



# ANNUAL REPORT 2009

**Stephanie Y. O'Malley**

**Clerk and Recorder  
City and County of Denver**

*The mission of the Office of the Clerk and Recorder is to efficiently and kindly respond to each customer who has cause to interact with the department for any purpose; diligently abide by mandates prescribed by federal, state and local laws and rules; and effectively and efficiently plan, prepare and execute all steps necessary to fairly afford the voting public its right to enfranchisement.*

# TURNAROUND, IMPROVEMENT...



*Stephanie Y. O'Malley is Denver's first elected Clerk and Recorder. She was previously Director of Denver's Excise and Licenses Department, appointed by Mayor John Hickenlooper. Prior to her city service she was an attorney in private practice, focused on public policy. A native Coloradan, Stephanie grew up in Denver's City Park West neighborhood.*

## ... and full speed ahead

2009 was a year dedicated to furthering our goal of making the Office of the Clerk and Recorder a top notch city agency. When I came to this agency in early 2007, it was an agency with significant operational challenges. It had sizable work backlogs in major divisions, and it also had a need to re-tool and move forward from practices engaged in by the former Election Commission. 2007 and 2008 were dedicated to complete restructuring and turnaround and a high priority of making the 2008 presidential election one that Denver residents could be proud of.

2009's activities and work priorities were to maintain the enormous progress we made in 2007 and 2008 and to build upon that by tackling additional needed initiatives. The agency continued to place a heavy emphasis on customer service.

Like other Denver agencies, the Office of the Clerk and Recorder continues to provide high quality service to the public in spite of shrinking budgets. Challenging economic times have caused us to find creative solutions in our day-to-day responsibilities and commitment to the public we serve. Cross training of staff allowed us to meet or exceed productivity goals. Increased training of elections personnel additionally yielded greater expertise and efficiency. I also want to note that our 2009 budget figures reflect the lower election costs of a non-presidential election year.

The Clerk and Recorder has the responsibility of preserving and making available to the public a massive number of historical land use and city records collected over the last century and a half. This year, time and personnel were dedicated to two very large records-related projects that the city and citizens will benefit from far into the future. Over a five-year period, the *Records Imaging Initiative* will image documents currently on fragile microfilm and microfiche and will improve the quality of a significant number of previously digitized documents in the department's legacy database. *The Inventory of Historic Records* project includes inspecting and cataloguing hundreds of thousands of very old paper documents, maps and records. These records have long been neglected and are now in process of being evaluated for retention, destruction and archival importance. A future goal will be to scan this collection into electronic form.

The Elections Division conducted a very successful November election in 2009. We are proud to introduce *Ballot TRACE*, a tool designed to help voters track their mail-in ballots through the mail. We believe this groundbreaking new service will increase the confidence of mail-ballot voters and become a model for other elections jurisdictions across the country.

The Public Trustee Division has continued to keep its workload on track despite a steady high foreclosure rate. They also did a fantastic job of creating and offering free public seminars to educate interested citizens about the foreclosure auction and lien redemption processes. Our Recording Division maintained its pace with its goal of recording documents within one day of receipt.

The City Clerk Division trained new staff, responded to a new requirement to post campaign finance reports on the city's website within 24 hours of receipt and processed thousands of marriage license applications.

It is with great pride that I present the particulars of our 2009 work year for the Office of the Clerk and Recorder.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Y. O'Malley". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Stephanie Y. O'Malley  
Denver Clerk and Recorder



# CLERK AND RECORDER INITIATIVES



## Ballot TRACE

In 2009, the Elections Division made its vision of offering a mail ballot tracking system to voters a reality. In partnership with local software company i3logix and the U.S. Postal Service, the Elections



Division created and beta-tested *Ballot TRACE*, a first-in-the-nation mail ballot Tracking,

Reporting and Communication Engine. Ballot TRACE allows voters to sign up to receive text messages or e-mails alerting them to where their mail ballots are in the postal process, including when the ballot is mailed when the ballot is with their local postal carrier and when their voted ballot has been received back by the Elections Division.

As part of the introduction, voters who used the tracking system provided positive feedback and shared that their trust in voting by mail increased with the use of *Ballot TRACE*. This service will be available to use in all upcoming elections conducted in the City and County of Denver.

