

March Rollout Congratulations!

In January 2000, when the Registry 2000 team began consulting with stakeholders about the Registry 2000 discussion paper, actual implementation of a new legislative regime and system for managing land transactions seemed far off. Five years later, with an unprecedented amount of support and assistance from stakeholders and staff, province-wide implementation of the new land registration system and technology platform has become a reality.

This is a huge accomplishment for the many stakeholders who work in the system, for our staff and for the project team. Since we are often so busy moving on to the next task or working on the next

file that we forget to celebrate our accomplishments, we thought we should stop and congratulate all those who had a part in making this huge change to our registry system happen. Special thanks to the Registry 2000 and NSBS training teams, who have spend every day over the past few months on the road in order to successfully implement nine counties on the same day - March 1, 2005. The Western region celebrated one year as a land registration county on March 1, 2005 and Colchester will be celebrating two years on March 24, 2005. A big cheer for Nova Scotia's new land registration system and for everyone who helped create it, put it in place and who make it work every day!

Pictou Celebrates Too: One Year Land Registration Anniversary Party

On December 1, 2004, staff at the Pictou Land Registration Office was very pleased and surprised by an anniversary celebration thrown by their title searchers to commemorate one full year under the new land registration system. The searchers – Donna Jack, Verna Oakes, Jori Hart, Marshall Payzant, Linda Bristoll and Ann Wren – presented each staff member with a beautiful rose. An individual “Thank You” presentation was made to each staff member by Donna Jack. Afterwards, everyone celebrated by toasting to the past year and to the years ahead. The staff, thoroughly surprised by the kind gesture and sentiments of the searchers, agreed that the new system has brought them all together as a team, since everyone has to work more closely together in order to achieve progress for all.



Back row: Darlene Dixon, Ivan Grant, Jackie MacDonald, Patsy Rae, Mary Hahn, Verna Oakes, Donna Jack and Jori Hart

Front Row: Doris Langille, Tom Hahn, Marshall Payzant, Ann Wren and Terry MacDonald

Missing from photo: Beth Cameron, Andy MacDonald and Linda Bristoll

HRM: E-Submission Pilot Starting in Early May 2005

In the midst of rolling out the new land registration system province-wide, the Registry 2000 team has continued with preparation for e-submission implementation. In the past three months we have selected the pilot site, formed an e-submission working group, drafted new user agreements to address the new e-payment approach, and worked with PureEdge Solutions to develop the e-submission forms. Our planned rollout of e-submission to a small group of pilot users will begin in May 2005.

E-Submission Design

The E-Submission Working Group, formed in November 2004, includes representatives from the project team, Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, Department of Justice, and lawyers and accounting staff from the HRM law firms that will participate in the pilot. After a design review of the proposed notice-based e-submission process, the Working Group recommended that scanned images of the original documents should be attached to each electronic submission. As a result, the design was changed to incorporate this capability into the new e-submission process.

Pilot Site

Halifax County has been selected as the e-submission pilot site for a number of reasons:

- the Halifax County land registration district contains only one municipal unit - Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM);
- SNSMR collects deed

transfer tax on behalf of HRM;

- the proximity of the Registry 2000 project office to the HRM offices and the pilot users will be beneficial for pilot user set-up, training and support.

Initially 10 HRM law firms that had expressed interest in e-submission were approached about participating in the pilot. Other firms will be able to participate once the new processes have been tested and e-submission is ready for wide-spread use.

System Testing

The e-submission and e-payment software are now ready for testing. Thorough testing of all components of the e-submission process is critical to the success of the pilot. Through the course of an online transaction, the e-submission is shepherded through three separate systems – *Property Online*, the Department of Finance accounting system (SAP), and the bank's electronic funds transfer process. Each of these organizations will participate in an integrated testing process to ensure that everything works as planned.

New Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) Agreement

A new pre-authorized debit (PAD) agreement has been prepared to authorize the Provincial government to receive funds directly from lawyers' accounts. This agreement does not replace the Property Online user agreement - it is a separate agreement used to provide client

banking information directly to the Department of Finance. The banking information is then recorded in SAP to enable the e-payment process. The PAD agreement allows clients to specify two separate bank accounts – one for general operating e-payment transactions (e.g. Property Online monthly subscriptions and usage charges), and one for transactions involving trust funds (e.g. document filing fees, deed transfer tax payments for e-submissions).

NSBS Trust Regulation Changes

The Nova Scotia Barristers' Society is in the process of changing their trust regulations to allow trust accounts to be accessed for e-submission charges. The NSBS expects to have final approval of the regulation changes by April 22, 2005.

Moving Property Online Users to E-Payment

Initially, e-payment services will only be available to law firms participating in the e-submission pilot. During the summer and fall of 2005, all *Property Online* clients will be offered the opportunity to begin electronic payment of their monthly *Property Online* subscription and usage charges. It is anticipated that by December 2005 all Property Online users will be paying their Property Online accounts electronically. Further communication explaining the process for converting to e-payment will be distributed in the next several months.

Innovative Grantor Grantee Search Tool Implemented

On March 7, 2005 the new Grantor Grantee Search tool, with expanded search functionality, was implemented for *Property Online* users. This new functionality allows the Grantor/Grantee Index, the Judgment Roll and the General Power of Attorney roll to be searched together or separately, result sets to be added to, or individual items removed from a result set, and Columnar and Searchers' reports to be generated and sent to the user's email account.

