



Barnstable County Registry of Deeds

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Recording Hours: Monday through Friday 8:00am- 4:00pm
Research Hours: Monday through Friday 7:45am- 4:15pm

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The Registry of Deeds is responsible for maintaining the records of property transfers within Barnstable County. This includes all deeds, mortgages, plans and other instruments which purport to affect the title to real estate on Cape Cod. The registry is used daily by local attorneys, surveyors, title examiners and members of the general public who are trying to determine the status of particular parcels of land. Our goal continues to be one of providing prompt, efficient and courteous service to all those who visit our facility.

This past year continued to be challenging from a revenue standpoint. While there was a slight increase in the volume and value of property transfers, we still experienced one of our slower years in overall document volume. An increase in the County Deeds Excise Tax rate from \$2.28 per thousand dollars consideration to \$2.70 coupled with an uptick in sales volume due to federal tax incentives brought us an overall increase in revenue from the prior fiscal year. Registry employees remained busy handling

mortgage refinance recordings due to record low interest rates brought on by the difficult economic climate. The volume of refinances combined with record volume of foreclosure related documents kept the work flowing over our counters at steady pace. We think we have begun to see the value of sales rebound and hope to benefit in the coming year with a corresponding increase in volume and revenue. The registry continues to move towards new and innovative ways of reaching our goal for providing

prompt and courteous service to the public. We have continued to upgrade our counter recording functions, enabling us to speed up the recording process and reduce waiting times at the registry. We continue to work with our outside software vendors and the County IT Department to update the appearance and functionality of our website. These improvements have enabled registry personnel to make regular news updates and blog posts alerting our customer base of upcoming changes in fees or other items of general interest. Additional changes have been made and are planned to ensure the security of our site.

We have continued to focus on providing the best in electronic land data for users of our site. We presently offer over 300 years of public records to be viewed or printed nearly 24 hours a day year-round. The fees generated through this site have grown solidly since its inception in the spring of 2002. Due to the continuing tightening in the real estate market, the website has continued to see growth from out of county subscribers as competition to fight for available business has remained strong.

All in all, we remain quite pleased with technological advances that we have implemented over the past several years. These advances, along with our dedicated staff, have helped to make the Registry of Deeds a successful and user friendly facility.

Capeview Access

The registry provides use of our internet access *Capeview* system to all towns within Barnstable County free from all fees. The fees that the towns are exempt from are \$50.00 annual fee and \$1.00 per page copy fee.

Capeview enables remote users to access the registry's database. Users can do title rundowns, search for liens or find records pertaining to any real estate transaction within the county. The system also provides users the ability to have documents printed directly on their own printers without the use of registry personnel.

Currently, all Assessors' offices and several town departments in the county have active cost free accounts with us. This has enabled them to save valuable tax dollars that can be earmarked for other projects that towns deem necessary.

Declaration of Homestead Forms

The registry and its staff provide valuable assistance to all homeowners in Barnstable County with the preparation of declaration of homestead forms.

These forms are available free of charge at our copy counters. The cost to record a homestead is \$36.00 in our recorded land section and \$35.00 in our registered land (Land Court) section.

The Declaration of Homestead under Massachusetts General Laws Ch .188, Sec. 1 and Sec. 1A, gives persons up to \$500,000.00 protection on their primary residences. It can be a valuable last line of defense and it is recommended to all homeowners of Barnstable County.