## Inventory of Historic Records

The Office of the Clerk and Recorder has the distinct pleasure of serving as the depository for many types of city records that have both informational and historical value. Records ranging from contracts and City Council minutes and resolutions to articles of incorporation dating back 100 years or more are among the treasures of the Clerk's office. With a goal of establishing an updated inventory of records maintained by the Clerk, a team was created in 2009 to undertake the herculean task of inventorying and individually examining a massive collection of records stored mainly in the basement

of the City and County Building. An undertaking of this nature has not been done for a significant period of time, and it has required staff to clear several rooms of boxes and file cabinets filled with records.

In the quest to develop an updated inventory, the Clerk's office has accounted for and memorialized the existence of a multitude of historical documents, including handwritten abstracts of elections from the late 1800s and the original articles of incorporation of the Denver Dumb Friends League. During 2009, more than one million pages of documents were individually reviewed, and a new database was developed to maintain the inventory and record retention schedules for each class of document. The Clerk, in cooperation with the city's General Services Department, identified storage space for records that have been inventoried and purchased shelving and containers necessary to preserve the records and make them available for easy retrieval. The project is ongoing and will continue through 2010.

## Records Imaging Initiative

One of the many challenges the Clerk's office faces is working with older records in books and on microfilm and microfiche that are brittle or deteriorating. In an effort to convert these older items to a more usable and durable form and provide enhanced and clear copies of records to its customers, the Records Division has been working on the first phase of a planned 5-year project. These records will all be converted to high-quality digital images. In 2009, more than 542,000 documents were converted. This equates to more than 4 million pages of documents. Once converted, members of the Records Division performed an extra quality assurance review to ensure that images will have a high level of readability for centuries to come. The project is being closely monitored and managed by the agency's business analyst and a project manager. The city's budget office has provided the necessary budget resources to carry the project through its initial phase.

## BUDGET AND REVENUE

	2008	2009
Clerk and Recorder Budget	\$9,895,700	\$5,918,438
Funds Expended	\$9,657,689	\$4,937,081
Projected Revenues	\$6,991,000	\$6,167,200
Actual Revenues	\$5,247,367	\$6,141,657



## Denver Votes!

### Successful November election

The Elections Division provides comprehensive election services for the City and County of Denver. The division is responsible for conducting fair, accurate, accessible, secure, transparent and efficient elections. It maintains all voter registration records, official election records, candidate certification records, ballot access documents and all historical election documents. Public participation in the election process is promoted through formal programs including poll worker recruitment, voting education campaigns and ACCESO, the voting advisory committee that advises the division on outreach to primarily Spanish-speaking voters.

During 2009, the Elections Division delivered a successful election, and Denver voters elected new school board members and voted on one initiated ordinance. Votes were cast by mail ballot, with two Voter Service Centers offering ballot drop off, replacement ballots, emergency registration and electronic voting machines for voters who wished to use them. Ballots for this election were printed in-state, providing an opportunity for closer oversight of the printing process.

### Achievements

- Conducted successful November election by mail ballot. More than 346,000 ballots were sent to Denver voters. Denver was the first metropolitan Colorado county to complete ballot counting on election night. The all-mail election saved the city \$125,000 compared to the cost of a polling place election.
- Expanded training opportunities for staff including Colorado election official certification, national election official certification, supervisory training, computer software training and other internal training opportunities.
- Partnered with area colleges and voter advocacy groups to secure federal grant funding for student poll worker program.
- Implemented an internal content management system to ensure highest quality document production.
- Created new procedures for budget expense tracking and projections.
- Worked with city offices to streamline the hiring process for hundreds of temporary election workers and thousands of Election Day pollworkers.
- Collaborated with the city's Real Estate, General Services and Technology Services offices to program and build out a state-of-the-art, transparent, new elections facility located in a city-owned building. Saved taxpayer money by moving to a city-owned facility instead of remaining in a leased facility.

### ELECTION STATISTICS

	2008	2009
Registered voters	415,808	418,396
Number of ballots mailed*	173,188	346,955
Percentage of vote that was by mail ballot	62%	100%
Number of people who voted in November election	277,114	82,549
Voter registration records processed	241,967	89,799
Petition signatures processed	N/A	76,567
Voter status letters mailed to voters	1,096,030	98,480

\*2008 was a polling place election in a presidential year; 2009 was an all-mail ballot election.

