



New Look for Deeds and Dialogue

This month, *Deeds and Dialogue* introduces our revamped masthead. Communications Nova Scotia, who assist government departments in getting their message out, have coordinated a common look and feel for the dozens of newsletters and communiques that are published regularly across the Nova Scotia government. The look of the newsletter is new, but the focus remains the same - to update our readers regularly on the progress of the Registry 2000 initiative.

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Colchester County Chosen as Alpha Site

After a thorough analysis by the Alpha Site Working Group, Colchester County has been selected to host the first implementation of the new Registry 2000 System. It is anticipated that the new system will be introduced in Colchester in the Fall of 2002. Province-wide rollout is planned for 2003.

It was agreed by stakeholders and SNSMR staff that Alpha Site must be a registration district with a volume of business which will offer a good opportunity to assess the new system, while not overwhelming the staff, system and in the result, stakeholders. Four mandatory factors and associated benchmarks were identified as parameters for the Alpha Site search. To be short listed, the following had to be demonstrated in the registration district:

1. The annual number of document registrations are between 5,000 and 9,000;
2. The number of parcels created by subdivision range from 275 to 600;
3. The provincial mapping is sufficiently mature so that, on average, at least three documents have been indexed to each parcel; and
4. The Registry is collecting deed transfer tax on behalf of at least one municipal unit in the registration district.

The Alpha Site Working Group determined that if a county could not meet these mandatory criteria, it should not be recommended to host Alpha Site. Hants and Colchester Counties were the only two counties that met all of the mandatory criteria. The Working Group's analysis did not stop with identifying the two short-listed Counties. The secondary factors were developed in consultation with stakeholders and SNSMR staff, and were then applied to Hants and Colchester Counties.

These issues included the quality of legacy data, the technical readiness of municipal units, human resource issues such as retirement of key staff, stakeholder issues such as the dispersal of real estate bar and interest of other stakeholder groups, facilities/physical plant issues, migration acceleration such as the presence of large landowners, and GIS maturity/quality. Each of these factors were weighted based on their overall significance to the Alpha Site rollout. The quality of the data and stakeholder issues were considered the most important factors, while technical readiness of the municipality and GIS maturity were considered the least important.

A comparison of Colchester and Hants County on these factors, and on the four mandatory criteria, showed that Colchester County is the preferred location for Alpha Site implementation. More detailed information on the selection process, the relevance of the key factors and criteria, and on the

overall scoring can be seen in the **Final Alpha Site Selection Report** which is posted in the document centre on the Registry 2000 web page at:
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/property/registry>.

Registry of Deeds Fees News Bulletin

The fee for registering and filing most documents at the Registries of Deeds was increased to \$70.00 on September 17, 2001. These fees had not been increased since 1990. The increase, which was first announced by Finance Minister Neil LeBlanc in his Spring Budget Address, brings the fee for registering documents closer to the actual cost of providing the service (\$73.83). Notices of the fee increase were sent to more than 4,000 users and were posted in the registries one month in advance of the increase. A reminder of the fee increase was also sent to members of the bar several days before the change.

Releases of Mortgage

The Regulation left the registration fee for releases of mortgage at \$40.00+\$1.00 per page until February 1, 2002. A request was made by RELANS and the Barristers' Society that the fee for Releases and Partial Releases of Mortgage be tied to the date of transaction, rather than a date certain. As a result, the Registry and Information Management Services Division has issued the following policy statement with regard to mortgage releases and partial releases:

5. Until February 1, 2002, the fee for entering and registering a release or partial release of mortgage is \$40.00 plus \$1.00 per page.
6. After February 1, 2002:
 - a. For all transactions closing on and after February 1, 2002, the fee for entering and registering a release of mortgage will be \$70.00.
 - b. For all transactions closing prior to February 1, 2002, the fee for entering and registering the release of mortgage will continue to be \$40 plus \$1 per page, provided the release is registered before September 1, 2002.
 - c. The fee set out in 2(b) will only apply if, at the time of registering the release, the lawyer/user provides the Registrar with written confirmation that the date of the transaction was prior to Feb. 1, 2002.
7. Releases of debenture and releases of judgment are not included in this policy - the fee for these documents increased to \$70 per document as of Sept. 17, 2001.

