

Clerk-Recorder Department 2013 Business Plan



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ORANGE COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER



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I. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

A. VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Vision

To be the leader in electronic document recording and public record preservation while delivering timely and cost effective services through leading edge technologies.

Mission Statement

To provide a reliable repository for public records and efficient services that exemplify the highest standards of courtesy and cost effectiveness. Public records will be readily accessible in a convenient manner while safeguarding confidentiality and security.



In 2012, the department's South County Branch Office in Laguna Hills assisted 35,393 customers.



B. CORE SERVICES

The department's core services are:

Recorder Services:

Examining and recording documents presented for recording that involve ownership of land in the county. The department maintains a permanent record and index of all documents for public access.

Clerk Services:

Maintaining and providing certified copies of birth, death and marriage certificates. The department also issues marriage licenses, performs civil marriage ceremonies, files fictitious business name statements, processes passport applications, files notary public oaths and bonds, and registers professional photocopyers, process servers and unlawful detainer assistants.

Orange County Archives:

Overseeing the Orange County Archives, the repository of the county's historical documents. The Archives identifies, catalogs, protects and provides access to county records and other materials of historical value. Volumes of historic photographs, correspondence, property records, artifacts and numerous materials on the history of Orange County are accessible to the public, researchers and historical organizations.



II. 2013 OPERATIONS PLAN

The Clerk-Recorder Department is comprised of two major divisions:

Recorder Services and Systems

Clerk Services, Archives and Administration

The department has 101 budgeted full-time positions. When compared to departments in similarly sized counties, Orange County has one of the lowest staff-to-population ratios in California. This is primarily due to the department's focus on enhanced automation and efficiency.

A major focus for the department is enhancing the quality of our staff. Cross-training, teamwork, and commitment to public service make our employees the department's most valuable asset.

In 2009, the Clerk-Recorder Department opened our North County Branch Office in downtown Fullerton. Almost 30,000 customers were served at this branch during 2012.





A. ENVIRONMENT

Clients

The department provides services countywide and assists former Orange County residents. Other specific clients are referenced below:

I. External Clients and examples of services provided:

- Title and Escrow Companies: *Electronic Document Recording, Document Examining*
- Lending Institutions: *Document Examining and Recording*
- Business Owners: *Fictitious Business Name Statement Filing*
- Contractors and Sub-Contractors: *Document Examining and Recording*
- Notary publics in the County: *Administer Oaths and Bond Filing*
- Internal Revenue Service: *Document Examining and Recording*
- Franchise Tax Board: *Document Examining and Recording*
- Parents with children in school and sports: *Provide Official Copies of Vital Records*
- State Attorney General's Office: *Document Examining and Recording*
- Historians, genealogist and Researchers: *Orange County Archives, Copies of Vital Records*
- Orange County Grand Jury: *Respond to Inquiries*
- Orange County Center for Demographic Research: *Provide Statistical Information*
- U.S. Department of State: *Process Passport Applications and Collect Passport Fees.*
- All O.C. Cities: *Collect and Distribute Transfer Tax*
- Various State of California Agencies: *Collect and Distribute Mandated Pass-Through Fees*

II. County of Orange agencies and example of services provided:

- Tax Collector-Treasurer: *Document Examining and Recording*
 - Health Care Agency: *Vital Records*
 - Assessor's Office: *Collect Preliminary Change of Ownership Forms and Fee*
 - Historical Commission: *Archives*
 - District Attorney's Office: *Collect District Attorney Fraud Fee*
 - Department of Child Support Services: *Document Examining and Recording*
 - Sheriff-Coroner's Office: *Document Examining and Recording*
-



Challenges

The department will meet challenges in 2013-14 by continuing our commitment to public service. We will enthusiastically meet our core service demands and pledge that public records will continue to be secure and accessible. We continue to be an innovative leader in implementing technological solutions to solve problems and improve service.

Fiscal Challenges

The department is a self-funded operation. The department pays for operating costs by collecting fees for our services, as required by law. About 60% of the fees collected are pass-through fees and must be distributed to other government programs. The downturn in the real estate market and the economy in general has affected the department's revenues. The department is challenged to find ways to cut costs while continuing to provide the same quality and levels of service that our customers expect.

