



Recording Jurisdiction Identifiers

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Introduction

For most of our nation's history, recording of land records has been a local activity. Documents were created by local lenders, local title companies, or local attorneys and closing agents. These documents were then recorded in the recorder's office. Knowing where to go was pretty straight-forward. There was little reason to confuse Columbus County, North Carolina, with Columbus County, Wisconsin, or Columbus, Georgia, with Columbus, Ohio.

However, as the lending and title industries have become more regional and national in scope, and as the Internet and eRecording have given rise to the virtual courthouse, confusion over which jurisdiction is correct for a particular transaction has increased. This confusion has also been compounded by buyers and sellers moving around the country and purchasing multiple properties in multiple jurisdictions.

The Recording Jurisdiction Identifier (RJID) is a recommendation to help reduce this confusion. The purpose of the RJID is to assist document submitters in identifying the correct recording jurisdiction for a transaction and related documents the first time and every time. The RJID is intended to be used by submitters as part of the background code or metadata at the time the document is prepared for and sent to the recorder. At this time, it is not envisioned to become a part of the recorder's instrument number, file number or other number given to the document by the recorder to clarify the recording order of the document.

As the Uniform Document Numbering Workgroup researched currently available numbering systems, none were located that met the needs of the land records industry. Federal Information Processing Standard codes (FIPS codes) are assigned at the county level and do not account for recording done at the township level or for counties that have multiple distinct recording offices. The Mortgage Industry Standards Maintenance Organization (MISMO) has a comprehensive list of taxing jurisdictions with nearly 28,000 entries that was unwieldy for the purpose of recording jurisdiction, since taxing authorities and recording jurisdictions are not identical. A clear and concise numbering scheme needed to be developed.

The Standard

After considering a number of alternatives, the following simple yet inclusive idea is recommended:

1. The first two characters of the identifier are the two letter state or territory abbreviation assigned by the United States Postal Service (USPS).
2. The next three characters of the identifier are:
 - a. numeric, commencing with 001 within each state or territory (or if a compatible pre-existing numerical identification system is used in a particular state, as assigned in that system);
 - b. typically consecutively incremented by 1;
 - c. assigned to recording jurisdictions within a state or territory in alphabetical order;
 - d. expandable, since numbers beyond the currently assigned identifiers are available for any new recording jurisdictions created within the state or territory in the future.

Examples:

By state:

Adams County, Indiana = IN001

Allen County, Indiana = IN002

Bartholomew County, Indiana = IN003

By name:

Orange County, California = CA030

Orange Township, Connecticut = CT107

Orange County, Florida = FL058

Conclusion

The RJID standard provides a readily understood clarity of recording jurisdiction by using existing USPS abbreviations, alphabetical sorting and numerical designation, while allowing for expandability and future changes. (Note: The state of Texas currently has the largest number of recording jurisdictions in the United States – 254. The RJID standard, if implemented in Texas, would allow for 745 additional new jurisdictions, nearly three times the number of current jurisdictions.)

The comprehensive list of all RJIDs will be published on the PRIA website and will be freely available to all interested parties. Use of the RJID number, like all PRIA recommendations, is optional but the workgroup believes that its value to parties working across diverse geographic areas will encourage its adoption.

About

The Uniform Numbering Workgroup is a workgroup organized under the PRIA Business Processes and Procedures Committee. As its name implies, this workgroup focuses on uniformity in identifying land records.

For additional information regarding this paper or any other PRIA work product, send an email to info@pria.us.

As with every PRIA work product, many people contributed their time and intellectual property to this consensus-building effort. Hours and hours of discussions took place. Opinions from across the country were solicited and received.

The Uniform Numbering System Workgroup is chaired by:

Joan McCalmant (Recorder, Linn County, IA), Government Co-Chair and

Jeff Carlson (IndeComm Global Services), Business Co-Chair

PRIA sessions where these topics were discussed include:

- March 2011, Washington, DC
- September 2011, San Antonio, TX

Drafts of this paper were distributed on:

- December 7, 2011

Appendix A – RJID For Existing Recording Jurisdictions

The full list of RJID for existing recording jurisdictions is available on the PRIA website at the following URL:

http://www.pria.us/files/resource_library_files/Business_Processes_and_Procedures/RJID_Codes_spelling_updates_09_16_2015.pdf