



Lincoln County—South Dakota

USA

Lincoln County, South Dakota, is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. Its triple digit growth is reflective of a healthy economy, minimal unemployment, and a low crime rate. The County Register of Deeds Office is the government office tasked with maintaining a record of real estate ownership and is the repository for official county records and documents.

“With the population increase and the growth in the county, our records were accumulating very fast,” said Kathy Hill, Lincoln County Register of Deeds.

From the early days, when all records were literally transcribed by hand, and later typewritten, finding the most efficient methods of managing those documents has been an everyday challenge for the Register of Deeds Office. In the 1970s, microfilm became an accepted method for storing county records.

According to Hill, when microfilming came along in about 1977, it somewhat eased the problem, as they were able to just keep microfilm copies of documents. “Over the years the microfilm has deteriorated. The microfilmed images aren't as good as they were originally and it's becoming more difficult to get a good readable copy from the microfilm,” says Hill.

In the 1990s, Active Data Systems (ADS) began providing electronic scanning and digital management systems to help counties store records more efficiently, provide easy retrieval, and offer much-needed assurance for protecting documents from fire, flood, wind, and other natural and man-made disasters. Said Mark McClung, President of Active Data Systems, “A copy of a digitally scanned document will look as good 20 years from now as it does today.”



Despite phenomenal growth, the Lincoln County Register of Deeds Office has clearly found effective means to manage records in a manner that has not only saved money, time and space, but provided better service to the taxpayers.

Today, with the assistance of Active Data Systems, the Lincoln County Register of Deeds uses File Director for document imaging and management. File Director can efficiently manage hundreds of thousands of documents being accessed by multiple users throughout the county. File Director makes storing, classification, retrieval, and distribution of documents quick and efficient. “We have attorneys, surveyors, or appraisers that call and need a copy. They don't have to drive to Canton to get them. We can email them and it makes it much easier,” says Hill.



Kathy Hill, Lincoln County Register of Deeds



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Through digital imaging and management, Lincoln County has come to realize both personnel and budget relief. One of the highest line items in the county budget is employees (salaries and benefits). The Register of Deeds Office has discovered that handling most of its records and documents by computer has allowed efficient management of data and better control of employee costs. Said Hill, "We're doing a lot with just a few people. Three of us take care of it all."

With the computerization of documents and records, Lincoln County discovered individual solutions for various tasks, but the integration of solutions created another problem. Hill said,

"We had our fee program, we had our grantor/grantee program, we had our imaging program and we had this PT program, so things were just getting entered, but there was so much redundancy in the whole recording process."



Kathy Hill and Elaine Niebuhr review documents being scanned.



Lincoln County needed to implement a clerk recording management solution that allowed for the recording of critical records information including land and deed records, marriage licensing, probate records, and business licensing. With the help of ADS, they found the solution with Clerk Track, which also provided cashiering and receipting functions and tightly integrated the. Document imaging and management system with File Director. Added Hill, "With Clerk Track, you enter it one time and it's in all of those processes. It's all covered."

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Active Data Systems (ADS) is a Sioux Falls, SD based corporation, with an office in Rapid City, SD, that provides document imaging solutions for government and businesses in a six state area. ADS has been delivering and supporting document imaging consultation, products and services since 1982.

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