Protecting Public Records

We strive to create a balance between maintaining the security of public records and respecting the public's desire for records to be more accessible. The use of the internet and incorporating new technologies provides a cost effective means of improving services to the public. At the same time, the department ensures that the technologies incorporate the highest levels of security so documents are transmitted accurately and safely.

Protecting the Consumer

Our department meets the challenge of respecting our customers' privacy by monitoring and proposing legislation that enhance the security of public records. We lead efforts to ensure consumer's interests are protected by cooperating with the State Attorney General's Office and by participating in statewide professional organizations, as well as working with the county's legislative delegation. As in the past, the department will work to propose legislation to further safeguard the privacy of documents that become part of the public record.

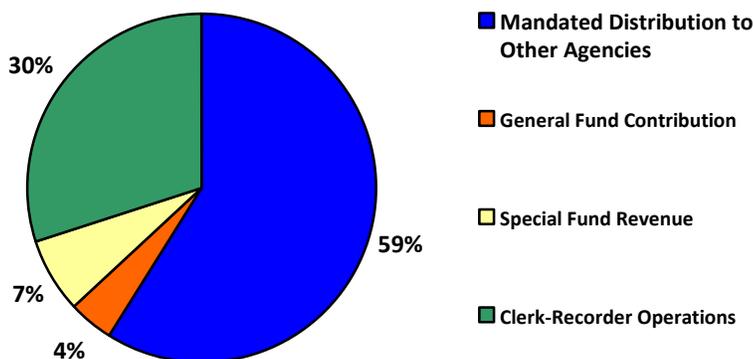


Financial Resources

The FY 2011-12 gross revenues for the department were approximately **\$45.60 million**. Most of these dollars were distributed as mandatory pass-throughs to other government agencies. This gross revenue is broken down into four major components:

Revenue Category	Percentage of Gross Revenue
I. Mandated Distribution to Other Agencies	59%
A portion of the fees collected by the department for various services are required by law to be distributed to other government programs, such as Domestic Violence, Victim Witness Protection and Family Conciliation Courts. Fees subject to this distribution are collected from the following: marriage licenses, fictitious business name filings, vital record certificates, and the recording of real property documents.	
II. Clerk-Recorder Operations	30%
This is the annual budget or appropriations for the actual operation of the department. This includes all costs associated with salaries, services and supplies, fixed assets and other applicable expenses.	
III. General Fund Contribution	4%
This is the budgeted contribution to the County's General Fund and shows up as an "expense" in the department budget.	
IV. Special Revenue Fund	7%
These are the funds established by state statute for specific uses by the department. They are divided into three distinct categories: Health Statistics, Micrographics and Modernization.	

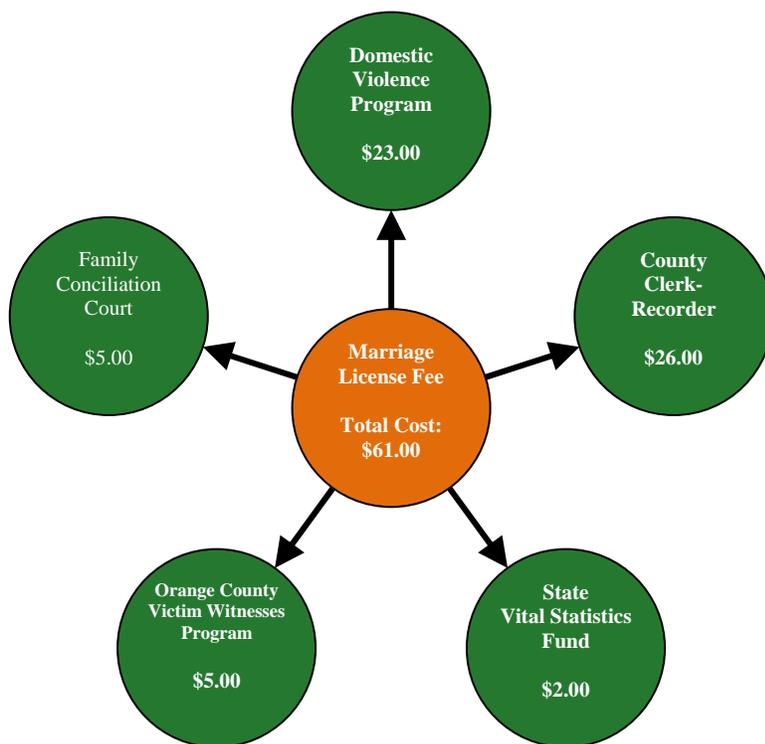
**Clerk-Recorder Department Allocation of Collected Fees
FY 2011-2012**





