



"WORKING TOGETHER"
Property Records Education Partners
(PREP)



[PREP Newsletter](#)

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Cook County, Illinois Unites Taxpayer Data

excerpted from Government Technology (6/12/12)

"Governments have long realized that citizens don't necessarily associate government functions with the proper agency or department. Distinctions between the many offices involved in taxation, for example, are irrelevant to the average person. They just want to know how to get information. In [Cook County, Ill.](#), several different offices, led by separately elected officials, each have a hand in property taxes. Home to Chicago, Cook County is the second most-populous county in the country, with approximately 1.7 million separate parcels. A new Web portal unites information from the Cook County **Treasurer's Office, the Assessor's Office, Clerk's Office, Recorder of Deeds and the Board of Review** in one location, to provide a [comprehensive view](#) of all property tax-related information at one online location.

Cook County Treasurer's Office CIO Steve Edmonson, formerly Cook County CIO, told *Government Technology* that officials believe that their property tax portal is breaking new ground. "This is so comprehensive," he said. "I don't believe you'll find another tax portal like this anywhere in the country."

In crafting the portal on a short 90-day timeline, technical staff gathered data on the most requested information from each contributing agency. Site visitors can use their property index number (PIN) or address to access five years' worth of data related to the property. Besides a photograph and property description, owners can also access the property's assessed value, tax rates and payments, deeds and liens on the property, refunds owed, exemptions, appeals information and more. Cook County Board President [Toni Preckwinkle](#) announced at a press conference earlier this year that this collaboration greatly simplifies the process of gathering tax information for residential and property owners.

"We are making one of the most crucial areas of county government - information about people's homes and property - more sensitive to their needs, more convenient for their use, more efficient and more transparent for all of our residents," Preckwinkle said. "What we're trying to do is make it easy so that you aren't chasing paper between offices and floors and so that you don't have to go to the county building or to the satellite offices to get the paper which is now in five or six different places," explained Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas, credited as the visionary behind the project.... Cook County is eyeing a series of upgrades to the portal for its next phase. GIS will be added so that property owners can access comparative data for other parcels in their area. A mechanism for getting additional user input will be added to the site as well.



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In This Issue

Cook County, Illinois Unites Taxpayer Data
Survey Finds Home Prices to Bottom Out by 2013
News from PREP Chapters - SE Nebraska and No California Register for PRIA's Annual Conference Soon
Indecomm Global Services Grows its Recording Footprint
MCRA Award Given to Janelle Weis
PREP Blog and PREP LinkedIn Links to National News
PRIAwareness Campaign
ALTA News
Advertise in PREP Newsletter

Examples of PRIA's Products
["2010/11 PREP Chapter Topics"](#)
["How to get Ready for eRecording"](#)
[Bulk Records Access and Cost \(other PRIA Standards and Publications\)](#)

According to Edmonson, the target date to complete the second phase is the end of October 2012." ([Read complete article](#))



PREP Chapter Meetings June/July 2012

Metro Minnesota
South Florida
Northern California
Colorado

Survey Finds Home Prices to Finally Bottom Out by 2013

excerpted from Mortgage Professional 6/25/12

"Economists continue to predict home prices will decline only slightly in 2012, falling 0.4 percent for the entire year, and will increase thereafter, according to the June 2012 Zillow Home Price Expectations Survey, compiled from 114 responses by a diverse group of economists, real estate experts and investment and market strategists. For the first time, the individual economists surveyed were largely in agreement on the trajectory of home prices nationally, signaling that a true bottom may be imminent. The Survey, sponsored by Zillow and conducted by Pulsenomics LLC, is based on the projected path of the S&P/Case-Shiller U.S. National Home Price Index during the coming five years." [Read complete article](#).



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News from PREP Chapters

Each PREP Newsletter will highlight one or two PREP Chapters with a brief summary or overview of recent meetings. You can also go to the [PREP Chapter Locator Map](#) and look up all minutes/agendas from each chapter.

In this newsletter, we'll be highlighting these chapters: **SE Nebraska and Northern California**.

SE Nebraska PREP Chapter:

Co-Chairs: Government, Diane Battiato at Diane.Battiato@douglascounty-ne.gov and Business, Ellen Albrecht at ealbrecht@firstam.com

The SE Nebraska PREP Meeting was held on May 9, 2012. PREP Chapter Government Co-chair Diane Battiato provided an update about Project Aristotle, Archive Access, LB 14 and LB536. The guest speakers were FBI Special Agent Chris Meztista, and Intelligence Research Specialist Edward Oslica, with the U. S. Attorney's Office in Nebraska. They shared information about sovereign citizens, domestic terrorism and document misuse. And they discussed what to do when you must work with a sovereign as a customer. The next meeting will be on September 9, 2012. [Read complete minutes](#).

