Office Procedures, School Records, Misc. Administrative Duties And Other Information

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THE ADMINISTRATOR ROLE

Different aspects of the Administrator's role are outlined in the following section. The leadership of the Register of Deeds will affect not only the functions of the office, but how those functions are completed.

LEADERSHIP

The Register of Deeds sets the tone for how the office will operate. A positive attitude and professional demeanor are a strong message for the public and the staff. **"Start each day with a smile and the day will smile back".** If you want to be treated as a professional, then you should act like a professional. How you conduct yourself reflects directly on your office.

You are a public servant and must uphold the highest ethical standards. Every person who comes in contact with the office should receive the same treatment. There is no room for special consideration or efforts on the part of one citizen over the other. The office serves many different people on a daily basis. You should treat each one as you would want to be treated if the roles were reversed.

Neither the Register of Deeds nor any staff member may use the personal office for gain. Although the documents recorded become public record, the information from those documents should not be discussed outside of the office. There are certain situations where the Register of Deeds may have knowledge of business transactions that are not available to the public at that time. It is the responsibility of the Register of Deeds to keep those matters confidential.

Daily the office will distribute information and answer questions. Those functions must be performed without crossing the line of giving legal advice. Staff must also understand how to avoid practicing law. It is unwise to tell a customer what document should be used or how the document should be completed. To do so may cause complications later. The situation may seem simple, but the person's situation may be much more complicated.

Be careful not to be brought in disputes concerning other Register of Deeds office. When asked to comment on the operations of another office, the best answer is to be respectful of the Register of Deeds and the caller. Every Register of Deeds has received a telephone call where it is reported that other Register of Deeds allow things to be done in a particular way. The best strategy is to call or use the e-mail list serve, KANSASROD-L@LISTSERV.JOCOGOV.ORG, to ask other offices about their procedures. Only then can you make an educated response as to whether or not the procedure should be changed. Remember that every county is unique.

As a county official your office has certain responsibilities that come with the job. It is wise to visit the other offices in the courthouse and talk to the official or department head about how that office runs. Try to establish a good working relationship with all other officials and workers in the work place. Keep the lines of communication open at all times. Be careful about taking sides in a dispute. Perceptions and assumptions differ widely between people. Sharing information and ideas between offices and staff members can make everyone's work easier. If you offer to help others when an extra hand is needed, they will be more than willing to help you when needed.

Be up front with your employees and listen to them about the policies and procedures in the office. What is important to the employees should be important to the Register of Deeds. Communication is the key to working with your employees and the other offices. Clarify the values of the office and enlist the help of every person to communicate those values in every aspect of office operations. Seek the input and participation of all of the affected parties when making decisions. The final decision lies at the feet of the elected official, but the decision will be stronger when made as a joint effort.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Almost more than any other office in the courthouse, the Register of Deeds office is a customer service operation. People depend on the office to help them record documents and retrieve information concerning their property. Know your customers and the level of interaction they may have with the office. Learn how to help those persons who rarely interact with the office. Establish procedures for those who work with the office on a daily basis. Learn to listen to the customer and understand their requests and anticipate customer service. Accurate and efficient office procedures lay the groundwork for good customer service. Courteous and friendly people skills are a must when working in a public office. Develop techniques to assist customers who cannot communicate their needs. Limit the power of the difficult customer since they make up such a small percentage of those served.

COMMON SENSE

Common sense tells us that every Register of Deeds office cannot operate exactly the same. Each county is unique. A county of the size of Johnson County cannot be run the way a county the size of Stanton County is run. But remember the same Kansas statutes govern all County Register of Deeds' offices. Learn to understand and appreciate the differences of the offices. Every office has some reason for their procedures and policies. An open and curious mind will help to develop the best practices for each unique situation.

Let common sense be a guide when making decisions. Decisions to change procedures should be made slowly. Communicate with other county officials as well as the office staff before you make rash or wholesale changes. Remember the old cliché "If it's not

broke, don't fix it." But, it is 2009, so don't drag your feet on changes that are necessary to update the office and provide better and more efficient service to the citizens.

If you are unsure of what decision to make, call other counties, talk to Register of Deeds with experience. They can and will be glad to lend you advice. Learn to work with the county attorney or county counselor to resolve questions and problems. When called upon to assist another Register of Deeds, be open to different situations. Make sure that you understand the situation or the question completely. Stay curious.