Below is an example of a state mandated pass-through regarding the cost of a regular marriage license. In 2012, the cost of obtaining a marriage license was lowered to \$61.00, of which our department retains \$26.00 to offset the cost of operations. The other \$35.00 is distributed to other government entities as mandated by state statute.

DISTRIBUTION OF MARRIAGE LICENSE FEE



Not all fees collected by the department are distributed in the manner illustrated above. Each fee has a unique disbursement according to the applicable state law. This example has been provided simply to illustrate the concept.



B. ACTION PLAN

Goal 1: Provide courteous and efficient service that is easily accessible to the public.

Strategies:

The use of branch offices offers the public greater convenience, free parking and a shorter drive for processing and obtaining important documents. The department's main office in Santa Ana requires visitors to pay for parking and is difficult to get to from the outer reaches of the county. Branch offices have provided an ideal alternative for greater accessibility to the public. This model brings services to our customers, rather than requiring the public to come to one location.

In February 2006, the department opened our South County Branch Office at the Laguna Hills Civic Center. In 2007, the South County Branch Office served approximately 17,100 customers. The number of customers served at the office increased to over 33,400 in 2010 and to nearly 34,000 in 2011. In 2012, over 35,000 customers were served.

In keeping with our goal of efficient service delivery, the department opened our North County Branch Office in February 2009 in downtown Fullerton. The North County Branch Office served more than 24,000 customers in 2010, more than 28,000 in 2011 and almost 30,000 in 2012.

In 2009, we enhanced our Webmaster Response System by joining with Access OC. Access OC is internet based and an easy way for customers to send their questions, suggestions, complaints and compliments directly to the department staff who can help. In 2010, we responded to all e-mail queries within 48 hours, with 99% cleared within one day. In 2011, we received 1,146 Access OC inquiries and responded to them in less than one business day, with 99% being cleared within a day. In 2012, there were 1,170 Access OC inquiries; the average close time was .55 days. In addition, the North County Branch Office processed almost 7,000 pieces of mail, the South County Branch Office processed over 3,700 pieces of mail and the Central Office helped over 116,000 customers that came to the office and they processed almost 20,000 pieces of mail. In 2013, we will continue to educate the public and our clients regarding our services through community outreach and continually adding relevant information to our webpage.

The department will continue to hire and train a diverse workforce to ensure sufficient bilingual skills, especially Spanish and Vietnamese, are available to meet the needs of our expanding ethnic community and to ensure good communications with our customers. In addition, we will provide staff with training opportunities to help them enhance their customer services skills.



Actions to Accomplish Goal:

In 2013, the department will work to increase the number of customers assisted at our branch offices by reaching out to community and business organizations near the offices. We will continue to participate in low- to no-cost expositions, business fairs, bridal shows, baby fairs and conventions as appropriate.

We will continue to monitor and update the information available on the department's webpage to ensure customers have the latest information about the services we provide. In addition, we will continue to use our webpage to promote prevention of identity theft and real estate fraud.

Also, we will continue to encourage completion of the customer opinion surveys forms. The department will continue to monitor the number of comments submitted and take action to address customer concerns.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	
WHAT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Respond to 99.1% of Clerk-Recorder internet inquiries within one business days.b) Achieve a 90% rating of "good" or "outstanding" on department's customer satisfaction survey.c) Reduce required customer visitors to the department's Civic Center location by 100,000 through the use of conveniently located branch offices and on-line services.
WHY:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Responding to customer inquiries within an acceptable amount of time helps the department provide prompt services.b) Survey forms and customer response/inquiries measure and ensure best practices in addressing current and future needs.c) Increasing the number of locations providing Clerk-Recorder services makes the departments services more accessible and convenient to a larger portion of the county's population.