Documents Contained in Other Documents

The revised Registrars' Fee Schedule also contains an important change to the fee structure relating to documents contained within other documents. The Department has noted an increasing tendency on the part of system users to combine documents (or even document types) into one document for registration. This practice erodes the integrity of the registry index, as only the first document type is indexed when combined documents are registered. Any documents hidden or combined within another document are not listed in the Grantor Grantee Index, making them harder to locate. Searchers indicate that this practice makes title searching more difficult. As this is a complex issue which will require additional staff and user training, we will be consulting with staff, users and system stakeholders to determine the best way to implement the fee for documents combined within other documents. Until a policy statement is circulated, staff will continue to apply the current procedure for dealing with documents within other documents: they will index the document by the main document only, and charge only for the registration of the main document.

We've Reached Some Milestones

- ✓ LRA received Royal Assent June 2001
- ✓ Issued RFP on technology solution June 2001
- ✓ Chose Implementation Partner July 2001
- ✓ Selected Alpha Site August 2001
- ✓ Short-listed technology solutions October 2001

What's Next???

- Acquire new technology Fall 2001
- Enhance and modify system Spring 2002
- Train users and staff Spring/Summer 2002
- Implement Alpha Site Fall 2002
- Begin Province-wide rollout Spring 2003

Registry 2000 Phase Two Working Groups Update

Fifteen working groups have now been established to complete the myriad of tasks connected with implementation of Alpha Site by the end of 2002. Some of the working groups have started to hold regular meetings and others will be starting their work later in the Fall or early next year. Recent Working Group activity includes:

- Alpha Site** - The Site selection process has now been completed, the Working Group will now begin planning for Alpha Site implementation issues
- Communications** - A meeting was held on September 13, when we welcomed two new stakeholder representatives who will provide input from a user's viewpoint. This group oversees the publication of Deeds and Dialogue, ensures that the Registry 2000 website is updated regularly, and oversees ongoing communication strategy as the project moves forward.
- Fees** - The Fees Working Group has begun its consideration of appropriate fees under the Land Registration Act. The Group, which includes representatives from the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, Canadian Bankers Association and the title searching community, will be examining the Act and recommending a fee schedule for new services and processes under the Registry 2000 system.
- Standard Forms** - A meeting is planned for mid-October to commence development of forms prescribed under the LRA
- Legislation** - This Working Group is preparing amendments to the Land Registration Act for the Fall sitting of the House. More than 10 suggested amendments have arisen since the Act was passed in June. The Working Group is also discussing a proclamation schedule for the Act and will be discussing the regulations required for Alpha Site implementation.
- Procedures** - We have assembled a team of Working Group members as well as a secondary group to provide periodic review on specific issues and will be meeting October 24, 2001.
- Surveyors** - Members met in early fall to formulate an action plan for educating surveyors and other stakeholders on the PID pre-approval and subdivision processes. Another meeting is planned for early November
- Systems Requirements** - A meeting was held to update the full Systems Requirements Working Group on the technology search that is currently underway. General meetings will be held regularly, and individual members will be called upon to provide their expertise on an ad hoc basis.
- Training** - The Training Working Group and periodic reviewers have been assembled. Once we have acquired the base technology system and understand what modifications are required to fit our specific business needs, we will hold our first meeting.

Technology Solution Search for Registries Well Underway

One of the key components of the Registry 2000 vision is the implementation of a new technology solution for our land registries. Significant progress has been made in the evaluation and selection of a solution to replace the legacy systems currently being used. This search and evaluation is being led by our Implementation Partner, Eastbridge Consulting Inc. (see box), working in conjunction with members of the Registry 2000 team.

Eastbridge Joins the Team

Following the release of an RFP in June and a rigorous evaluation process, Eastbridge Consulting Inc. was selected to help the Registry 2000 team identify and implement the new technology solution for Nova Scotia's registries. Eastbridge is a Nova Scotia company with specialized knowledge in the management of technology implementation projects and evaluating technical applications. They have a clear understanding of the Registry 2000 vision, having participated in earlier phases of the Registry 2000 project. The Technology Solutions Project Manager, Andrew Creaser, is an experienced professional with 16 years in the information technology industry. Eastbridge team members include Tom Roberts and Chris Henkelmann (system analysts), and Don Trotter (technical architect). Other Eastbridge resources will be utilized as the project progresses. The Registry 2000 team is excited about the opportunity to work with Eastbridge.

The evaluation is focused on the systems in place in five Canadian jurisdictions -- New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and the Yukon. The combined Registry 2000/Eastbridge team, with assistance from the technical staff at Transportation and Public Works, closely analyzed each system to determine their compatibility with the needs of Nova Scotia.

