



## **Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder (Aspen, Colorado) Leverages BMI's Digital Reel Microfilm Scanning Solution**

*Fast, inexpensive microfilm scanning solution gave Pitkin County digital access to over 100 years of historical, recorded documents within a few weeks*

Sunnyvale, California - June 9, 2011 - BMI Imaging Systems, a leading provider of document management and microfilm scanning solutions, announced that Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder (Aspen, Colorado) is using BMI Imaging's Digital Reel as its microfilm scanning solution. The Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder's Office is dedicated to providing citizens with easy access to public records. Although Pitkin County archives records from 1977-present in a digital recording system, legacy County records prior to 1977 were archived in two rooms on a combination of books and microfilm.

Any time a citizen needed a pre-1977 record, historical books and microfilm had to be accessed. It was a time intensive process for not only the general public, but also the Pitkin County staff. Pitkin County had been systematically digitizing the County records and had plans to digitize the records on books and microfilm, but price was always an issue.

Linda Gustafson, Chief Deputy, Pitkin County Clerk and Recorder states, "We continued to re-visit the issue of scanning our older records, but found traditional [microfilm scanning](#) approaches too expensive. " Gustafson continues, "Digital Reel was a fast, inexpensive solution that gave us digital access to over 100 years of historical, recorded documents within a few weeks. Even though Digital Reel is not integrated into our existing recording system, it has proven to be a vastly more affordable solution with immediate payback results.

### **Time-Intensive Physical Book and Microfilm Retrieval Process Before Digital Reel**

Pitkin County's pre-1977 records were archived on a combination of books and microfilm. Approximately 50 books contained the index information and 230 books contained the actual recorded documents. In addition, two, five-drawer cabinets housed the remaining records on film. The physical books as well as the microfilm cabinets were stored in two public research rooms along with two microfilm reader printers and the computer workstations running the digital recording system.

“After we implemented a new online record request system, we saw citizens take advantage of this convenient way to order records by using a credit card for payment,” states Gustafson. “One of our staff’s least favorite activities was trying to locate pre-1977 records archived on the books or microfilm. The books were large (15-20 lbs.) and some were high up on the shelf, requiring a ladder,” continues Gustafson. “Trying to set them on a copying machine was difficult. The microfilm records required dealing with out-of-date reader printers. A staff member could easily find themselves searching for an hour or more.”

### Digital Reel: A Practical, Affordable [Microfilm Scanning Solution](#)

Pitkin County had been looking to digitally convert these records, but cost and budget constraints had been an issue. Gustafson states, “When BMI Imaging introduced us to Digital Reel, we were impressed with its simple, yet practical approach to converting our legacy records. For the first time, we were looking at a solution that would enable us to cost effectively convert our entire physical archive prior to 1977 at once.”

BMI Imaging completed the microfilm conversion at its California facility. Although the book records were used by the public and staff, Pitkin had an archival copy of the books on microfilm that were digitally converted to Digital Reel by BMI Imaging.

Digital Reel converts the entire microfilm roll or microfiche. As a result, all of the images are kept together on the microfilm roll or microfiche – just as they existed in a physical state. “Other scanning solutions we looked at would have dissociated the individual images from the microfilm roll or microfiche. One of the nice features of Digital Reel is that it created a digital, virtual replica of our microfilm rolls and microfiche; we now have a digital backup copy of our records just as they existed on the original microfilm and microfiche,” states Gustafson.

Pitkin County now has Digital Reel installed on several workstations. Pitkin staff and the public can easily access digital microfilm rolls from a computer rather than hassling with books and physical microfilm. “Occasionally, when we try to find a document and it is not located in the exact spot we thought it would be, we’re able to easily scroll back and forth on the virtual microfilm roll to get some context about the information surrounding the record we are looking for. This would not have been possible with another scanning solution,” states Gustafson.

After records are found in Digital Reel, users can enhance an image using the adjustable grayscale feature of Digital Reel prior to saving, printing or emailing the information. Gustafson states, “The only limitation we found with the solution stems from the fact that some of our microfilm and microfiche was very poor quality. Some of our images on microfilm were too poor in quality for the adjustable grayscale to enhance into a readable form. But, overall, the solution has been very well received by our staff and the public.”

## About BMI Imaging's Digital Reel

Digital Reel is a complete microfilm conversion solution. BMI will convert your microfilm to virtual, digital microfilm rolls at one of our secure facilities (optional, on-site option available). The Digital Reel microfilm conversion service creates a digital replica of your original microfilm (or microfiche) - the entire microfilm roll is digitally converted. The Digital Reel microfilm conversion solution includes a software application that emulates microfilm retrieval from a reader printer. Users retrieve virtual microfilm rolls from a PC workstation, avoiding the hassles that come with physical microfilm and legacy reader printers.

## About BMI Imaging

Since 1958, BMI Imaging Systems has been a leader in microfilm scanning, [microfiche conversion](#), aperture card conversion and document management solutions. BMI offers industry-leading scanning products from Canon and the ApplicationXtender document management product line from EMC Corporation. In addition, BMI has developed the Digital Reel microfilm and microfiche scanning solution, which is available nationwide. Today, BMI staff consists of 80 employees, many who have been with BMI for decades. BMI converts an average of 3 million images per month. BMI serves commercial and government agencies throughout the United States and has developed a customer list of more than 2,000 accounts. BMI is headquartered just outside San Francisco in Sunnyvale, California, with an additional production and sales facility in Sacramento, California.

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