Clerk-Recorder Department 2013 Business Plan

2012 Results	<p>a) The Clerk-Recorder Department responded to and closed 100% of 1,170 internet inquiries within .55 business days.</p> <p>b) The department achieved a rating of “good” or “outstanding” on 98% of the customer satisfaction surveys received.</p> <p>c) Served over 65,000 customers at our North and South County branch offices. In addition, the offices submitted over 8,000 documents electronically for recording. These numbers represent the number of trips that were not made by customers to the department’s Civic Center location.</p>
FY 12-13 Anticipated Results	<p>The department is on track to meet the performance measures established.</p>
FY 13-14 Plan	<p>The department plans to maintain the current performance measures for FY 13-14. The department will continue to explore conversion to the Balanced Scorecard in FY 13-14.</p>
How are we doing?	<p>The department continues to provide courteous and efficient service that is easily accessible to the public. We will continue working to improve and find ways to help our customers obtain answers to their questions in a fast and efficient manner via the internet. For example, customers can now order copies of official records through our online Grantor-Grantee Index Search feature.</p>



Goal 2: Utilize technology to improve the convenience and efficiency of recording official records and documents.

Strategies:

The Orange County Clerk-Recorder Department is a statewide leader in electronic document recording. This reduces expenses, increases efficiency, and also enhances the ability of submitters to record documents much faster.

In July 2008, the department became the first Recorder Department to begin accepting Abstracts of Judgment submitted electronically by the California Department of Child Support Services. This procedure automated what was a time-consuming process.

In late 2009, the department solidified our role as a pioneer in electronic document recording with the implementation of SECURE. This is an electronic recording delivery system allowing title and escrow companies, financial institutions and others to record documents electronically from across the state to individual counties using a single portal.

Orange, Los Angeles, Riverside and San Diego Counties share ownership of SECURE. These counties represent nearly 70% of all documents recorded in the state. SECURE obtained state certification by the State Attorney General's Office in its first attempt. Submitters are able to submit documents in one simple action to every county using SECURE.

In 2010, the SECURE system was honored by both the California State Association of Counties and the National Association of Counties for innovation and customer service. CSAC Executive Director Paul McIntosh traveled to Orange County to personally present the 2010 Challenge Award to Clerk-Recorder Tom Daly and key staff.

Accepted honors naming the multi-county SECURE system as a "Bright Idea" by the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. SECURE was among 36 government initiatives honored nationally for 2011.

In 2011, the Clerk-Recorder Department and county Health Care Agency completed a yearlong project to streamline the process for obtaining copies of birth and death certificates in Orange County. The change included upgrading the transfer of information from the Health Care Agency, which registers all births and deaths, to the Clerk-Recorder Department's main office in Santa Ana. This change ensures that copies of birth and death certificates are available to the public in a more timely manner.

In 2012, SECURE, our multi-county electronic recording delivery system, was implemented in Ventura County.



Actions to Accomplish Goal:

For 2013, we will continue to fully implement SECURE and work to encourage other counties in the state to partner with our multi-county recording system.

The department will continue to play an active role in the State Attorney General’s Electronic Recording Advisory Committee, which monitors the status of all new electronic recording systems.

Add more partner counties to the SECURE electronic recording system and enhance secure recording among existing counties.

In addition to maximizing the usage of our electronic recording capabilities, we will look for ways to increase internet access to our functions and services by using new technologies.

Implement a system allowing customers to order copies of property documents online.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	
WHAT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Achieve a rate of 50% for documents electronically recorded. b) Achieve a target of 900,000 visits to the Clerk-Recorder website for department services and/or information.
WHY:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) This will improve the recording efficiency and accessibility to recorded documents. b) Using the internet to provide information regarding the department’s services makes our services more accessible and convenient to our customers.

