

Office of County Recorder

McKenzie County

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Karlene Fine
Executive Director
North Dakota Industrial Commission
Attn: Oil and Gas Research Program
State Capitol- Fourteenth Floor
600 East Boulevard
Bismarck ND 58502

Dear Ms. Fine,

Enclosed is a grant application requesting the North Dakota Industrial Commission to approve funding for the McKenzie County Recorder to complete a proposed project, to digitize the remaining 428,774 pages of recorded real estate documents within McKenzie County thereby making it possible to have the digitized images accessible in the county office and also through NDRIN (North Dakota Recorders Information Network), the central repository preservation and internet site.

This project will greatly enhance the records system in McKenzie County, enabling the oil and gas industry and other entities utilizing our records to do their title work in a more efficient and expeditious fashion, maximizing the potential for oil and gas development in McKenzie County and the State of North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Ann M. Johnsrud
McKenzie County Recorder

Dale Patten
Chairman of the Board
McKenzie County Commission

Request for Waiver

McKenzie County formally requests a waiver of paragraph # 11 in the Contract:

“Ownership of Work Product, Patent Rights and Fees”

All work product, patent rights and fees of the Contractor resulting from this contract shall be governed by Section 6 of the Oil and Gas Research Council Policies.

OGRC – 6.04 states that it is the intent of this section to enable state agencies to purchase or use, or both, new technology products or processes for governmental purposes without having to pay the imputed development costs of the products or processes twice; first in the research and development state under Commission fund and then later in the purchase of the process or products.

We request that McKenzie County retain all rights to the end product of this project, namely the digitized recorded documents, and to be able to levy fees for usage of same, according to the statutes established in the North Dakota Century Code in regard to the Records office, thus retaining complete control.

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McKenzie County Digital Imaging Enhancement Project

Applicant:

McKenzie County

Watford City, North Dakota

Principal Investigator:

Ann M. Johnsrud

McKenzie County Recorder

February 7, 2006

Amount of Request

\$65,153.00

Abstract of Project

- The objective of this project is to digitize the recorded real property documents in the McKenzie County Records Office from Patent forward through April 11, 1982, grantor/grantee indexes and Tract (Township and Range) index books. When the project is completed, the digitized McKenzie County real estate records would be available to the public through the recorder's imaging program or via the internet through the North Dakota Records Information Network (NDRIN), which is a subscriber based website providing security and access.
- The project would take four to six months to complete.
- Total cost of the project is \$65,153.00.
- Participants in the project will be McKenzie County, McKenzie County Recorder Ann M. Johnsrud, Information Systems Corporation (ISC), Computer Professionals Unlimited Incorporated (CPUI) , North Dakota Records Information Network (NDRIN), High Plains Technology and Underground Vaults and Storage.

Project Description

The purpose of this project is to convert 35mm and 16mm microfilm of documents to a digital format.

The object of this project is to digitize all recorded “legal” documents, real estate “blind” indexes, grantor/grantee indexes and monument corner records in the McKenzie County Recorders office located in Watford City, North Dakota.

The process of converting our roll microfilm to a digital format is important as it provides a uniform format of information for our county staff as well as the public. The older microfilm is difficult to view and prohibits more than one user viewing at any given time. By digitizing these film images, we will be able to have them loaded onto our document management server and multiple users may view the desired images at the same time, in our office setting or, as well, via the internet through NDRIN (North Dakota Recorders Information Network).

The process involves sending our film to a designated film conversion center where the film is converted one image at a time to a digital image. After the image is converted it is indexed by document number and date and then written to an industry standard CD-ROM disk. The disk can be uploaded into our document management system which we have installed within the county and all converted images become viewable and printable via a desktop PC computer.

The anticipated result is a digitized image of all recorded documents in the McKenzie County Recorder’s office.