Be consistent and uniform in your daily recording procedures. Keep the records consistent, keep your office consistent, and keep your staff consistent in their jobs. First and foremost, procedures must be based on the requirements of the statutes. The statutes are designed to give fair and equal treatment to every citizen or customer. It is important that all decisions be consistent with other procedures and policies in the office. Don't change procedures from day to day. Establish policies and procedures using logic and common sense. This logic might include the following: (1) Is it fair? (2) Is it accurate? (3) Is it consistent with other decisions? (4) Does it provide an audit trail?, etc... Assist other staff members and customers to use the same logic when faced with a problem.

Many inquiries are made via the telephone. When handling these questions, make sure that you correctly understand the questions. Repeat the question back to the caller for clarification. It is best to reserve the right to change your opinion once you have seen the actual documents. Sometimes small details can change the answer to a question.

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

Developing relationships is an important part of any business and should not be forgotten at the County Register of Deeds. Numerous people in the community use the Register of Deeds office on a regular basis. A good working relationship with your financial institutions, the attorneys, surveyors, land title/abstractors, the legislators from your area as well as communication with the other officials in your courthouse can be most important. These professionals may be the same citizens who voted you to serve as Register of Deeds. Show friendliness and willingness to work with these people and they will respect you and re-elect you to office.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A learning environment is necessary in the administration of the Register of Deeds office. There will always be new questions. The office is responsible for so many different things, that is impossible one person to know all the information concerning the office. It is important to instill in yourself and your staff a willingness to learn and grow with each new experience. When staff is encouraged to learn more, they will be able to perform their duties at a higher level.

There will always be new and different people at your office door. Persons who serve as abstractors, oil and gas land men, attorneys and bankers all change from time to time. Learn the needs of these customers and include them whenever possible in the decision making process. When you take the time to explain why a certain procedure has been adopted, the other persons have the opportunity to consider information from the customers that would be important to the policies or procedures. Be open to learning about yourself and others.

Changes are made each year that affect the Register of Deeds Office. Some of the changes are made by the legislature. New techniques and new technology bring opportunities to better serve the public. Attend the training meetings and schools that are provided. Educate current and new office staff about procedures and policies. Learn how to coach employees about new ideas. Make the office a place where thinking and learning are everyday events.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is one of the best gifts that you can give yourself. Become aware of your talents and shortcomings. Being aware will help you to stretch and grow as a business professional. Develop an educational plan that includes the Register of Deeds Certification program. Attend and participate in the Register of Deeds annual seminar as well as other educational classes. Participate for yourself as well as for your county. It is very important for you to participate in the Kansas Register of Deeds Association meetings and educational activities. Budgets are tight, but you need association meetings because laws, techniques and issues are always changing and the association is your link to these changes. The association certification program that provides education meetings twice a year is very important to you in how you run your office. The relationships that you will build at these meetings with other Register of Deeds throughout the state are a plus. It helps you keep up with new technology and better exchange ideas for running your office efficiently.

ADMINISTERING OFFICE OPERATIONS

STATUTORY DUTIES

It is the responsibility of each Register of Deeds to establish efficient and effective systems to carry out the statutory requirements of recording, retention and retrieval of documents and information. These duties comprise the underlying function of the office and will be discussed in depth in the next section.

WORKFLOW MANAGEMENT

The Register of Deeds office does not control the amount of work that arrives each day. Every office whether small or large will have different workloads each day. The number of staff members in the office will determine if on average the workload and the staff are balanced. Register of Deeds must be prepared to adjust to the various levels of workload. It is essential to record the time and date on the documents the same day they are presented for recording. Documents must be recorded in a timely manner. The recording of documents is critical to your citizens in transacting business. If workload and staffing are not in balance it may be necessary to document those statistics. This information can be helpful at budget time to request and justify additional staff. Another option to help with an imbalance may be cross training employees to do multiple tasks in the office.

Prepare work assignments for staff on light workload days. If you are a smaller county, you may not have many filings one day, but you may be swamped with filings the next day. If you are a larger county, the slow days may be used to simply keep up with the heavy workload days. Just remember it is always good to have extra work to do on the days when you do not have a lot of recording. The following are some suggestions: check quality control by spot checking work, work on back file conversion of documents for the computer index, scanning older records, catch up on correspondence, clean out file drawers, develop new spread sheets, prepare for next year's budget, etc...