2012 Results	The Clerk-Recorder has electronically recorded 6.6 million documents since 1997, when we became the first county in California to begin electronic recording. Approximately 64% of documents recorded in 2012 were recorded electronically. Our web pages logged over 1,000,000 visits in 2012, providing information and allowing online appointments and requests for various services.
FY 12-13 Anticipated Results	The department is on track to meet the performance measures established.
FY 13-14 Plan	The department plans to maintain the current performance measures for FY 13-14. The department will also explore conversion to the Balanced Scorecard in FY 13-14.
How are we doing?	With the implementation of SECURE, E-FBN, and online official record ordering, we believe we are on-track when it comes to increasing the number of services we provide over the Internet for enhanced customer access and efficiency.



Goal 3: Maintain the physical security of public records and safeguard sensitive personal information contained within document submitted for recording.

Strategies:

In fiscal year 2013-14, the department will continue its proactive role to better protect consumers from identity theft and real estate fraud.

Former Clerk-Recorder Tom Daly worked with Representative Loretta Sanchez to direct a study of the military discharge document known as the DD-214 Form. Historically this form summarizes a veteran's military service and contains sensitive information such as a full social security number and other information that could potentially be used to commit identity theft.

Beginning in 2006, the Clerk-Recorder Department pushed for better protection of consumers' sensitive information. In 2007, a statewide bill authored by the office was passed requiring the use of only the last four digits of a social security number on most documents presented for recording.

In 2009, the Clerk-Recorder championed a second bill to further protect property owners' privacy. In October 2009, that bill was signed into law by Gov. Schwarzenegger. Effective January 2010, this legislation restricts the use of full social security numbers in Abstracts of Judgments and other family court documents. Jan. 1, 2010, also was the implementation date for full social security numbers in all new documents recorded to be redacted on copies made available to the public.

The department continues to mail courtesy notices to parties listed on every Grant Deed after it is recorded. This program was implemented in 2006 and will be continued through 2014 to help protect property owners from real estate fraud.

Actions to Accomplish Goal:



In 2013, the department will continue to work with legislators at the local, state and federal levels to ensure the privacy of consumers’ personal information.

We will work to expand our Real Estate Fraud Prevention Program by participating in additional public education efforts.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	
WHAT:	a) Maintain an accuracy rate of 99.5% on recorded documents. b) Insure that 95% of recorded documents have personal SSN redacted from the official document.
WHY:	To safeguard the privacy of social security numbers as required by state law and to address consumer concerns with identity theft and to ensure the accuracy of those records.

2012 Results	a) The department achieved an accuracy rate of 97% on documents recorded. b) The department will continue to ensure that all documents presented for recording will have personal SSN information redacted as mandated by current and future state and federal law. 100% of all documents recorded in 2012 had the first 5 digits of the SSN redacted.
FY 12-13 Anticipated Results	The department is on track to meet the performance measures established.
FY 13-14 Plan	The department plans to maintain the current performance measure. The department will also explore conversion to the Balanced Scorecard in FY 13-14.
How are we doing?	The department is working to meet the goals established. This ensures the continued physical security of public records and safeguarding of sensitive personal information contained within documents submitted for recording.



