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### **REGISTER OF DEEDS GETS NEW COMPUTERS AT NO EXTRA COST TO THE COUNTY**

Macomb County Clerk – Register of Deeds Carmella Sabaugh announced her Register of Deeds office has received and installed new computer equipment to process real estate documents, such as deeds, mortgage refinance paperwork and other documents, at no extra cost to county taxpayers.

“Over a decade ago, using state-of-the-art equipment we were the first in Michigan to computerize our Register of Deeds. But new computers are like new cars – as soon as you get them from the dealer their value decreases. I chose a system that would benefit our county for the long term, by making sure from the start that updates are included,” said Sabaugh. “I am pleased that we again have state-of-the-art equipment and that we are using it to benefit county residents at no additional cost.”

The new Register of Deeds equipment includes 31 personal computers and 31 flat-panel liquid crystal display monitors - equipment that would have cost approximately \$50,000.00 if the county had purchased it this year. The equipment was installed over approximately 2 ½ days and the office stayed fully operational during the entire process.

When the system was implemented, Sabaugh negotiated a per document fee to be paid to the equipment vendor, rather than a large sum to be paid up front. This made sure the vendor had a vested interest in providing good service after the system was installed. The fee covers all software and hardware updates and staff training, including the recent improvements.

The equipment vendor chosen by Sabaugh is Affiliated Computer Services, Inc., America’s Largest Land Records Company with headquarters in Syracuse, NY. ACS is unique in offering equipment, service and support under an all-inclusive service contract, requiring no capital investment and no purchasing, insurance, maintenance, upgrading or replacement worries on the part of the county.

The Macomb County Register of Deeds office processed 1,471,819 pages in 2002, compared with 1,167,640 pages the year before, a 26% increase. In 1995, the office processed only 329,007 pages. The office makes a digital scan of each document that is filed. Sabaugh attributes the increased workload to rapid development in the northern end of the county and the high volume of mortgage refinancing currently taking place. Sabaugh’s office was able to dramatically increase production without a dramatic increase in permanent staff by using technology. Last year, in addition to using a state-of-the-art system, Sabaugh used additional temporary employees and some staff overtime.

“Like any other tool, computers can make things better or worse depending on how they’re used,” said Sabaugh. “The way we’re using computers in the Register of Deeds office has definitely made things better. I will be announcing more good news about our office soon.”

As Macomb County Clerk – Register of Deeds, Sabaugh was the first county clerk in Michigan to:

- Use computerized scanning for the register of deeds.
- Accept credit card payments.
- Provide a toll-free 24-hour fax-on-demand system to provide forms and information.
- Provide overnight delivery service for birth certificate requests and other vital records
- Provide assumed name business registrations and death records on the Internet.
- Start a Personal Protection Order Assistance Center to help victims of abuse
- Enable the public to initiate an automatic phone call from the clerk's web site
- Enlist local amateur radio operators to relay election results on election night.

She has also utilized local community programs such as Green Thumb, Macomb Academy and Cross Roads that provide workers to her department at little or no cost to the county.

Editor's note: Clerk Sabaugh is available for a photograph in front of the flat-panel displays and other new computer equipment at the Register of Deeds office, Second Floor, 10 North Main, Mount Clemens, MI 48043.