# PUBLIC TRUSTEE DIVISION



## Keeps pace and offers workshops

The Public Trustee Division administers all foreclosures that are filed in the City and County of Denver. During 2009, Denver's foreclosure activity remained at historically high levels with no decrease through the year. Despite a workload of in excess of six thousand foreclosure filings and over thirty-four thousand releases of deeds of trust, the Public Trustee Division not only kept up with the demand but also reached for new goals.

2009 brought opportunity for members of the Public Trustee Division to cross-train in the varied and complex aspects of the foreclosure process. All staff became well equipped to handle every piece of the foreclosure process including setting up new files, lien redemptions, bankruptcies, withdrawals and working the weekly property auction.

In keeping with our overall emphasis on providing excellent customer service, the Public Trustee Division created and presented free seminars to the public designed to help people understand and purchase property at Denver's foreclosure auction and to help people understand the highly technical aspects of the redemption process. The seminars have had great attendance and have gotten a very positive reception from attendees.

The division modernized and streamlined the weekly foreclosure auction by creating a more visual presentation with all bids projected on a large screen, posting the list of properties pulled from the auction in a location where bidders can see them prior to the auction, and implementing a code of conduct for auction attendees.

The division additionally provided analysis and feedback on foreclosure legislation. This information was accepted by bill sponsors and incorporated into bills that ultimately became law during the 2009 and 2010 legislative sessions.

## PUBLIC TRUSTEE STATISTICS

	2008	2009
Foreclosure filings	6,145	6,141
Foreclosures cured by homeowner	90	136
Foreclosures withdrawn by lender	1,956	2,025
Foreclosures redeemed by lien holders	81	47
Properties auctioned	4,362	3,108
Deed of Trust Releases	31,047	34,064

## RECORDING DIVISION

### Timely recording of crucial documents

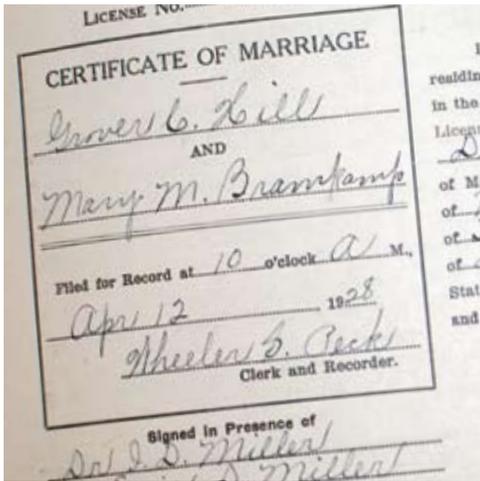
"I would like to have this deed recorded." This is a request that was made often in 2009 by customers to the Clerk's Recording Division. During 2009, the Recording Division responded to this kind of request and recorded almost 174,000 documents. One of the many challenges associated with any recording process is maintaining pace with the large number of documents submitted. If there is a failure to record documents in a timely manner, the interests of various parties such as property and lien holders, lenders or title companies could be substantially affected. Throughout 2009, the Recording Division consistently recorded documents presented within 24 hours of receipt. This success furthered the division's goal of having recorded documents completely processed within three days.

## RECORDING STATISTICS

	2008	2009
Paper documents recorded	87,889	72,390
E-Recordings processed	57,128	80,711
Documents recorded by other divisions	33,981	20,685
Total documents recorded	178,998	173,786

The Recording staff maintained high efficiency levels by recording only three percent fewer documents in 2009, despite a 30 percent cut in personnel. During the 2009-2010 legislative session, the division provided critical input into discussions related to legislation introduced to clarify and provide consistent recording fees across the state. With the division's feedback, the proposed legislation was passed and made law.

# CITY CLERK DIVISION



## Taking care of Denver's citizens

Surprise, surprise! This was the greeting given to a happy young couple who came into the City Clerk's office on April 2, 2009 to obtain a marriage license (photo above right). The couple was hailed by fourteen of the groom's fellow soldiers from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, who came along to give the bride and groom good wishes before the soldiers were deployed to Iraq.

This couple and 4,867 others obtained marriage licenses from the City Clerk Division during 2009. Many of the couples who obtained licenses in 2009 did so during the division's now-popular annual Valentine's Day event. Along with their marriage licenses, Valentine couples were provided with treats and special gifts donated by sister city agencies and local businesses.

Also during 2009, the City Clerk's Office continued to adhere to its obligation to publish City Council ordinances and resolutions and to maintain city records including City Council proceedings and ordinances, city rules and regulations, contracts and official appointments.