OPEN RECORDS LAW

The legislature has made various changes to the Open Record's Law. Read the law to familiarize yourself with these changes. Documents in the Register of Deeds Office are open for public inspection with a few exceptions. In fact the very nature and function of the office is to give public notice of property interests. Each county must have a designated open records officer. That person can assist in establishing open records procedures. See section on open records.

BONDING

Each Register of Deeds, according to K.S.A. 19-1202, is to be bonded for not less than $10,000.00. The Board of County Commissioners or the County Clerk may handle this bond. Some counties use a blanket bond for all public officers. Be sure to check that the county has completed this requirement.

OATHS, SIGNATURES AND SEALS

The oath of office for the Register of Deeds is administered at the beginning of the term. The Register of Deeds administers the oath of office to the Deputy Register of Deeds. The Deputy oath is recorded in the official records of the county. The County Clerk registers the signatures of the county public officials and any official seals with the Secretary of State.

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

PERSONNEL ISSUES

Staff size varies across the state from one and half person to over twenty persons in an office. If the Board of County Commissioners has adopted Personnel Policies, the Register of Deeds is required to follow those policies. When the county has not adopted Personnel Policies, the Register of Deeds is still responsible for following all state and federal laws concerning personnel practices. Whether Personnel Policies exist or not being familiar with the Federal Labor Standards Act, The Federal Family and Medical Leave Act, American Disabilities Act and the requirements of due process for employees is required.

Using the best practices in personnel matters will build a strong staff. Establishing trust with the office is the most important element in establishing a healthy office environment. This trust relationship must be protected and cared for at all times. It is important to remember the importance of a professional employer/employee relationship. Small offices may have more difficulty in this area. But the professional relationship will make office operation easier.

No matter the size of the office, it is a best practice to develop job descriptions for every staff position. These job descriptions should include the responsibilities, level of authority, amount of interaction with people within and outside the courthouse, and the necessary skills or training required to successfully perform the job. The job description can be used to advertise the position and evaluate the credentials of the candidate applications.

Interviews are used to determine if the applicant and the job description match. There are specific guidelines for what may and may not be asked in an interview. See page
It can be helpful to have several people interview the candidate separately or together. One interviewer may see something that another misses. If staff is involved in the interview process, make sure that they understand the dos and don'ts of the interview process.

Applicants with the following skills and traits may be good candidates: Good attention to detail, accuracy, Real Estate background, ability to learn and follow procedures, basic operation of office equipment, computer literate, clerical skills, good handwriting, good people skills both in person and on the telephone, logical thinking, good etiquette, organizational skills, notary, etc...

Choosing the right candidate is a difficult job. Remember that every employee is a reflection on the office. Once the top applicant has been identified, it is wise to check the references provided on the application. It may be difficult to find out specific information concerning an employee's work history, but checking is always worth the time.

Some counties have residency requirements for employees. Make sure that this is not an issue before extending an offer to an applicant. The applicants may or may not be aware of any such policy.

It is also wise to discuss wages and pay increases with the candidate at the time the employment offer is made. If the new hire has different expectations than reality, having this discussion up front can avoid a difficult situation later.

Once an applicant has accepted an offer, the job description will again be helpful in developing an annual performance plan for that employee. Performance plans outline the Register of Deeds expectations for each employee's development during the year. If you are a new Register of Deeds it is best to review each employee's performance plan with the new employee and make any adjustments that are required. There are workshops and seminars available to help develop these plans.

The job description and performance plan are used to evaluate the employees. Evaluations are an opportunity to review and evaluate the employees and the Register of Deeds successes and shortcomings during the previous year. Both employee and employer play an integral part in the success and failure of each individual and in the overall performance of the Register of Deeds Office. Some counties award pay increase based on merits of the annual job evaluation. Some counties award pay increases using an across the board method. Learn how to utilize the job evaluation as a tool to enhance the performance of the office.

When a new Register of Deeds takes office the transition may be difficult both for the employees as well as the Register of Deeds. Remember to use common sense and treat the employee as you would like to be treated. If you treat the staff well, most generally, they will appreciate you and in return treat you well.

