



REGISTER OF DEEDS

VITAL to Wisconsin's Citizenry

—Kyle J. Franson, Wisconsin Register of Deeds Association, President & Oneida County Register of Deeds; Staci Hoffman, Jefferson County Register of Deeds; Sharon Martin, Washington County Register of Deeds

The Register of Deeds (RODs) was established in 1836 and the Wisconsin Register of Deeds Association (WRDA) was formed on June 4, 1918. One of the first objectives during that WRDA meeting was to create uniformity with real property forms and documents.

A resolution was presented to standardize forms and create better efficiencies in the office of the Register of Deeds. WRDA is known nationally as a leader in standardization and progressive thinking.

Since that first meeting in 1918, WRDA continues to be active finding ways for the offices to be more efficient, help constituents, use technology, and continue moving forward. Whether it is pursuing or supporting new legislation or working to revise and update old statutes, this association is active and vocal helping the public and representing our offices.

Fast forward 102 years and more than a year since COVID-19 started. Unknowingly, Wisconsin RODs have been preparing for a pandemic for years by electronically recording documents, back indexing and scanning historical records, and basically, told the industry to “bring it on!”

While RODs have always known they are a key component to the local economy, others quickly realized this during the pandemic. Throughout the years, RODs have worked hard to support business partners with providing online information and services using Land Records Modernization funds collected through recording fees. The foresight to use technology helped keep the wheels of the real estate market moving by providing a steady source of revenue for counties and the state.

Although electronic recording is not new, the pandemic made it a necessity for many counties and business partners. Thankfully, the WRDA was progressive enough to ensure all 72 counties were eRecording before the pandemic hit. Many counties are recording 70-90% of their docu-

ments electronically and are experiencing efficiencies in processes and a savings in staff time and materials.

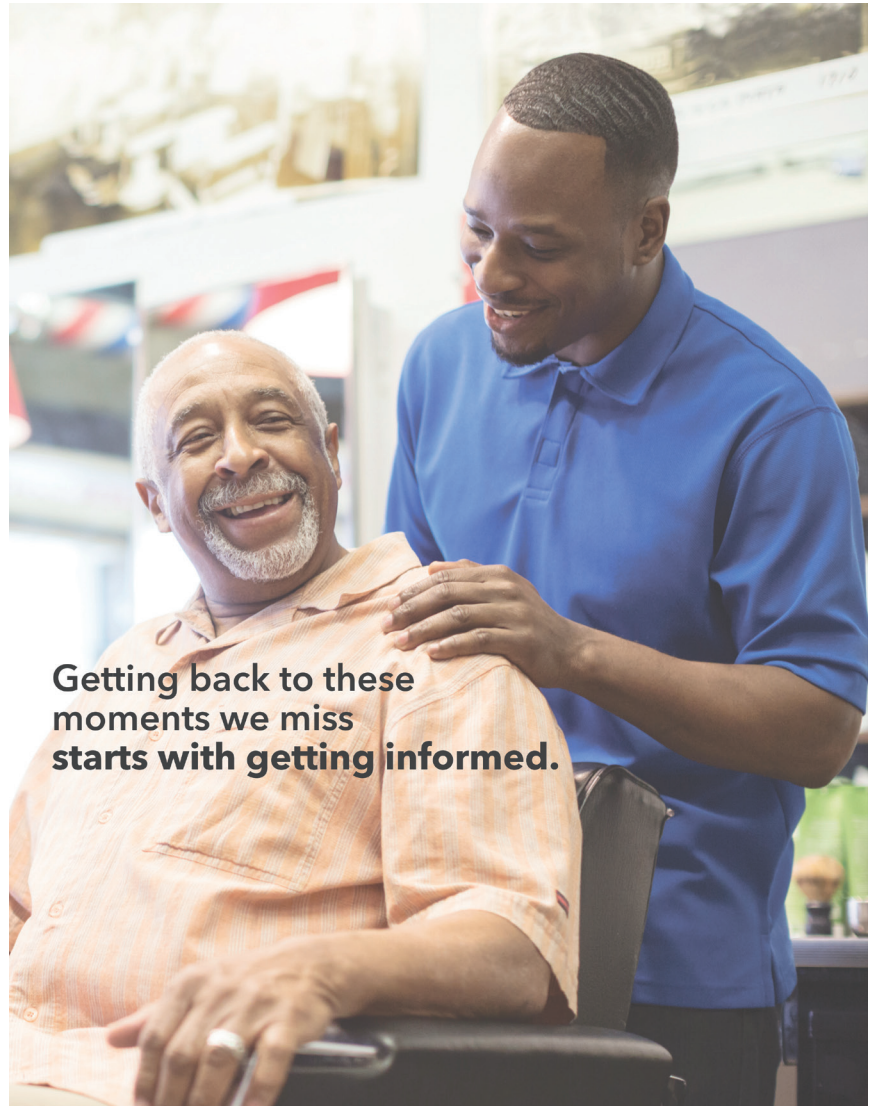
The Federal Real ID requirements have been extended and will go in effect May 3, 2023. The *Wisconsin Counties* magazine covered these requirements in the March 2021 issue. Any person boarding a plane or entering a federal building must have a Real ID. The WRDA actively pursued and lobbied for legislation in 2015 that enabled statewide issuance of vital records. This option provided convenient access for constituents to visit their own county ROD office to obtain the documents required for a Real ID.

Privacy, identity shielding, and protecting citizen information is a hot topic that the WRDA is proactively watching on both the local and federal level. As Wisconsin public record custodians, RODs have engaged in discussions with various state and national real

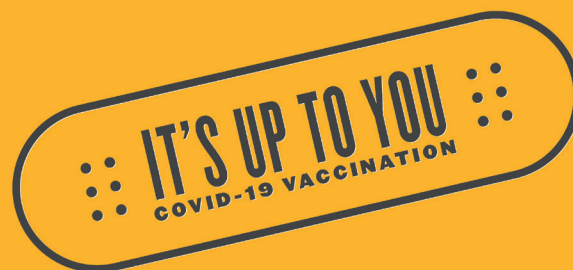
property associations as well as the Department of Justice. The records within the ROD's office are used by many different entities both internally and externally, but this proposed legislation is bigger than their office – it includes all government agencies that provide public records.

As a member of the county family, the WRDA actively monitors legislation that affects not only the ROD's office, but other legislation that may affect the county as well. WRDA is focused on ensuring that constituent's needs are met while helping the legislators understand the impact and reality with the implementation of legislation. WRDA prides itself in being a proactive association and believes that education, involvement, and partnership building are the keys to ROD's success.

Celebrating 103 years as an association on June 4th, our predecessors had great ideas and vision about how this office should move forward. WRDA has covered a lot of ground and continues to be an active and proud association. We will carry on, work for constituents, and be forward thinking for our own offices and our counties. ♦



Getting back to these moments we miss starts with getting informed.



Get the latest information about COVID-19 vaccines at [GetVaccineAnswers.org](https://www.getvaccineanswers.org)