Northern California PREP Chapter:

Contact Information

Do you have questions or suggestions on this newsletter or any updated information on co-chairs, emails, phone numbers etc. please contact us:
[Carolyn Ableman](#)
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ALTA, Manager of Government
Affairs

Co-chairs: Government, Theresa Rabe at trabe@smcare.org and Business, Yianni Pantis at ypantis@corelogic.com

The Northern California PREP Chapter met via telephone on May 2, 2012. The discussion centered around information and planning for both the Northern and Southern California PREP conferences. Southern's conference is to be hosted by First American (Santa Ana) on Wednesday, September 12, 2012 and planning is underway.

The Northern California PREP conference to be hosted by Santa Clara County was hoping to be on September 13, but both conferences wanted the primary speaker to be Mr. Bill Beckman, President and CEO of MERS, and he's unavailable on 9/13, so the Northern chapter will change their annual conference to another date. The next meeting of this chapter was in June via conference call. [Read complete minutes.](#)



Register Early for PRIA's Annual Conference in Memphis

From August 28-30, PRIA will host its Annual Conference at the famed Peabody Hotel to Shake, Rattle and Roll in Memphis. There are lots of registration options available for both PRIA members and non-members, including a special one-day option for those unable to attend all three days.

Check out the [preliminary schedule](#) and then make your travel reservations early keeping in mind that the conference dates immediately precede the Labor Day Weekend. And hotel reservations are now being accepted at The Peabody. Registration materials are now available on the [PRIA website](#).

PRIA Press Release: "Indecomm Global Services Grows Its Recording Footprint"

Firm Offers Turnkey Solutions in eRecording and Mail Away For All Customer Needs - St. Paul, MN (June 8, 2012)

Indecomm Global Services, a leading business process outsourcing company, is growing its recording footprint with eRecording in over 400 of the largest counties and mail away procedures in all of the others. "Our approach in recording is to deliver economies of scale through eRecording initially with the largest counties rather than attempting to connect to all counties regardless of size," said Latha Parameswaran, Vice President, Document Management Group, Indecomm Global Services. "From a volume perspective, Indecomm's eRecording footprint will be close to the 50% of the total population where eRecording is available. As a result, our customers such as lenders and title companies can further enhance efficiency through eRecording." In mortgage recording, Indecomm's unique position of offering advanced solutions in eRecording is strengthened by its proprietary platform InteleDoc Direct™. Customers can leverage this platform for their eRecording needs or send paper documents and let Indecomm handle the processing. ([Read complete press release](#)).

Press Release: Janelle Weis Wins Distinguished MCRA Award

"The Minnesota County Recorder's Association (MCRA) presented the MCRA Distinguished Service Award to Jinnelle Weis, Executive Vice President of Burnet Title. Weis has over thirty years of experience in the Real Estate Services Industry. She has been an extraordinary asset to MCRA and the recording industry.

The MCRA Distinguished Service Award is given to individuals who work in relationship with county recorders in the land records industry. They are given the award for their support and assistance in enhancing the services that we mutually provide. Jinnelle has played an active role in the MN Land Title Association, the MN Electronic Real Estate Recording Commission, as a past chair of the Metro PREP group, and with legislation and initiatives that benefit both county recorders and the title industry.

Weis has served on numerous electronic recording committees including the initial eRecord task force. She is currently serving on the MCRA eRecord workgroup which has been critical to advancing eRecording in Minnesota over the last year. Her work is improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the recording process statewide.

In 1997 Weis convened a workgroup comprised of title industry personnel and public sector partners with the mission "to ensure quality service to the home buying public by improving communication between the title industry and the counties and simplifying our piece of the real estate transaction." **In 2002 the success of this model was shared with the national industry group Property Records Industry Association (PRIA) who expanded it nationwide creating Property Records Education Partners (PREP) as a forum for stakeholders to work together at the local level. Due to Jinnelle's initiative, the MN Metro PREP group has been working together to improve commerce and serve their customers for over 15 years.**

MRCA President Lynn Ette Schrupp presented the award to Weis on June 13, 2012 at the Recording Institute. The MRCA is proud to honor Weis for her outstanding service." (Released June 19, 2012. Contact information: Lynn Ette Schrupp, President Minnesota County Recorder's Association; Phone: 320 -864-1216; E-mail: Lynnette.schrupp@co.mcleod.mn.us)

Keep Up with Land Records Issues Across the Country

Almost every day, we post news articles, and PRIA and PREP Chapter information, so feel free to subscribe to both the [PREP Blog](#) and the [PRIA/PREP LinkedIn Group](#) to stay in touch.

