

# IMPROVING COUNTY RECORDER, DEALER, AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO IOWA'S BOAT, SNOWMOBILE, AND ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLE (ATV) REGISTRATION PROGRAMS

Concept Paper

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**Goal:** To provide increased county recorder, boat, snowmobile, or ATV dealer, and public access to the boat, snowmobile, and ATV registration information which will provide improved services to Iowa's local governments and citizens.

**Project Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to increase county recorder, dealer, and public access to the 516,509 (boats = 331,034; snowmobiles/ATVs = 185,475) boat, snowmobile, and ATV total public registrations maintained on the Department of Natural Resources' Mainframe database. Being able to verify that the public person has a current registration is critical in order for the county recorder to issue a renewal, transfer, or duplicate registration for any one of the three programs.

This will be accomplished by developing a web front end for an existing Mainframe database, which contains the registration data. Web access will be provided for three user groups – 99 county recorders, 1,500 dealers, and the public. The county recorders, dealers, and public would be able to view each registration to ensure pertinent information required for renewal or transfer is available.

The Department would also be open to reviewing or possibly using the functionality of a system previously developed by Iowa Interactive for the Polk County Recorder's Office for renewal registrations. The Department would like for the 99 county recorders to interface with our existing system or a redesigned one and updated automatically in real time. Enhanced forms could be designed to print the registration and decal in the

county recorder office. There would be considerable cost savings in terms of data entry by Iowa Prison Industries (IPI) and less staff time; both to the Department and county recorders and it would be an added benefit to the public.

**Background:** The Department administers and has supervisory oversight of the Boat, Snowmobile, and ATV Registration and Titling Program. They are programs designed to issue new, renewal, duplicate, and farm use registrations and titles for the approximately 500,000 plus boats, snowmobiles, and ATVs registered in the state of Iowa.

Currently, the only way county recorders, dealers, and the public can gain access to the registration is to call the office of the Department and verify the registration information contained in the database. The Department currently handles anywhere from 100 to 300 telephone calls daily just to verify registration information from the database. The two staff (plus a temporary and two backups) of the Boat, Snowmobile, and ATV Registration Program handle the calls, verify the registration information, sort the registrations manually, send to IPI for data entry, proof the registrations, and issue renewal notices to the dealers and for public information. There are three renewal periods, the snowmobile and ATV renewal is yearly and the boat renewal period is every two years (until 2007, which renewal goes to a three-year period).

The county recorder offices are not linked to the Department of Natural Resources' Mainframe database so therefore must make calls daily to verify information. Access to the public information is slow and inconvenient. Sometimes there are so many calls that the county recorder must leave a voice mail message and be called back, while the customer is waiting. The registration renewal manual process is time consuming and costly for both the Department, the county recorders, and dealers.

The Department is proposing to enhance web access to provide the following in three stages:

The first stage would include Web posting of the existing Boat, Snowmobile, and ATV Registration Mainframe database. This would be in a read-only format, with updates occurring quarterly. The updates would be quarterly due to IPI entering information three to four months behind the registrations coming into the Department, being sorted, and sent to IPI. The web page would include a search function where the county recorder, dealer, or public can search by the registration number, county, serial number, or name. The county recorder could then review the registration before finalizing the renewal, duplicate, or transfer. The dealer could verify an existing registration before taking in a machine on trade because current law requires the registration to be current before trading into a dealer.

**Request:** \$\_\_\_\_\_ for planning phase of this project.

**Cost Avoidance:** Once the database is fully implemented, it is estimated that at least \$134,000 of taxpayer money could be saved annually from reduced telephone calls and

problems encountered by the county recorders and Department staff because of registrations being issued in error because of not having the database information available. (Cost was figured using four administrative assistants taking 100 days daily each and totaled at the entry level per year salary.) Problem resolution is the highest work priority of two staff plus two backups spending approximately four hours daily on resolving the issues due to the counties not having access to the database.

**Project Funds:** The Department intends to come back to the Council and request to add a second stage of Internet-based on-line boat, snowmobile, and ATV registration renewal for the public in each of the county recorder offices. This would include an application printing of the registration and decal in the county recorder office. There would be estimated cost savings of \$5,000 monthly for data entry currently being done by IPI because the county recorder would automatically update the database while issuing the registration.

The Department also intends to add a third stage to enhance the site by adding Internet-based dealer renewal, electronic dealer reporting, and electronic forms used by both the county recorder and dealer in registering. Having electronic reporting and electronic forms available would save the Department staff from having to mail hundreds of forms ordered by the county recorders and dealers annually for use in the program.

**Interested Parties:** Parties interested in this project include the following:

All 99 County Recorder Offices  
Iowa State Association of Counties  
All Boat, Snowmobile, and ATV Dealers  
General Public  
Department of Natural Resources  
Law Enforcement Officials

**Some of the Recipients of this Service:** Department of Natural Resources, general public, county recorders, dealers, and snowmobile and ATV sponsor groups such as the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council (NOHVCC), the Iowa State Snowmobile Association, and the Iowa Motorcycle Dealer's Association.