Each person using the GG Search tool must log in with a separate User ID because the GG Search combines search results for users using the same ID. For

example, if two users are logged into the GG Search under the same ID at the same time, one user's result set will be overwritten with the next user's search. This does not affect clients who access the new GG Search using the public access computers in LRO vaults.

If your office requires additional User IDs to be created, please contact the Property Online Help Desk at propertyonline@gov.ns.ca or 1-866-518-4640. There is no additional charge for the creation of additional User IDs.

LRA E-Submission Regulations and Forms Changes - Spring 2005

Amendments to the *Land Registration Administration Regulations* (Admin. Regs.), including forms, are required to support the electronic submission process. A few other Admin. Regs. amendments that have been suggested since the land registration system rollout in the Western and Central Regions will also be put forward. The new regulations will be presented to the Minister in mid-April for consideration and approval.

The Admin. Regs. were first introduced in preparation for the Colchester County rollout in March 2003. Based on comments received from system users and issues identified by staff, these regulations were substantially amended in December 2003 and again in December 2004. We recognize that previous changes to the regulations had a significant impact on system users, however, they have also introduced efficiencies clarification to the land registration processes.

Changes will continue to be necessary to keep the system responsive and constantly improving. With the remaining nine counties working under the new land registration system and new eyes looking at the system, further changes are still likely. Future changes, however, should be much less disruptive – in fact, this set of amendments will be much more limited – the current regulations will not repeal and replace as was done for the two previous regulation changes.

Highlights of the Spring 2005 Proposed Regulations and Forms Changes

Proposed Amendments to the Regulations

- A. *Electronic submission of instruments.* Provisions to enable submission of an electronic cover page with a scanned document

image attached.

- B. *MGA compliance statement for PDCAs.* The MGA compliance choices to be expanded and refined. Future systems changes to incorporate the compliance statement into the electronic PDCA via a checkbox or drop-down menu of choices.
- C. *Registration of condominium units.* Changes to give the Condominium Common PID LRA status, and allow it to serve as a repository for the declaration, by-laws and amendments for the Condominium Corporation.
- D. *Rectification.* Provisions to permit the option of a registrar's rectification without a Form 17, to perform parcel register cleanup for condominium units.
- E. *Parcel register information.* Instrument and interest types, which never formed part of the lawyer's Certified Opinion of Title, will be categorized as appearing for convenience only.

Proposed Changes to the Forms

- A. Electronic cover pages to be prescribed.
- B. The Form 8 Opinion of Title to be streamlined so that it acts as a cover page for the signed Form 29 SRI.
- C. Forms 24, 25 and 17 to revert to their simpler format prior to the December 2004 changes that permitted registration of the "flip side" of benefits and burdens.
- D. Minor improvements to Forms 17, 24, 25, 26 and 28 and several other forms.

Crown Lands Layer Access For Use of Authorized Users

In January 2005, the Crown Lands layer was added to the map function in *Property Online* to provide lawyers, surveyors and searchers with notice of possible Crown interest in land. The Crown Lands Layer is an innovative and valuable tool used by lawyers, surveyors and title searchers to determine whether a search at the Crown Lands Record Centre is required to clarify title to land. Lawyers, surveyors and title searchers have always had the obligation to ensure that there is no outstanding Crown interest in land, but previously they had to go to the Crown Lands Record Centre to obtain this information.

Concerns have been raised that the Crown Lands layer has the potential to create confusion as to the extent of Crown ownership of lands in Nova Scotia.

As such, in early April we will be restricting access to the layer to those who need the information to complete property transactions – authorized lawyers, surveyors and their support staff.

Over the next year, the Department of Natural Resources is making it a priority to reconcile the Crown Lands records with the records in *Property Online* to determine what lands are owned by the Crown and which ungranted parcels are clearly not owned by the Crown any more.

If you have any questions regarding this initiative or the Crown Lands layer, please contact the Property Online toll-free Help Line at 1-866-518-4640.

Looking for a Plan?

Check for Plan References in *Property Online*

Plans recorded in the past year or so can now be searched using *Property Online*, remotely or from access computers in LRO vaults. Land Registration Office (LRO) staff across Nova Scotia began recording plans in the new LIN-NS system (the internal system that replaced the old deeds operating system and provides information to *Property Online*) as it was implemented. The last offices were moved to the new LIN-NS system in May 2004.

Plans that are recorded in LIN-NS follow the same basic process as documents – they are first placed “in process” and then they are verified. When plans are initially recorded, very basic information is collected (plan name, plan type, and location). More detailed information is added during the verification process, which generally happens within a few days of recording. To search for plans that have passed the initial recording stage, go to “**Search Plans in Process**,” which is accessed from the “**Registration Index**” link in *Property Online*. Select the appropriate county and click on the “**Find**” button. All plans awaiting verification will be displayed alphabetically by plan name.

Once plans have been verified, they are automatically removed from “Plans in Process” and placed in the “Plan Index.” At this point, more detailed searching information has been entered about the plan.

Searching by keyword in the plan reference field will search the database for matches with subdivision names, owner names, location, and street names. You can also narrow your search by entering a keyword in the “Plan Reference” field and selecting a “Reference Type” qualifier (e.g. Subdivision Name). To search verified plans, you can access the “**Search Plan Index**” screen from *Property Online*’s “**Registration Index**.”

Searchers should keep in mind that plans recorded prior to the implementation of LIN-NS in each county will not be found by searching in *Property Online*; they can be found by searching the Plan Log index in each LRO vault. A more detailed step-by-step description of searching plans can be found on the Land Registration website, under User Group Resources for Title Searchers.