



March 2003 for Colchester



The Registry 2000 team is recommending implementation of Nova Scotia's new land registration system in

Colchester County in March 2003. Colchester was selected as the project's first implementation location (Alpha Site) but the implementation target had not been set.

The March 2003 implementation date was chosen by the Registry 2000 team after careful analysis of all the tasks that still need to be completed before the new land registration system is put in place. Along with the numerous technical requirements, successful implementation will require a fully trained staff and well-informed and prepared users.

The team is planning to have the new system, which will handle registry of deeds as well as new land registration processes, rolled out to staff by mid February. This will give staff an opportunity to gain some expertise with the new system before the *Land Registration Act* is proclaimed in March.

The new system is made up of three modules, which are being developed by CARIS (the project's software developer). The first module has already been delivered, and testing is going well. The full system will be delivered by mid-December 2002.

Millions of existing electronic records and files are being converted so they can be accessed through the new system. That process is nearly complete. The various staff and stakeholder training modules are well into development, as are the regulations, standard forms, staff and user procedures manual, and other details that will ensure the system's successful implementation.

Training has begun with certain stakeholder groups, and detailed plans are being devised to ensure that all the necessary training is completed before rollout. Even though the team plans to have everything completed so the system can be used by staff in mid February, most stakeholder training will be scheduled for later in February and early March, in order to provide the training as close as possible to the actual implementation date.

The Alpha Site Working Group will be participating in an implementation readiness workshop later in November, in order to develop a checklist of implementation tasks.

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Working Group Round Up

Communication

The Communication Working Group continues to coordinate the project's efforts to keep all stakeholders informed. Quarterly publication of this *Deeds and Dialogue* newsletter is becoming increasingly vital as the project draws nearer to the implementation date. The monthly staff bulletin provides all property registration staff with information that relates directly to issues staff will face when the new land registration system is implemented.

In early November, Registry 2000 is sponsoring a booth at the annual conference of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities in Halifax, and will use the opportunity to distribute information about the project to municipal representatives and other attendees. As well, the working group has been putting the finishing touches on the first in a series of Land Registration brochures which will range from general information on the new system and processes, to specific topics of interest, such as the subdivision process.

Evaluation

The Evaluation Working Group has identified and documented 21 measures which will be used to assess effectiveness and efficiency in the new land registration system. Measures include items that can be counted, such as the number of transactions and documents processed, items that assess the time it takes to complete tasks, and ways of testing the satisfaction of system users.

Standard Forms

A number of the standard forms have now gone through a third draft and have also been reviewed by the Legislation Working Group. At last count there were 32 forms, of which fewer than 10 will be used regularly in land registration transactions. The remainder have been created to support some of the less common processes described in the LRA. The process and training teams are currently drafting a Standard Forms Instruction Manual to give guidance on forms preparation and use.

Fees

The Fees Working Group has completed its review of system fees and has presented its recommendations to senior management for their perusal and approval. The group is recommending that the document filing fee remain at \$70 per document, and that other fees fit within the current fee schedule.



Legislation

The Legislation Working Group has completed a first draft of the *Land Registration Act* regulations (both cabinet and ministerial) and has forwarded them to senior management for review. At the October 25th meeting, the group reviewed the standard forms that will be recommended for inclusion in the regulations.

LRA Agreement

This working group is responsible for developing an agreement which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society and the Province in the management of the new land registration processes. The group has been meeting every two weeks or so during the last several months and is preparing a draft agreement. It is expected that the recommended agreement will go to the Bar Council and government for comment and approval.

Migration Acceleration

The Migration Acceleration Working Group has been working on a set of recommendations on migration acceleration and management strategies. These recommendations came out of a workshop, which included representatives of government departments and large land holders. It is anticipated that the group will finalize the recommendations at its November meeting.

Procedures

Project team members who are focusing on the development of procedures have almost completed the new land registration procedures for internal staff. Once finalized, the procedures will be imported into RoboHelp software making it easy for staff to search and review procedures. The team will then distribute the new procedures to staff for their review and comment.



The existing registry and property mapping procedures have also been reviewed and are being adjusted for use under the new land registration system. These changes are roughly 70 per cent complete. Procedures for external users and Registry clients are being prepared at the same time as the internal procedures are being reviewed.

