

# LEGACY PROJECT

## Services

# Cochise County Recorder

*“Committed to Excellence”*



# Cochise County Recorder Services



## Introduction



The Cochise County Recorder operates two separate and distinct divisions: Recording Department and Voter Registration Department. Each department offers public services that are strictly governed by state law. Therefore, Recorder staff is obligated to perform only those duties that are specifically statutorily mandated. This presentation provides a basic overview and cursory explanation of services currently the responsibility of the Recorder.

# Recording Department

## Customer Base



The Recording Department serves a myriad of customers over-the-counter, by e-mail, by telephone, by courier, by electronic submission, and through the U.S. Postal Service. Fed-Ex and UPS pick-up and deliver documents daily. In general documents are submitted for acceptance for inclusion in the public record. Customers who primarily record documents include individuals, title companies, lending institutions, attorneys, surveyors,

land developers, utility companies, governmental agencies and realtors in addition to miscellaneous corporations, companies, and partnerships. Although recorded documents primarily relate to real estate, there is a significant number of unpatented mining claims and related documents recorded each year by companies and individuals. Oil leases submitted by oil companies are also part of the public record.

## Primary Services

The Recording Department's primary service consists of determining the correct statutory recording fee and accepting an original document for recording either in hard-copy format or electronically, known as e-recording. The document is deemed recorded upon acceptance. After application of electronic documentation that includes the recording data, the document is receipted, scanned and returned to the over-the-counter customer. If submitted by the U.S. Postal Service, the document is processed in a similar manner and returned to the requesting party via USPS. There are ever-increasing numbers of documents submitted for recording electronically, an entirely paperless procedure. State law continues to require microfilming as the only currently proven archival process. The Cochise County Recorder archives computer-generated microfilm of all documents. Scanned documents from 2003 forward are available in the office and to subscribers off-site.



## **Services to Cochise County Assessor**

A vital function of the Recorder's Office consists of electronically transporting all documentation recorded that transfers property ownership or any changes thereof to the Assessor. The Assessor fills the key responsibility of maintaining ownership records along with many other complex and varied responsibilities. The Assessor provides information to the County Treasurer for tax collection purposes.

## **Services to Other County Offices**

The Recorder's Office provides services and assistance to other county offices when necessary and as requested. Other offices may request copies or research.

## **Regular Services Offered**

A common daily request addressed to staff is a request for a copy of a deed or other document. Sometimes the request is made by a property owner who does not have recording information. Staff accesses the information by computer, if recorded after July 1985, or by searching in the older hand-written indices. The office is also host to company-contracted or governmental researchers who use the public computers and reader-printers to access and copy documents. In addition, various companies regularly correspond with the office and submit requests for copies usually needed by lending institutions and utility companies. Staff makes and sends document copies in the manner requested: e-mail, fax, USPS, Fed-Ex, UPS, or courier. Statutory fees are collected by check, cash, credit card, or debit card.



## Additional Services Required

The Recorder is required to redact personal data such as social security numbers from the public record. These numbers may appear on a death certificate recorded to terminate joint tenancy ownership or on some other document. Military discharge records are no longer available to the general public but only to persons allowed by law to acquire copies along with the ability to produce acceptable identification. Some categories of individuals including those in law enforcement, judicial field, or victims of domestic violence may acquire an official redaction order through the Superior Court so that their recorded documentation cannot be accessed by the general public.

## Services Provided For Researchers



The Recorder is proud to facilitate access for research purposes to the older Cochise County Records that contain fascinating evidence of the exciting history of one of the American West's most intriguing areas. Many books, articles, movies, and public presentations have resulted.

## Miscellaneous Services

The Recorder provides certified copies of recorded documents that are signed and sealed as required by law and for a legally designated fee. Notary services are provided at no charge.



## Speaking Opportunities

The Recorder offers to speak to organizations about the duties of the office and the history of the county as reflected through the records.

# Voter Registration Department

The Voter Registration Department coordinates closely with the Cochise County Elections and Special Districts Department. Many members of the Public seem to be unaware that there are two departments that play a major role in the election process.