K.S.A. 19-1202 governs the duties you have in appointing a Deputy Register of Deeds. This statute states that the Register of Deeds **may** appoint a deputy. The Deputy is responsible to carry out the duties of the Register of Deeds when the Register is absent. The Deputy may sign documents and deposits in place of the Register of Deeds. This person will work closely with you in the operation of the office.

The Deputy and any other staff are hired or dismissed by the Register of Deeds. Personnel Policies may govern the process of how employees are hired and fired and discuss the rights of the employee. The commissioners set the salary of the Register of Deeds. The Board of County Commissioners adopts the budget for the Register of Deeds office. The Register of Deeds is responsible for carrying out the duties of the office within the budget following the personnel policies. The Register of Deeds has jurisdiction concerning hiring and firing.

Courthouse traditions vary widely concerning the role of the Board of County Commissioners in the staffing of the Register of Deeds office. Some courthouse traditions include the commissioners in all information concerning vacancies and new hires for the office. Other courthouse traditions completely remove the commissioners from any involvement in the staffing decision. Know your courthouse environment.

The Board of County Commissioners is involved in the staffing levels of the office as part of the budget process. Staffing needs are influenced by a number of factors. Consider the following items when assessing staffing needs: county population, number of documents recorded, technology usage, personnel tenure, and new legislation. Knowing the statistics involved with each of these items and communicating this information to the commissioners for consideration during the budget process is very important. The Board is charged by statute to provide adequate resources for the timely performance of the duties of the office. Make sure you help them meet those responsibilities.

It is your responsibility to see that your staff is educated about their job. Not only will you be responsible for training them, but also encouraging them to attend workshops and seminars. Training may be needed in team building, stress management, organizational skills, mapping, notary functions, legal descriptions, etc... Remember that if you send them to workshops their expenses will come out of your budget. Check policies and procedures in your county, not all counties have the same policy. Another good source of information is in the 1999 Kansas County Commissioner Desk Reference manual that describes the Authority of the Board of County Commissioners and their Ultimate Authority over Personnel.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING ISSUES

REVENUE

KSA 28-115

The filing fees for document recording in the Register of Deeds office are found in the Kansas Statutes Annotated K.S.A. ~~28-155.~~ All fees collected under this statue are due and payable before the Register of Deeds can record the document. Most Register of Deeds collect all fees at the time of recording. A check is presented with each set of documents to be recorded. Some larger counties maintain a daily charge account to

facilitate the large number of document filings by Title Companies. One check is written for multiple document filings throughout the day rather than processing a check for each document presented for filing.

A double entry accounting system is recommended for revenue tracking. Establish systems that show a clear audit trail for every transaction. The county auditor is a good resource and can tell you if the system has any weaknesses or may have suggestions on how to upgrade your accounting system. Internal annual audits are performed to ensure the correct handling of revenue. The type of audit varies from county to county. These audits should be viewed as a good protection and opportunity to have outside confirmation of good accounting practices.

Other items that will enhance office operations include cross training employees, forced absences for persons who handle the accounts and separation of duties. These types of practices help to ensure that all monies are being handled properly. As discussed earlier a cross training employee helps with managing workload. It can also provide a way for more than just one person to be handling the office revenues. The work in the Register of Deeds office is very repetitive. Cross training can also help with this problem.

All revenues are deposited with the county treasurer. All revenues are applied to the County General Fund with the exception of revenue collected for the Kansas Heritage Trust Fund with the state. No county is required to contribute more that $100,000.00 per year to the Heritage Trust Fund. If additional revenue is generated through this fee, the money is deposited to the county general fund. At least one county has established a county heritage trust fund for excess revenues to be used for county funded preservation projects.

Office revenues are deposited with the county treasurer daily, weekly or monthly. Daily deposits eliminate the expense of separately maintained bank accounts. Work with the Treasurer to understand your county's procedures in transferring monies over to the Treasurer. K.S.A. 79-3104 outlines the financial responsibilities of the office.

The revenue generated through mortgage registration tax and recording fees is considered a part of the county revenue and impacts the county budget. More or fewer revenue dollars generated through the Register of Deeds office impact the county mill levy. There are several factors that directly impact the revenue levels collected in the Register of Deeds office from year to year. Lower mortgage rates mean more work load and more revenue. High mortgage rates mean less workload and less revenue. The general economic conditions of the nation and specifically the economic conditions of each individual county impact the revenues in the Register of Deeds office. Understanding these influences and tracking the year-to-year revenue may help to project the revenue expected during the following year. The ability to forecast these revenues can be of assistance to the Board of County Commissioners during the budget process.