III. APPENDICES

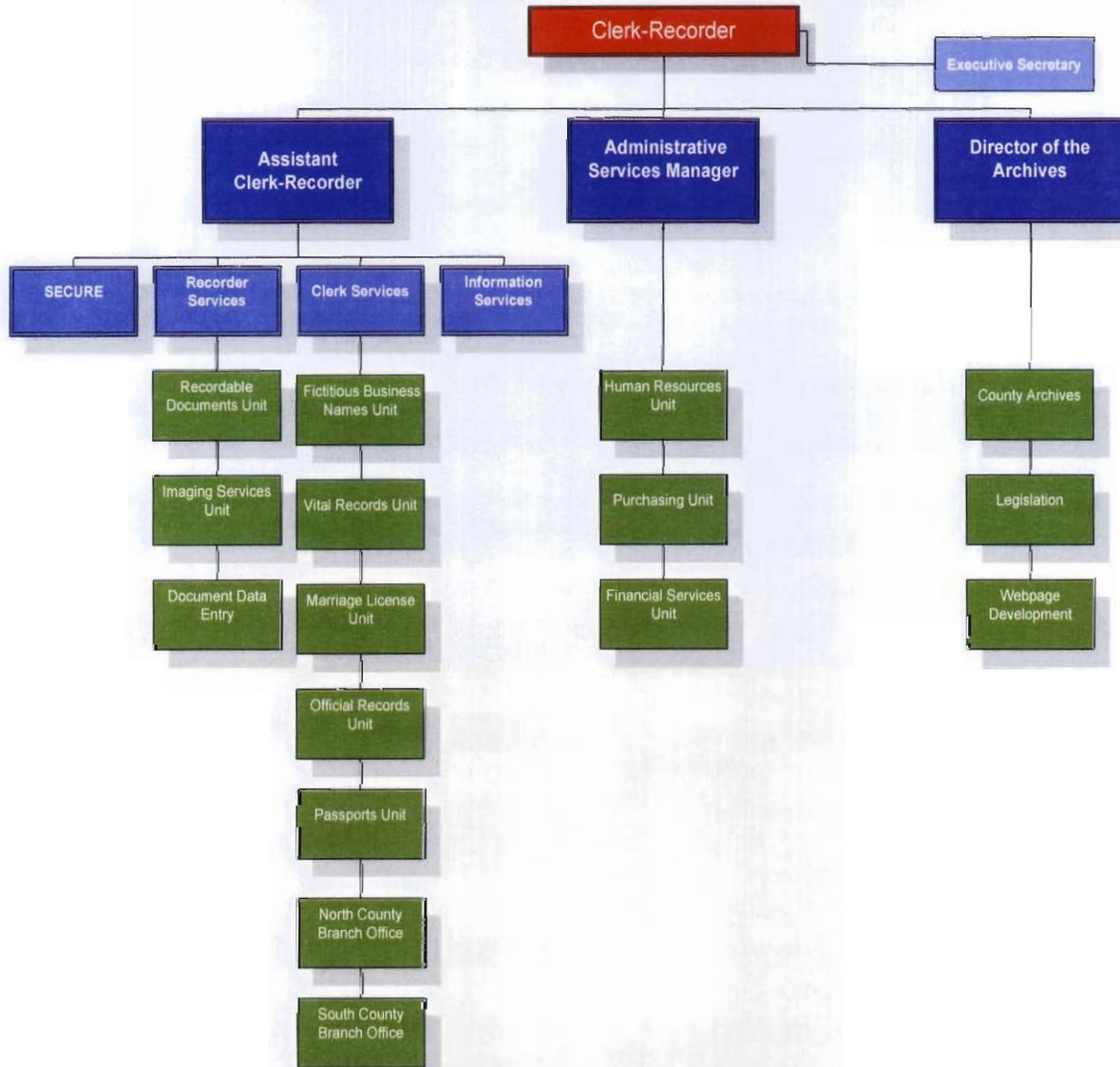
A. Organizational Chart

B. Significant Accomplishments in 2012 and additional goals in 2013-14



A. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

CLERK-RECORDER DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





B. SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2012

- Offered a new online system for customers to order copies of official records, including property documents, over the Internet, reducing the need to drive to one of our offices in person.
- Performed a record number of civil wedding ceremonies – 283 – in a single day on Dec. 12, 2012, to celebrate “love by the dozens.” The previous record was 250 couples married on Aug. 8, 2008.
- In calendar year 2012, recorded the highest volume of property documents since 2006, reflecting increased confidence in the housing market.
- Celebrated seven years of success with the department’s South County Branch Office at the Laguna Hills Civic Center, issuing more than 31,000 marriage licenses, performing some 11,000 civil wedding ceremonies and providing 183,00 copies of birth, death and marriage records.
- Processed a record number of passports on a special Saturday “Passport Day,” making it easier for parents to complete the application process because both must be present to sign the applications.

2013-14 GOALS:

- Add at least 50 submitters to our Multi-County ERDS “SECURE”.
- Present another exhibit co-created by the OC Archives and OC Parks.
- Complete preservation, rebinding, microfilming and digitized scans of 202 volumes of archival records, including indexes to Deeds and indexes to Grantors and Grantees from 1889 to 1953.