## Voter Registration

The most basic service provided involves voter registration itself. The office provides voter registration forms that are widely dispersed to public places such as the U.S. Post Office and the Arizona Department of Economic Security. The Arizona Department of Transportation's Motor Vehicle Division offers voter registration services as part of the now Federally-sanctioned "Motor-Voter" law, which was enacted to make voter registration services more universally available. The Voter Registration Department issues Voter ID Cards.

The Voter Registration Department works closely with the political parties making sure that their offices and precinct workers are fully supplied with forms and are aware of any new regulations. Individuals may acquire voter forms and assist in registering voters. Years ago and for decades prior only the Recorder, Deputy Recorders, trained Voter Registration Officers, and Justices of the Peace were permitted to register voters. Currently, the most common method of registering to vote is on-line.



Register to vote online:

[www.azsos.gov](http://www.azsos.gov)

**ARIZONA VOTER REGISTRATION FORM**  
**FORMULARIO DE INSCRIPCIÓN DE VOTANTE EN ARIZONA**  
 INSTRUCCIONES EN ESPAÑOL SE ENCUENTRAN AL REVERSO

**Questions?** For questions regarding voter registration, call your County Recorder listed on the back of the form.

**You Can Use This Form To:**

- Register to vote in the state of Arizona
- Let us know that your name, address or party affiliation has changed

**To Register To Vote in Arizona You Must Qualify:**

- Be a United States citizen (see citizenship requirements on back)
- Be a resident of Arizona and the county listed on your registration
- Be 18 years of age or more on or before the day of the next regular General Election

**WARNING: Executing a false registration is a class 6 felony**

**You Cannot Register To Vote in Arizona If:**

- You have been convicted of a felony and have not yet had your civil rights restored
- You have been adjudicated incompetent

**How To Register To Vote:**

- Your city, town or precinct office will mail you a proof of registration within 4 - 6 weeks
- Your County Recorder's office will mail you a proof of registration within 4 - 6 weeks
- Your decision to register to vote or not, and where you submitted your registration, will remain confidential

**Registration Received By Mail:**

- In the case of registration by mail, a voter registration is valid if it complies with either of the following:
  - The registration is dated 29 days or more before an election and is received by the County Recorder by first class mail within 5 days after the last day to register to vote in that election
  - The form is postmarked 29 days or more before an election and is received by the County Recorder by 7 p.m. on the day of that election.

**Citizens With Disabilities May:**

- Contact the County Recorder/Elections Department for information about early voting or any voting accommodations.

**If you are not a citizen of the United States or will not be 18 by the next General Election, do not complete this form.**

**USE BLACK PEN - COMPLETELY FILL OUT FORM "USE PLUMA DE TINTA NEGRA - LLENE EL FORMULARIO COMPLETAMENTE"**

**DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES**

**(1) Are you registered to vote at another address? Yes  No  Not Sure**

List the former address, including county and state

**(2) Last Name** First Name Middle Name Jr./Sr./III

**(3) Address where you live** - If no street address, describe residence location using mileage, cross streets, parcel #, subdivision name and lot, or landmarks. Do not use post office box or business address. Draw a map below if located in rural area. (4) Apt./Unit/Space No.

**(5) City** **(6) County** **(7) Zip** **(8) Address where you get your mail** - if mail is not delivered to your home

**(9) Birth Date (Month/Day/Year)** **(10) State or Country of Birth** **(11) Telephone number** **(12) Father's name or mother's maiden name**

**(13) AZ Driver license number or AZ Nonoperating license number** **(14) Last four digits of social security number** **(15) Optional Tribal Identification Number**

**(16) Specify Party Preference** **(17) Occupation** **(18) If your name was different the last time you registered, list former name** **(19) Alien Registration Number**

**(20) Will you be willing to work at a polling place on election day? Yes  No**  **(21) If no street address draw a map here**

**(22) Are you a citizen of the United States of America? Yes  No**  **(23) If you checked "No" to either one of these questions, do not submit this form.**  
 Will you be 18 years of age on or before election day? Yes  No

**VOTER DECLARATION** - By signing below, I swear or affirm that the above information is true, that I am a RESIDENT of Arizona, I am NOT a convicted FELON or my civil rights are restored, and I have NOT been adjudicated INCOMPETENT.