BUDGET

The Register of Deeds prepares a budget each year for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners. The schedule for budgetary preparation and hearings may vary from county to county. Get familiar with the budget process and schedule. The Board of County Commissioners will finalize the budget for the next year in August.

The budget will project needs of the office. After the budget has been adopted by the Board of County Commissioners alterations are difficult. Therefore it is important to learn how to anticipate the future needs of the office. Accurate accounting of previous expenditures, salaries, services and possible future equipment cost projections are all intricate parts in preparing a budget. New legislation that will require additional supplies, personnel or procedures may impact the budget. Communicate with the board about these changes.

It is required to operate the office within the current budgetary dollars. This requires the tracking of all expenditures throughout the year. The budget may be divided into several categories: Personnel (salary/benefits), Commodities, Contractual Services, and Capital Outlay. Experience level in the office will determine the amount of time that is spent in this area. See section on Budgets.

PURCHASING POLICY

If the county has a purchasing policy, the Register of Deeds must comply with the policies. These policies may include requirements for additional approval over a certain dollar amount, use of purchase orders, use of credit card, etc... Procedures vary from county to county. Some counties have one office or department in charge of purchasing for all county offices. Other counties require each office to purchase goods for that office. Some counties require a bidding process on certain purchases.

Office equipment must be accounted for on a fixed asset report. New equipment is placed on a fixed asset sheet as it is purchased and added annually to the office inventory at the first of each year. An office inventory is required each year by statute. This inventory may be a simple update of the fixed asset report or a more complete and specific inventory of all items in the office.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Full courthouse security, i.e. guards at doors, fire alarm systems, restricted access and metal detectors is the responsibility of the commissioners. If you have a concern about the courthouse security, bring it to the attention of the board as soon as possible. In the past ten years there has been a national movement and especially within Kansas by militant groups. These groups are particularly interested in recording certain documents

in the county Register of Deeds office. Learn about this movement and assess the security issues that would impact your office.

Bomb threats have become a reality in public offices during the past several years. Learning the steps to take during a bomb threat is training needed throughout the courthouse.

The Register of Deeds is responsible for the security within the office. Most of the emphasis within the office is focused on the protection of the public record. The Register of Deeds office retains copies of documents. These copies must be maintained according to archival standards. The original documents, with a few exceptions, are returned to the filer. This office never purges documents from the public record. The documents are a permanent record of property rights and transactions. This means that records in the Register of Deeds office are being maintained from the mid-1800's to present day. Records are added every day of the year. All records must be available for research at all times.

Older courthouses may have vaults where the official records are stored for protection from fire and other damage. Newer courthouses may have eliminated vaults, but installed sophisticated security systems to protect the records. Every Register of Deeds office should have a second copy of all documents and indices that are stored at another location. The other location should be chosen as one that adheres to archival standards. Putting the backup copy in a simple storage area does not meet the archival standards required for security of the public records. Archival preservation information can be obtained from the Kansas Historical Society as well as ARMA. See section on retention of records. Preservation of records is a major item in the budget. Preservation includes security backup copies, bookbinding, book repairs and the generation of microfilm. Work with the Board of County Commissioners to educate everyone in the courthouse about the responsibility of this important public trust.

Since money is collected in the office daily, it is important to review the security of those funds. Limiting access to the money is highly recommended. Good procedures not only protect the money, but also protect the staff. This security should be incorporated into the accounting procedures.

A Disaster Recovery Plan is important in case of fire, tornado, water damage, etc. and damage to the courthouse or office. Disaster plans are discussed in a later section. The county emergency management department is a good resource in developing a plan for your county.

The Board of County Commissioners is responsible for setting the hours of the courthouse and therefore the Register of Deeds office. Because it is a public office the Office needs to be safe for not only the employees, but also the public who use the office daily. The office may be required to be ADA compliant, or the Register of Deeds will at the least be responsible for knowing how to provide assistance to any disabled person who wishes to use the office. The surroundings should be pleasant and friendly. The

office needs to be cleaned on a regular basis. The security of the documents needs to be taken into consideration when the office is cleaned. The ergonomics of the office needs to be considered whether the office uses computers or not. All of these things are the responsibility of the Register of Deeds.

