Project Evaluation

Project ID	GG-8
Title of Program	Back-Indexing Project
Program Category	General Government
Submission Date	5/30/2017 5:30:05 PM
County	New Hanover County
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Implementation Date	8/1/2016
FLSA Designation	Non-exempt
Project Team Members	Donna Horne, Deputy II (Project leader) Libby Sellers, Temporary Worker Liesel Ward, Deputy Sherry King, Deputy Ellen Gorman, Deputy

Description of Productivity Improvement

In 2016, the New Hanover County Register of Deeds (ROD) initiated a Back-Indexing Project. The project requires entering names and scanning images from old recorded documents into the ROD search software. The benefit to the public will be the ability to search names and see the original image from their own computer or device. The ROD is working on real estate documents from the 1960's, going back to the 1700's. Each record is examined to determine the names to be indexed. The names are entered into the system and an image is scanned and merged with the index. Currently, the ROD has indexed and imaged two books, and there are eight books awaiting verification and four books currently in process. This project is anticipated to take more than two years to complete.

Description of why this project was initiated

The New Hanover County Register of Deeds (ROD) Back-Indexing Project was initiated with the goal of digitizing all of the older record books. New Hanover County has records dating back to the 1700's. There are nearly 700 books that will need to be examined and digitized. These are records that can

only be accessed by physically coming in to the ROD office and searching through books, microfiche and microfilm.

This project will certainly improve the customer experience and increase citizen satisfaction. By digitizing these records and making them available to search on the ROD website, anyone in the world who has access to the web can search a name and view the original image from their own computer or device. Currently, digitized records are only searchable online dating back to 1954. With the completion of this project, anyone looking to search the title of a property or examine their genealogy will be able to search names from the ROD's earliest records, without having to physically come in to the office.

Quantifiable results (sustainability, cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of service).

Indication of what resources were used and what was done with any accrued time savings

This project's goal is to achieve a higher level of service for the customer. For attorneys, title searchers, and those tracing their genealogy, having records and images of the original documents dating from the 1700's available online will be an added benefit and a great asset for the county.

Recently, a couple had driven several hours and were staying overnight in order to spend two days in the ROD search room tracing their genealogy. When the Back-Indexing Project is finished, all of those records will be available at their fingertips. Thousands of residents, of families across the country, and local attorneys will be able to benefit from this project.

Currently, because records prior to 1954 are only available by book or microfilm, attorneys and paralegals must come in to the ROD office to perform their title searches each day. Anyone tracing their genealogy is limited as well. But, as more of the books become available online, all of these customers will have the option of working from their own offices or homes to find this valuable information.

Many of the older books are difficult to read because they were hand written and the pages have faded, making examination by the public difficult. Through the Back-Indexing Project, the ROD indexers are able to scan and enhance each page. This allows the indexer to examine the documents closely, enter the names into the system, and ensure greater accuracy. Customers will be able to more readily see the information they need and will improve customer satisfaction.

The ROD has a full-time employee and a 19-hour/week temporary worker who area dedicated to the project. In addition, there are three indexers who work on the project as they are able. Through their work and through this project, these documents and the information they contain will be more readily available to our customers. This project will continually be an asset to New Hanover County.

Other descriptive information

The Back-Indexing Project will make a significant improvement for the customers who need access to New Hanover County records. Not only the citizens of the county, but anyone, anywhere who needs to access the ROD records to do business or wants to trace their genealogy. The ROD could have remained content with customers having to visit the office physically to access the older records. However, the ROD chose to go above and beyond, successfully utilize technology, and serve citizens and customer now and for generations to come.