Standards of Success

The success of the program will be identified by the following measures:

- This project will generate information and knowledge that will bring additional oil and gas companies and industry investment to McKenzie County and North Dakota. As additional exploration in our counties cannot happen without oil and gas leases in place, there is a direct link between reducing the barriers to expedient, efficient record searching and bringing production online.
- The public and private sector that will access these records are as follows: the general public, oilmen, abstractors, realtors, appraisers, surveyors, bankers, and a host of others. This on-going process takes place either directly at the County office or through the NDRIN website, which is an accessible, one of a kind, 24/7 records system.
- Another measure of success will be the support of the various entities using and accessing these innovative, unique, on-line records.
- Completion of the project in the established timeline.
- The collaboration and participation in this project amongst County Recorders will assist them in moving forward with their own digitizing efforts, furthering this process across the entire state of North Dakota.

Background

McKenzie County used a book/page system, paper copies, of documents from 1905 to 1982. In 1982, because of space restriction, we began making microfilm copies of documents on aperture cards. Later, it was discovered that aperture cards were not an archival method of preserving records. Because of that discovery, beginning in May of 1996, documents were photographed with a planetary camera and silver based, archival film, in order to preserve records in an acceptable archival format. In 1998, following the Red River Valley Flood Disaster, a FEMA grant was awarded to the North Dakota Recorders to help in the effort to disaster proof their offices. The first phase of the grant project was to microfilm all paper records in the Recorders office, including Mckenzie County. A second phase of the project was the creation of a central repository. The North Dakota Recorders Information Network (NDRIN) was then designed and created to preserve those digital images and data, in a secure off site system. In the event of a disaster, natural or man made, valuable, irreplaceable records would be protected in that site. A by-product of the repository was the creation of the NDRIN website, giving Recorders the ability to publish real property records to the internet thus allowing access for a reasonable fee to the public. McKenzie County began to digitize documents in 2000 and became a full NDRIN member. Since that time, we have digitized 82,556 documents from aperture cards and 12,025 documents from roll film, images (document pages) totaling 400,000. Documents continue to be digitized on a daily basis for office use and are also sent to NDRIN for preservation and publication to the internet.

Ann Johnsrud will serve as principal investigator for the project. She has been County Recorder since 1997 and has worked in the Recorders office since 1985. She is the immediate past President of the North Dakota County Recorders Association, having served on that board for 8 years. She is currently Chairman of the Recorders Preservation Committee and serves on the Legislative, Education and Chronicle Committees. She also serves on the NDRIN (North Dakota Recorders Information Network) board, currently serving as Secretary. She has worked with and been a part of all aspects of document preservation, paper, aperture cards, microfilm and digital imaging that has taken place within the Recorders office.

Management

The project shall be managed by the McKenzie County Recorder, Ann M. Johnsrud.

A retrieval order for microfilm to be digitized will be sent to Underground Vaults and Storage Facility in Hutchinson, Kansas with the film subsequently forwarded to Information Systems Corporation (ISC) in Fargo North Dakota. The film will undergo the digitizing process at ISC. The process will be monitored monthly by the McKenzie County Recorder.

After uploading the images into the computer system in the McKenzie County Records office, the images will be proofed and downloaded to the NDRIN Repository located at High Plains Technology in Fargo, North Dakota for preservation and then will be available in the County Recorder's office and through the NDRIN subscriber based web site at www.ndrin.com.

Timetable

This project will take from four to six months to complete. The commencement date is subject to the awarding of the grant funds. Interim reports will be submitted at the end of the second and fourth month and a final report will be submitted upon completion of the project.

Budget

428,774 images digitized at 12 cent per image

\$51,453.00

Film Retrieval and Postage

\$1,000.00

3 computer work stations

\$3000.00

Licenses for additional workstations

\$8100.00

HP Laser Printer

\$1600.00

Total Project Cost

\$65,153.00

Tax Liability

None

Confidential Information

None

Patents and Rights to Technical Data

McKenzie County would retain all rights and control to all technical data and images created from the microfilm.