Surveyors

The Surveyors Working Group is recommending that the Association of Nova Scotia Land Surveyors (ANSLS) enter into an agreement with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations to govern the relationship between the association and the Province generally and to define the surveyor's role in Parcel Description Certification applications. The Working Group will be reviewing the first draft of the Land Registration Act Agreement at their next meeting on Nov 6th.

Training

In September, realtors in Halifax and Colchester attended the first two realtor training sessions, which have been designed to help prepare them for the implementation of the new land registration system. Members of the training team delivered the first two sessions, and Nova Scotia Realtors Association trainers will deliver the remaining 24 sessions offered around the province between now and June.

Another set of staff information sessions to demonstrate the new system will be delivered in early December. All staff will be brought in over two days to be given a sneak preview of the new

application - LIN-NS.

In July the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society Bar Council decided that mandatory training will be required before lawyers will be permitted to submit documents into the new land registration system. The lawyer's training sub-group has been working with Caron George (the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society training consultant) to prepare the first two modules of the lawyers' education program. This training program will be rolled out during February and March 2003.

Title searchers from all over the province met in Truro on October 29 to further define the content of their training. Emerson Keen, Nova Scotia land surveyor, will assist the training team in the preparation and delivery of surveyors' training for his zone.

Project 2000 Update

Milestones We've Reached

- √ Data conversion virtually completed
- √ Two brochures completed and ready for distribution (subdivision process; general overview of new land registration system)
- √ Established the technology architecture

What We're Working on

- Preparing final draft of Procedures Manual
- Developing 8-10 other brochures
- Completing training materials
- Finalizing standard forms and regulations
- Preparing a Service Level Agreement
- Building system modifications
- Testing the system
- Drafting agreements with NSBS and ANSLS

What's Next?

- ▶ Train Alpha Site users & staff . . . Jan-Mar. 2003
- ▶ Implement Alpha Site March 2003
- ▶ Evaluate Alpha Site April-July 2003
- ▶ Begin province-wide rollout Fall 2003

Keeping Title Searchers in the Loop

Title searchers are key Registry users who will be affected by the new land registration system. To make sure searchers are kept up to date and receive the training they need, the Registry 2000 team has held two meetings with the searchers to discuss their transition to the new system. Title searchers identified two main concerns:

1. They want input and details regarding training content; and
2. They would like to explore their possible role in the parcel description certification process.

These concerns were discussed further at a second meeting held on October 29 in Truro. This meeting was facilitated by Caron George, training consultant with the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, and Nancy Saunders, training lead for the project. Title searchers noted that they will have an ongoing search role, and that there are many additional roles they may play in the parcel description certification process. These include doing the research to make the match between the parcel on the map and the description, and preparing the electronic descriptions for the lawyers or surveyors who will submit them in the electronic application.

During a discussion on training needs, searchers indicated that they will need training on all relevant processes, forms and systems, as well as a sound understanding of the professional standards which impact the work done for lawyers. Searchers were encouraged to provide input into the scenarios being developed for the lawyer education program as well as the overall training content (call Nancy Saunders at 424-4305).

The Registry 2000 team has been working to compile a complete list of provincial title searcher contacts so that we can continue to send out relevant material and updates. Notes and meeting handouts will be sent out to everyone on the list before the end of November. Any title searchers who have not yet received information from the *August* meeting should contact the Registry 2000 Project Office at 424-5619.

News....News....News....News....

- √ **SNSMR Head Office Has Relocated** - All Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations head office staff have completed their move from Summit Place to Maritime Centre.
- √ **New Communications Advisor Joins the Registry 2000 Team** - In September, the Registry 2000 Team acquired the skills of an experienced communications resource. Stephen Smith, formerly a communications advisor with the Department of Environment and Labour, has joined the team as a dedicated resource who will provide leadership and assistance in relation to all Registry 2000 communications matters. Steve has worked as a communications consultant since 1994 and before that, worked in public relations for more than 10 years. He even did a stint as a Halifax Herald reporter in the late 70's. Steve is keenly interested in sports history (particularly baseball) as evidenced by writing he has done for Beckett's Hockey Monthly, Sports Collectors Digest and the Edmonton Trappers Professional Baseball Club. The Registry 2000 Team is thrilled to welcome Steve to the fold.
- √ **Registry 2000 Shirts** - There are still a few stylish Registry 2000 shirts available at a low cost of \$25.00. Three XL and one Large - all in the faded denim look. To order call Carol - 424-5619.