**SIGN HERE** **DATE**

**(24) If you are unable to sign the form, the form can be completed at your direction. The person who assisted you must sign here.**

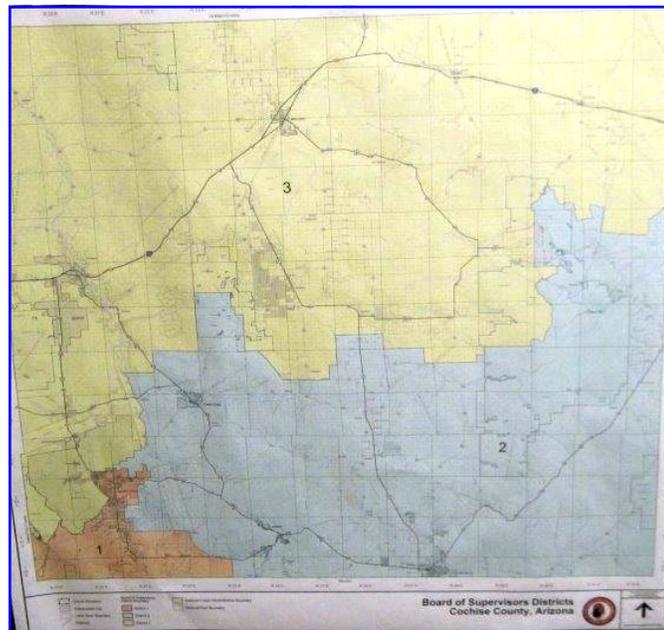
**SIGNATURE OF PERSON ASSISTING** **DATE**

## Providing and Selling Lists

Official political party chairpersons receive voter lists at legally designated intervals in a requested electronic format at no fee by law. Other persons or organizations may purchase lists but must sign a document indicating that the list will be used for political purposes only.

## Jurisdictional Maps

The Voter Registration Department maintains copies of jurisdictional maps for purchase that show boundaries for voting precincts, supervisorial districts, justice of the peace precincts, school districts, hospital districts, Cochise College Districts as well as for other designated voting jurisdictions.

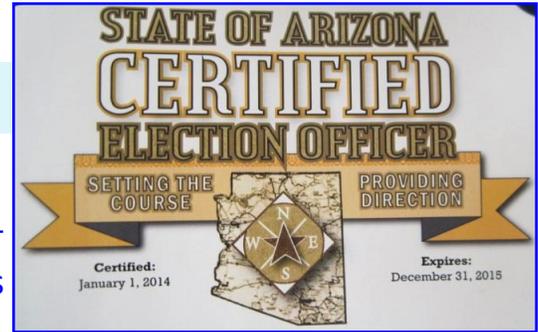


## Service to Other Jurisdictions

The Voter Registration Department maintains voter records for all jurisdictions including special districts, school districts, and municipalities as well as for county, state, and national elections. This indicates that voter lists may be provided or purchased containing voters for any jurisdiction.

## The Arizona Election Official

All personnel charged with any work related to voter registration and elections are required to attend Election Certification classes under the direction of the Arizona Secretary of State and pass the required test. Re-certification is required at intervals set in statute. This requirement ensures that services are solely delivered by knowledgeable staff.



## Working with the Election and Special Districts' Department

Cochise County has an Election Director with staff that operates under the authority of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors. To effectively and accurately carry-out the duties of the election process, it is necessary to develop a very close relationship with the Voter Registration Department. As such the Voter Registration Department maintains a consistent meeting schedule with the Election Director and staff that has resulted in the necessary bonding between the two offices.

