

## **CHANGE IS COMING**

*By H. Frank Bellon, Jr., P.L.S.*

Whether we surveyors like it or not, more changes in how our plat product is processed and filed are being considered by others. Change here appears necessary to embrace new technology and resolve existing obstacles and inconveniences. Your SLSI Board has a seat at the table to draft new policy.

Over the past year and a half, three SLSI board members and representatives from the Iowa County Recorders Association (ICRA) and Iowa Land Records (ILR) have been meeting. The purpose of our meetings was to identify concerns and provide solutions for the filing for record of the surveyor's paper product.

Attendees at the 2014 Annual Conference may remember the survey they were asked to complete. This was an effort to help assure all issues and solutions were being considered. With respect to the filing and retrieval of recorded documents, the following were priorities:

- Most surveyors are familiar with and use ILR for some of their research.
- The quality of document reproductions from some County Recorders and ILR should be improved.
- Standardized indexing by all County Recorders for land-related documents.
- All County Recorders should accept for filing large-format drawings.

Our study group has tentatively reached agreement on the methods to help resolve the above issues. However, we are only a recommending body for the parent organizations of ICRA, ILR, SLSI and other affected state or county offices or organizations. Agreements reached are as follows:

- Standards for all County Recorders will include requiring acceptance for filing letter-sized, legal-sized or tabloid-sized (11" x 17") drawings by July 1, 2016. (It is assumed retrieval of copies at full size will be possible.)
- By July 1, 2015 (tentative), it will be possible to e-file for all counties through ILR drawings as large as 24" x 36".
- A rectangular area labeled "Index Legend" will be required on the first page or cover sheet of all survey drawings presented for recording. The information to be provided is as follows:
  - 1) Land surveyor's name.
  - 2) Company, governmental agency or other organization under which the land surveyor provides the service.
  - 3) Proprietor or owner's name.
  - 4) Aliquot part of United States Public Land Survey System or portion of Official Plat.
  - 5) Provide information necessary for the Recorder to return the document.
  - 6) Name of person or entity that requested the land survey work.

The above information will aid the County Recorder and ILR in standardizing the indexing of documents and search parameters. You may notice that most of this information is already required.

- A rectangular space 3.75" wide by 2.5" high shall be reserved by the land surveyor for the County Recorder's marks. If feasible, this space shall be located at the top of the first page or in similar fashion on a cover sheet.

Options provided by new technology were a key influence in shaping solutions for outdated systems. Of course, technology comes at a price. This year the state legislature will be considering several options to increase funding support for ILR. There is a commitment by ICRA to have scanner/printers supporting tabloid-sized documents (11" x 17"). This should also help improve copy quality.

As a result of the above changes in method, your SLSI Board is working on developing the following:

- A definition for "Retracement Plat of Survey."
- A plat title and definition for monument preservation surveys.
- Investigation and resolution of issues with electronic plat signatures.

Final drafts are anticipated by early Spring 2015. Amendments to 193c Iowa Administrative Code will be considered.

Our study group also reviewed issues for future consideration. The following were briefly discussed and a course of action should be settled on in the months ahead:

- Encourage County Recorders to make older records and index/transfer books available through ILR or their own website.
- Provide detailed instructions for each county that has unique record search parameters.
- Archiving of historical documents by ILR, including railroad, IDOT, unrecorded plats, etc.

Our experience working with ICRA and ILR representatives in discovering common ground has been both pleasant and productive. Members of the study group are:

#### **Iowa County Recorders Association (ICRA)**

- Kim Painter – President ICRA and Johnson County Recorder
- Joan McCalmant – Chair of ICRA Standards Committee and Linn County Recorder
- Sue Meyer – Incoming Chair ESS Coordinating Committee and Clayton County Recorder

#### *Past Members:*

- Melissa Bird – Past President ICRA and Keokuk County Recorder
- Sue VandeKamp – Story County Recorder

#### **Iowa Land Records (ILR)**

- Phil Dunshee – Project Manager

#### **Society of Land Surveyors of Iowa (SLSI)**

- Joel Romey, P.L.S.
- Mike Geier, P.L.S.
- Frank Bellon, P.L.S.

SLSI's work with ICRA and ILR is only the first phase in an effort to include other state organizations in discussions involving common interests and mutually beneficial problem solving. The following state organizations have also expressed an interest in collaborating:

- Iowa State Association of County Auditors (ISACA)
- Iowa State Association of Assessors (ISAA)
- Iowa Counties Information Technology Organization (ICIT)

This is an exciting opportunity to work together to resolve issues and modernize existing systems and procedures.

Please direct your comments to Frank Bellon at [fbellon@mchsi.com](mailto:fbellon@mchsi.com).