The evaluation was performed over a one-month period and was conducted by three separate teams organized to focus on different aspects of each system. The **business functionality team** conducted phone interviews to determine how well each system met the requirements of the Nova Scotia land titles and the traditional registry environment. The **technical team** analyzed questionnaires submitted from each candidate jurisdiction to determine whether the technology was flexible enough to grow with the Registry 2000 vision and how well the technology fit with the current environment and skills situation in Nova Scotia. Finally, the **sales and service team** assessed such things as technical support and training capabilities that could be made available should Nova Scotia implement their system.

After reviewing the results, the team has recommended that a detailed second-level evaluation be undertaken of the land registration system in New Brunswick. This system, used by Service New Brunswick (SNB) and developed by CARIS-Universal Systems Limited (USL) of Fredericton, received the highest score from the evaluators in each of the three areas of review. The New Brunswick system contains a significant number of the processes required by the registries in Nova Scotia and is based on technology that is similar to our environment.

Over the next few weeks, the Registry 2000 Team will be meeting with representatives of SNB and CARIS-USL to do a more detailed evaluation and to determine what enhancements and modifications are required to fully meet the requirements of Nova Scotia. A recommendation will then be made to the Department acquisition of a system. If necessary, further discussions will take place with the jurisdictions that were evaluated in second and third place. Once approval to acquire a system has been received, the combined team will develop a plan that will lead to the alpha site implementation in Colchester County late next year.

SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA & MUNICIPAL RELATIONS NEWS

Registry and Information Management Services Division (RIMS), the Division responsible for managing the Registries of Deeds and Land Information Centres (among other tasks), continues to define its role within Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR). New appointments:

- Danny Gray has been appointed **Director, Geographic Information Services**. He will be responsible for implementing the Province's corporate approach to the management of geographic information.
- In his new position as **Director of Information Management Services**, Rob Doiron is responsible for the strategic development, management and marketing of the provincial corporate databases and supporting divisional and departmental e-government initiatives.
- As **Director of Business and Consumer Registration**, Anne James will be responsible for implementing and integrating various programs and business processes for the Registry of Joint Stock Companies, Vital Statistics and Business Registry Services.

A **move is afoot** . . . to bring the staff of various divisions within SNSMR closer together. Through the Fall, departmental sections whose functions have been re-aligned will physically move their office space to be closer to their colleagues. The Registry 2000 Team and the RIMS Division will be re-locating from Summit Place to the 9th floor of Maritime Centre as part of this move.

Correction...Correction...Correction...Correction...Correction...Correction...Correction

In our June issue of Deeds and Dialogue, we told you about some Registry of Deeds locations that now offer expanded Registry of Motor Vehicle services. Please note that RMV front counter service is available in the Liverpool and Shelburne Registry of Deeds offices two days per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.). In Guysborough, the service is offered on Tuesdays only from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

In Antigonish, full RMV service is available at the Service Nova Scotia Access Centre, 20 St. Andrew's Street, not at the Antigonish Registry of Deeds as mentioned in the June newsletter.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION



Land Records Reform Office

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations
 1601 Lower Water Street, P.O. Box 216
 Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2M4
 Web site: www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/property/registry/
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To review back issues of the newsletter or obtain additional information about the Project please visit our website at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/property/registry/>

NOTICE TO UNION OF NOVA SCOTIA MUNICIPALITIES
Update on Land Registration Act :Subdivision Process
October 5, 2001

As you probably know, the new Land Registration Act was passed by the House this spring and we are on target to implement the new land titles system in the first County by Fall 2002. It is anticipated that a new base technology solution will be acquired in the next few months so that we can begin modification and enhancement of the system for our needs. Detailed processes and procedures will need to be documented and finalized by late 2001 or early 2002 to allow for system design and testing in the spring and summer of 2002.

One of the processes which will be affected by the new requirements under the LRA and consequential amendments to the MGA is the subdivision approval process.

The Registry 2000 Team held a workshop with several Development Officers on July 27, 2001 to provide an overview of the proposed new process and to solicit feedback and suggestions for changes. It was recommended by those present that all requirements for subdivision approval under the LRA and MGA be checked by provincial staff at the Registry or LIC before the developer initiates the subdivision application at the Municipal Unit.

This proposal is being carefully scrutinized by the Registry 2000 Team and departmental management. The conclusion will be discussed with the Development Officers and presented at the Development Officers' Conference in November.

If you have any questions regarding the business processes related to the *Land Registration Act* or the Registry 2000 Project in general, please visit the Registry 2000 site at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/property/registry/> or call the Registry 2000 Project Office at 424-5619.