## Working with the Arizona Secretary of State

Another important factor in running successful elections involves a close relationship with the Arizona Secretary of State. That office appoints the State Election Director and voter outreach personnel. Attending meetings by teleconference and in-person with the Secretary of State and State Election Director helps develop a clear pathway to helping to guarantee Arizona's and Cochise County's timely and accurate results.

## The Jury List

The Election Department provides a list of voters to the Clerk of Superior Court's Jury Commissioner to constitute one avenue for selection of persons for jury service. The voter and driver license lists are electronically merged; therefore, the result is a fair and random jury selection process.



## Verifying Early Ballots

A service performed by the Voter Registration Department entails examining and verifying each and every signature on the ballot affidavit that is returned with the voted early ballot. This is a gargantuan responsibility and undertaking requiring a knowledgeable and trained staff. Each staff member has attended and passed a signature verification class to be “on-the-ready” for this task.



## Provisional Ballots

The Voter Registration Department handles the responsibility of examining each provisional ballot for verification and decides if the vote should be tabulated. Receiving an early ballot and failing to vote and mail the ballot is the most common reason for voting a provisional ballot.

## Verifying Signatures and Certifying Petitions

The Voter Registration Department verifies signatures on other types of petitions: initiative, referendum, and recall. Initiative and referendum petitions require checking a random sample while recall petitions require a complete check. Nomination petitions are only checked if there is a legal challenge and a court order. The Recorder or a Deputy Recorder may be asked or ordered to testify in regard to signatures in Superior Court.

## Attending Poll Worker Training

In recent years representatives from the Voter Registration Department have attended Poll Worker Training to answer any questions related to their department.

## **Responding to Inquiries on Election Day**

The Voter Registration Department responds to calls from poll workers and voters on each Election Day to address issues encountered concerning the voting process.

## **Involvement in Selecting New Election Equipment and Printing Services**

In recent months the Voter Registration Department, Recorder, and Deputy Recorder participated in exploring cutting-edge technology for election services and provided input in recommending equipment.

## **Selecting Printing and Mailing Service**

Voter Registration Department studied options and met with vendors, in-person and via webinar, and made selection for printing and mailing services.

## **Voter Outreach Services**

Recently, the Voter Registration Department, Recorder, and Deputy Recorder have been participating with the Election and Special Districts' Department in the numerous scheduled voter outreach services whereby new equipment is demonstrated. In addition, Vote Centers and "getting-out-the-vote" issues are addressed and discussed.



**Vote**

## Responding to Media Inquiries and Submitting New Releases

Both Departments administered by the Recorder provide continuing and convenient accessibility for members of the print and electronic media. Informational news releases are featured in local publications.



By Shar Porier

WICK NEWS SERVICE Douglas Dispatch | 0 comments

BISBEE — “I do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the state of Arizona, and I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same...”

So began each of the newly elected Cochise County officials as they took their oaths of office in unison Monday morning in a special ceremony attended by family, friends and county staff.

Superior Court Judge Wallace Hoggatt swore in Supervisor Richard Searle first, who then gave the oath of office to the county’s elected officials.

Searle said the ceremony would be the county’s 32nd swear-in since 1881, based on a four-year cycle of elections.

Included were Board of Supervisors members Ann English and Pat Call, Sheriff Larry Dever, County Attorney Ed Rheinheimer, County Assessor Phil Leindecker, County Recorder Christine Rhodes, County Treasurer Marsha Bonham and County School Superintendent Trudy Berry.

Rhodes was unopposed for her recorder’s seat and is now beginning her 30th year in the position. Others who had no opposition were Rheinheimer, Bonham and Leindecker.

All the county officials will be grappling with their departments’ budgets in the next few months.

## Contact Information

Recording Department- (520) 432-8350

[recorder@cochise.az.gov](mailto:recorder@cochise.az.gov)

Voter Registration Department- (520) 432-8358

[voterreg@cochise.az.gov](mailto:voterreg@cochise.az.gov)

Toll Free- 1-888-457-4513

Fax- (520) 432-8368

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Christine Rhodes

Cochise County Recorder