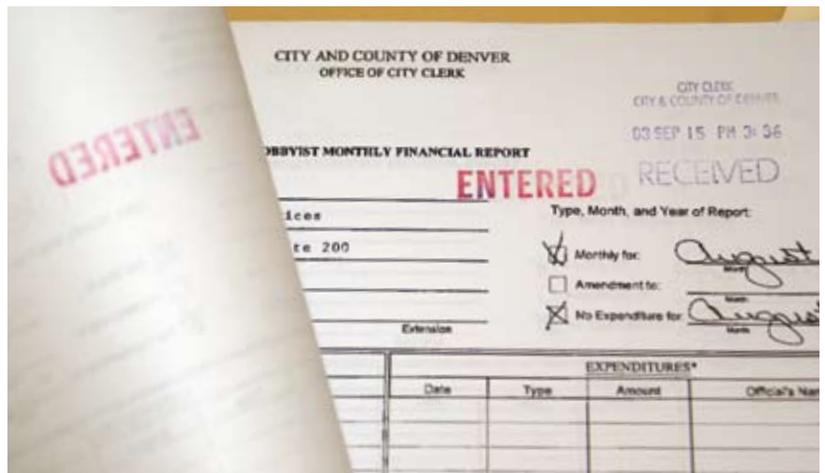
Representatives from the City Clerk's office have been major stakeholders in active planning and discussions related to the City of Denver's investment in Alfresco, a document management software solution designed in part to improve efficiencies in the city's contract management process. In the future, Alfresco will provide opportunity for the Clerk's office to improve the use, tracking and sharing of all Clerk and Recorder documents.

This past year, the City Clerk Division rolled out an updated Campaign Finance Information Packet. The packet is designed to serve as a one-stop shop where candidates, issue committees and officials can obtain clear information and forms for the filing of campaign finance reports. The office has received a lot of positive feedback on the packet.

Last but not least, the division continued to monitor lobbyist registration and reporting requirements. In 2011, we look forward to completing the development of a software utility that will automate these functions.

## CITY CLERK STATISTICS

	2008	2009
Marriage licenses issued	4,865	4,868
Marriage certificates recorded	4,580	4,701
Domestic partnership registrations	151	149
City contracts completed	1,968	2,060
Campaign finance reports filed	34	33
Lobbyist registrations (individuals and organizations)	53	54
Ordinances and resolutions processed	941	942





## Providing city records to citizens

The Records Division offers perhaps one of the most important services in the City and County of Denver. It provides Denver residents and people across the country with essential copies of records. A request from a daughter or son for a copy of a marriage license of deceased parents so that an estate may be settled is an example of why this service is indispensable.

During the past year, the Records Division provided copies of marriage licenses, deeds, military discharge documents and other records to citizens who requested them.

The Records Division additionally continued to be hands-on and mailed close to 94,000 recorded documents back to customers who submitted them for recording.

## RECORDS STATISTICS

	2008	2009
Customers served	22,192	13,659
Document pages mailed in response to customer requests	35,216	20,199
Recorded documents mailed back to recording customers	121,870	93,075

During 2009, the Records team provided tremendous support to Phase I of the Clerk's *Records Imaging Initiative* and visually inspected approximately 70,300 scanned documents for image quality and completeness. Each member of the Records Division provided input and feedback on the scans and about the project as a whole. The Records team will continue to support this very important project over its five-year projected duration.

The Records Division also continued its partnership with the Denver Public Library. The library is in process of imaging all of the Clerk and Recorder's 140-year-old land sale indexes. These will be available to the public through the library's Western History and Genealogy Department.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Informing the public, evolving with the times

The Communications Division is the Clerk and Recorder's public education arm. It supports all other divisions by creating customer materials and uses many different methods to get important information into the hands of the public.

Customer service for campaigns was a high priority for Communications in 2009. Informational materials were created or updated to provide greater customer service to all Clerk and Recorder customers. New candidate packets were created for the City Clerk and Elections Divisions, and materials demystifying foreclosures were updated for the Public Trustee Division. The Communications Division organized informational meetings for election stakeholders, and had a significant amount of interaction with news reporters to get information to the public.

Social media is exploding in popularity, so Communications started using tools like Twitter and Facebook for election notifications. The team also provided the city's 311 operators with up-to-the-minute information about Clerk and Recorder services and events.





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