New equipment and new technology may impact some or all of the items discussed above. If new personnel are added to the office the space needs and impact need to be considered. New staff is not as simple as just hiring the person. Equipment, office layout and many other items need to be considered. Remember to consider all of the requirements of the physical environment when preparing the budget.

The administration of the office includes many things. Staying abreast of all of these issues and the changes that are available takes a great deal of effort. The requirements of the office demand that the Register of Deeds be someone who is constantly learning and growing with the responsibilities.

THE ELECTED OFFICIAL ROLE

The office of Register of Deeds is a public office established as an office of the state, the duties of which evolve from the powers of the state. It is important to understand the full mantle and limitations of the office. The public trust held by the elected official holds significant weight. The functions of the office are tied to one of the basic tenets of democracy, that of property ownership. The framers of the Kansas constitution saw this position as one that was directly accountable to the peoples and elected by the people so served.

The Register of Deeds is elected every four years in a countywide election. A candidate must be affiliated with a political party. Filing can be done by petition or by paying a filing fee. The number of names on a petition equals 3% of the registered voters in the county as last certified to the Secretary of State in your party affiliation. Vacancies are filled through the political party process.

There are one hundred and five counties in Kansas with the same number of Register of Deeds. Wyandotte County and Johnson County have established different rules for the election or non-election of these offices, but the functions of the office are still governed by the Kansas Statutes. Different traditions, policies and procedures make the environment in each county unique. These differences contribute to the strength and flexibility of local government. The Kansas Register of Deeds Association celebrates the differences. Examining the differences can lead to more understanding and sharing within the membership.

COUNTY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

A county organizational chart shows all elected officials on the same line. Appointed officials and department heads are shown in different combinations underneath. After the elected officials line, the organizational charts vary from county to county due to population, tradition and resources.

ROD - CLERK - TREASURER - BOCC - SHERIFF - ATTORNEY

APPRAISER - ADMINISTRATOR - ENGINEER

NOXIOUS WEED - LIBRARY - HEALTH - RURAL FIRE

The Board of County Commissioner's oversees the operations of the county. The Board has authority over the budget of the Register of Deeds office, but within limits. The Board of County Commissioners must allocate funds for the Register of Deeds to carry out the statutorily imposed duties or obligations. The Board has full authority over discretionary funds in the Register of Deeds budget. In turn, the Register of Deeds is obligated by statute to follow personnel policies and purchasing policies if the Board of County Commissioners has established such policies. If no such policies exist, the Register of Deeds has full responsibility for the execution of those duties. Personnel and purchasing are very complex areas with additional state and federal laws that rule. If your county does not have these policies in place, it is advised to ask for guidance from other courthouse offices in executing these duties.

It is important for each Register of Deeds to survey the courthouse traditions and environment. Learn why certain procedures and practices are followed in the various offices. Every courthouse is different. One needs to know what are the expectations of operation within that environment. If there is something that seems to be out of line with the statutory guidelines, one must carefully assess how best to address the situation for the purpose of change. Because one courthouse does it one way, does not necessary mean that is the way it should be done in all courthouses. Conversely there is always ways for improvement.

Examples of items that are handled differently in each county:

Real Estate Sales Validation Questionnaires
Transfer Stamps
Travel
Purchases over $150
Personnel Hiring and Firing

What are the procedures in your courthouse?

LEGISLATIVE LOBBYING ROLE

The Register of Deeds Legislative Committee has a representative from each district. The committee is composed of ten members. Five members are appointed each year for a term of two years. Committee members from the Northeast, South Central, and Northwest Districts and two members at large are appointed in even-number years. Members from the Southeast, North Central and Southwest Districts and two members at large are appointed in odd numbered years. The current President of the Register of Deeds Association appoints the Chairman of the committee.

If you have a concern that you would like to be addressed by the legislature you must first present it to the Legislative Committee. They in turn will discuss it and if it is in the best interests of the majority members of the Association, the committee works together

to present it as a body to the Legislature. It is imperative that we work together as an Association when presenting issues to the legislature. A united front will increase the chances for passage of a bill.