Questions and Answers

This is the second installment of questions and answers raised during the Registry 2000 team's tour of the province earlier this year. Watch for more questions and answers in future issues and on our website.

Q Who decides if lesser title standards are acceptable on first registration?

A The Registrar General has the discretion to accept lesser standards for first registration - see clause 37(9)(b) of the *Land Registration Act*. This may be used for condo conversion, or migrating subdivision parcels with the same back title.

Q Will there be naming standards?

A Naming standards for judgments are contained in the LRA but additional standards, such as inclusion of a date of birth for identification purposes, may be specified in regulations.

Q How will the lawyer certify possessory title?

A The Nova Scotia Barristers' Society will be adopting a professional standard concerning the certification of possessory title. As with any title opinion given to the government, the solicitor is liable to the Registrar General with respect to any negligent error or omission in an opinion furnished if the Registrar General has, within 10 years after the opinion was furnished to the Registrar General, been required to pay compensation pursuant to this Act as a result of the negligent error or omission.

Q Can a paper title owner with marketable title register the parcel despite knowledge of an occupier?

A The paper title owner can register the parcel knowing there is an occupier, but must give the occupier notice of the registration of the parcel. The occupier then has 10 years from the date the parcel was registered to commence an action in the Supreme Court to confirm their ownership.

Q Do title searches have to include copies of ALL documents relating to the parcel in their abstracts?

A Paper copies of all documents relating to the parcel will not be required if there is a book and page reference available. If a document is not in the Registry of Deeds, then a paper copy of the document must be filed with the abstract. The Nova Scotia Barristers' Society professional standards on abstract preparation will have to be followed, as they are today.

Q Will the government be reviewing title searches as they are submitted?

A Abstracts will not be reviewed by registry staff, however, Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations and the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society will be auditing abstracts to ensure compliance with the LRA and professional standards. The public is not permitted access to abstracts.

Q Will there be electronic filing of documents?

A Electronic registration and recording of documents is a longer-term goal of the system modernization. We also plan to work towards electronic submission of plans. This functionality will not be available on initial rollout of the system. The infrastructure that would allow for features such as digital signatures is not yet in place.

Q Will abstracts be filed electronically?

A Initially, abstracts will be filed as paper copies only. They will be submitted with the lawyer's Opinion of Title and Affidavit of Verification. We are reviewing the option of scanning and faxing abstracts, however, there are quality control issues and format issues to be resolved. Due to the size of some abstracts and complexity of scanning this type of information, it is not likely that we will be scanning abstracts for some time.

Technology Solutions Component Update - Testing Begins

Much has happened since the technology update in the last newsletter. By far the most exciting news is that CARIS, our system developer, has delivered the first set of modules of the new application.

In preparation, the Registry 2000 Team developed hundreds of test scenarios that we are now running. Tests scenarios are meant to mimic all of the possible transactions staff and system users can preform while using the system. These tests will ensure that the new application works the way it is supposed to and meets the Nova Scotia requirements. Testing will be ongoing from now until we take the system public in Colchester (our Alpha Site).

The data conversion effort is nearing completion. Parcel and registry information for all 18 counties has been moved into the new database, allowing us to test the application using Nova Scotia data. Moving the data from our existing databases into a new data structure is not a trivial exercise. Registry and parcel data have always been somewhat separate, although from a business perspective there are all kinds of connections. The new data model reflects this relationship much better and, as a result, we will be much better positioned to handle the land registration processes and accommodate future process changes. The same business experts who were an integral part of the system design effort also support the data conversion.

The Technology Team is also starting to work on the design for the functionality we would like to add when we begin provincial rollout later in 2003. Items such as document scanning and retrieval of document images, and a new financial tracking module will be in place for the start of the provincial rollout.

Some functional issues will, no doubt, arise during the first few months of the Alpha Site implementation. All these items will be addressed and rolled into one more major version of the system before expand beyond Alpha Site. The planning for this second (or beta) version is now underway, and soon work on the detailed system design will start in earnest.

Finally, the picture that is emerging in respect to the municipal tax application mentioned in the last newsletter is becoming much clearer. Thanks to the enthusiastic support of the Town of Truro and the Municipality of Colchester, the new release of *Property Online* will allow users to view municipal tax balance information for properties in those municipalities. As well, users will be able to email the municipal unit and request a tax certificate directly through the computer application.



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