Recent Links to National News

[US new-home sales rose at fastest pace in 2 years](#) - "Americans bought new homes in May at the fastest pace in more than two years. The increase suggests a modest recovery is continuing in the U.S. housing market, despite weaker job growth."

[Los Angeles Gives MERS the Boot](#) - "Two years after the Los Angeles City Council approved a [foreclosure](#) registry to track distressed bank-owned

properties, city officials passed stricter rules to help clean up neglected bank-owned homes in Southern California."

[New battle brewing over foreclosed properties](#) - "The question of who is responsible for the costs associated with foreclosed homes has once again surfaced in Illinois courts. Now the issue is the real estate transfer taxes that are paid to Illinois counties and the state when a property changes hands and the transaction is recorded."

[SJC Rules For Lenders and MERS In Eaton v. Fannie Mae Case](#) - "The much awaited opinion by the SJC in [Eaton v. Fannie Mae](#) has just been released, and it is a huge relief for the banking and real estate community."

[The Myth of the National Housing Market](#) - "The housing boom and bust gave rise to the myth of a "national" housing market. After all, prices rose in almost every part of the country until 2006, when they began dropping from coast to coast."

PRIAwareness Campaign Launched



[PRIA](#) has launched a campaign to inform people about the advancements and resulting benefits successfully implemented by recorders and their business partners over the last decade. Here's their first announcement:

"It's important that people are proud of who they are, what they do and the accomplishments they have achieved. That statement surely applies to all of us and it certainly applies to the County Recorders, Registers of Deeds and others that diligently manage and protect this great country's official public records for property. No one knows that more than we do here at the Property Records Industry Association (PRIA). Over the next several months we hope to share with you, through short electronic news bulletins such as this one, many of the advancements and resulting benefits successfully implemented by recorders and their business partners over the last decade. The official public record is critical to all of us. PRIA is proud to be part of the industry and to facilitate the sharing of information, the ongoing discussions towards mutual goals and a strong commitment to making things happen. We hope you look forward to our future communications and encourage you to forward these messages along to your colleagues and business associates so they, too, will understand the importance of safeguarding and maintaining, for perpetuity, our public records."

ALTA NEWS: ALTA Urges FHFA to Require PACE Liens to be Recorded in Local Records

ALTA recently commented on an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR) issued by the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) on Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs. PACE programs allow local governments to provide homeowners with the financial resources to make energy improvements to their home. Homeowners then pay back the money

through an assessment on their property tax bill. Under this scheme, PACE liens take priority of a property owner's existing first lien mortgage.

ALTA's letter to the FHFA answers some questions about PACE programs that are needed to provide an "understanding of both the benefits and risks presented by PACE programs to property owners and mortgage holders and investors."

ALTA highlights a number of unanswered questions that are essential to determining the impact of PACE on Fannie and Freddie mortgages. The questions were designed to understand the basic mechanics of PACE programs, not to prevent consumers from accessing funding to upgrade their homes. ALTA's questions included: how the lien arises; whether the lien is recorded; and how the locality determines that the applicant actually possesses title the property.

ALTA said that understanding when a PACE lien is deemed to arise, when the assessment or loan is given, or when the assessment for periodic repayment is certified to the current year's taxes, is important for understanding the risks presented to the regulated entities by PACE lending. In its letter, ALTA also said PACE statutes are unclear about the recording obligations associated with these liens. Without ensuring that PACE liens are properly recorded in local property records, ALTA members cannot properly identify risks in order to protect the interests of consumers and creditors.

PACE programs began in 2008 when California passed the first legislation and a pilot program began in Berkeley, Calif. Since 2008, 27 other states have passed similar legislation. In the summer of 2010, FHFA announced that because of the ability for PACE loans to prime the first lien mortgage, Fannie and Freddie were banned from purchasing mortgages if there was an existing PACE loan on the property. FHFA also requires the borrower to obtain permission before obtaining PACE financing that could impact an existing Fannie or Freddie mortgage. Due to this announcement, PACE lending stopped across the country, and a handful of cities sued FHFA in California to overturn the decision. As part of that case, FHFA was required to obtain public comment about PACE financing.

For more information, contact Justin Ailes, ALTA vice president of government and regulatory affairs at jailles@alta.org.

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