When one Register of Deeds disagrees with the judgment of the Register of Deeds Legislative Committee, the established protocol calls for the following actions. The individual Register of Deeds and the Legislative Committee will make every effort to understand the positions of all parties and agree on a compromise of at all possible. If no compromise position can be found, the individual Register of Deeds must identify to the legislature that the bill being requested is not supported by the association and that it is being requested on an individual basis. The Association and the individual Register of Deeds agree to present their different positions in a respectful manner.

The Legislative Committee may request the help of all Register of Deeds in the efforts to pass or defeat a particular bill. It is important for every Register of Deeds to establish a relationship with the members of the house and senate who represent your county. Established relationships make it easy to contact your legislator and ask for their support on a certain issue. There are some basic rules that you should follow when talking to your legislator. This and other information concerning the legislature and passage of bills is included in the section on the legal process.

Duties of Register of Deeds

Public

Our responsibility to the public should be our number one priority.

- We serve as an information center.
- We receive requests from abstractors, realtors, banks, attorneys and the public in general for legal descriptions, easements, mortgages, verification of property ownership, etc.
- We assist visitors who are conducting ancestry searches.
- We make copies and fax documents for the general public.

Department Management

- Supervise a Deputy and clerks.
- Balance our books daily.
- Prepare and submit department budget and administer approved budget.
- Responsible for the effective utilization of staff and resources and the effective interfacing with other departments.
- Upgrade staff skills and department procedures.

Records

- Monitor the work flow to ensure that it is proceeding as prescribed.
- Responsible for the preservation of all records
- Responsible for the collection of fees.
- Make a copy of all records whether it be on microfilm or a digital image and store in a secure, offsite location.

Record and File Documents

- Record and index records such as:
  - Deeds
  - Mortgages
  - Plats
  - Easements
  - Many other real estate records
  - Death Certificates
  - Federal and State tax liens
- Enter a recording stamp on each document that is recorded.
- Enter into permanent record the date, time, book and page, instrument type, and other pertinent information. This may include but is not limited to a computer database and land index records.
- File Military Discharge (DD214) records

Reports

- Make daily deposits to the County Treasurer
- Make monthly reports to the County Commissioners
- Make yearly reports to the Kansas Department of Revenue on Mortgage Registration Tax
- Monitor staff skills and department techniques and upgrade as necessary
- Prepare evaluation forms for personnel department
- Provide copies of all deeds and Sales Validation Questionnaires to the Appraiser
- Provide copies of all deeds to the County Clerk

Duties

Not only do we have supervisory responsibilities, some of us work along side of our staff whenever needed. We have the ongoing duty of being knowledgeable of the State Statutes and being aware of any changes.

Make an effort to attend all meetings that will assist you in the performance of your elected office such as:

- All district meetings
- Summer Seminar
- Winter Kansas Counties Officials Association (KCOA)
- Register of Deeds Certification Classes
- International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers (IACREOT)
- National Association of Counties (NACO)

In addition it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with your own courthouse and the services offered by the different offices. Establish a good relationship with all other officials and workers in the work place.....Stay out of disputes in other offices....."tend to your own knitting".

M-M-F-I (means 'make me feel important') – Imagine you see these initials on the forehead of all coming through your door – treat customers as if they were the President of the United States – never let a customer leave your office feeling you did not attempt to give the best service possible.

Keep the following manuals at your fingertips:

- Register of Deeds Handbook
- Set of Law Books
- County Personnel Manual
- Dictionary including Law Dictionary
- Kansas Historical Society Manual
- Set of Attorney General Opinions
- Etc.

Other duties include:

- Keep track of office supplies
- Keep track of expenditures and budget balance
- Keep track of Attorney General Opinions concerning your office.
- Keep track of employees time – Sick/Vacation/Personal/Family Leave/etc.
- Review personnel manual with employees at beginning of employment and each time changes occur.

Assume responsibility for the record keeping of your office – even though you might have a county administrator, manager, etc. It is suggested you also keep track of your own budget, your supplies, personnel's time, etc. (request the necessary reports from record keeping office of county to accomplish this).

Office Inventory

The inventory is taken during the month of December of each year and shall be completed and a copy thereof filed with the county clerk on or before December 31 of each year.

Budget

Prepare and submit to the Board of County Commissioners a yearly budget for their approval.