



Recorder heading into Digital Age

By Sarah Lunsford

The Calaveras County Recorder's office will step firmly into the Digital Age when it converts an old data file system to a new digital microfilm retrieval library.

"This a faster, easier, better way to access information," said Karen Varni, Calaveras County Clerk Recorder.

The Board of Supervisors approved the conversion of the record-keeping system through a contract between the county and BMI imaging Systems of Sunnyvale to transfer data collected before 1995 to a Digital Reel image library.

Usually this type of product purchase would be bid out to the public, but, because of the proprietary nature of the product, BMI Imaging is the only company that can provide the product that will fit the county's needs.

The cost of the conversion should not be more than \$60,000, which will come from the Recorder's Microfilm Designated Fund.

According to the Recorder's Office, official records have been preserved from 1950 to 1995 through the use of a variety of media, including microfilm and microfiche, with microfilm being on rolls of film

and microfiche being cards with the data stored on them. Because of this difference in data storage, the office has to maintain multiple types of equipment so the public can access the data.

The types of records that are often accessed from this old file system include land titles and old mining claims, Varni said.

In 1995, Varni said she began a data storage conversion in the office, through the implementation of an integrated computer-based data storage system. Since that time, records are scanned into a computer system and indexed, allowing members of the public to search for records by name on a PC, then print the records for their use.

According to Varni, the Digital Reel image library and the post-1995 computer based data storage system will not be integrated but will be located in one area in the Recorder's Office. Although the data storage systems will be different, the public will be able to access both pre-and post-1995 records from PCs.

According to the agreement between Calaveras County and BMI, the company will be responsible for the transfer of

records from the microfilm pool to the Digital Reel image library. The Digital Reel will contain information from about 800 rolls of microfilm.

To facilitate use when the transfer of data is complete, the software marks, in sequence, the documents in the Digital Reel image library so that each document can be easily retrieved and printed out. Users can print out one of multiple pages according to their needs.

For archival purposes, the pre-1995 rolls of film will be stored in a secure offsite location, along with the post-1995 rolls that are generated for that purpose by the current computer imaging system.

Varni said the office is hoping the conversion does not prove to be a long process and should be completed in about four months.

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