



2010

Annual Report

Snohomish County Auditor's Office

Maintaining service to
the community through
efficiency and
innovation.



2010 Annual Report

Snohomish County Auditor's Office

Elections
Licensing/Animal Control Services
Recording

Carolyn Weikel
Snohomish County Auditor

To the Citizens of Snohomish County:

I am honored to serve as your Snohomish County Auditor. Thank you for electing me to such an interesting and important county government position. The work involves providing a variety of regional and countywide services to all residents. The Auditor's Office directly interacts with more individuals than any other office in the county.

2010 was an interesting year in the Auditor's Office. The sluggish economy affected some areas of the office with decreased activity while others saw more activity than forecast. In Elections, more people participated in the midterm elections than the county has seen since 1934. The Licensing Division received slightly less revenue than previous years though they kept busy processing more than 300,000 licensing transactions. During 2010, an Animal Control Officer position was eliminated and thankfully there were fewer animal complaints throughout unincorporated county. And the economic recession continued to impact our Recording Division – they recorded the fewest number of documents and received the lowest amount of revenue since 2000.

Through it all, the Auditor's Office staff continued to provide professional and knowledgeable service to our customers. They are a great group of public servants and I am thankful for their dedication and commitment to government service.

The Annual Report provides information on our services, our activities and our accomplishments for 2010. I hope you enjoy reading about us...

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn Weikel".

Carolyn Weikel
Snohomish County Auditor

Auditor's Office Overview

The Auditor's Office provides regional, countywide services in elections/voter registration, licensing/animal control and recording. Although we operate three distinctly different divisions that perform four disparate functions, the Auditor's Office is unified in its mission to provide customers outstanding service from trained, professional staff.

2010 Highlights

- The Elections Division offered on-line candidate filing for all offices up for election in 2010.
- Licensing/Animal Control Services selected and implemented a new cashiering system that creates efficiencies with transactions, data collection and report generation.
- The Recording Division, in partnership with the Treasurer's Office and the Assessor's Office started accepting Real Estate Excise Tax Affidavits and related documents via electronic submission. Snohomish County was the first county in the state to institute this new service for our customers.

The Increasing Role of Technology

The Auditor's Office seeks opportunities to expand the role of technology as it relates to elections, licensing/animal control and recording of legal documents. Technology enhancements in our office:

- provide state of the art ballot accountability and ballot tracking systems
- offer online voter registration services
- provide online candidate filing
- process pet license renewals online
- accept online citizen complaints regarding animals in their neighborhoods
- record documents received electronically
- provide internet access to public records

What our customers say about us:

"Expediently done, good rapport with citizens, great public service."

"Very knowledgeable and pleasant to work with."

"Professional, polite, knowledgeable and precise."

"The staff was very personable, as well as professional, and made a difficult task easier."

Elections and Voter Registration Division

To conduct fair, accurate elections and encourage people to understand and participate in the voting process

Core Services

- Register voters from cities and unincorporated Snohomish County
- Update and maintain state and local voter registration databases
- Remove deceased voters, convicted felons from the voter rolls
- Design and publish the local voters' pamphlet
- Design and layout ballots
- Mail ballots to all eligible voters prior to each election
- Maintain ballot secrecy and security
- Process returned voted ballots
- Count voted ballots
- Publish election results
- Conduct recounts

2010 in Review

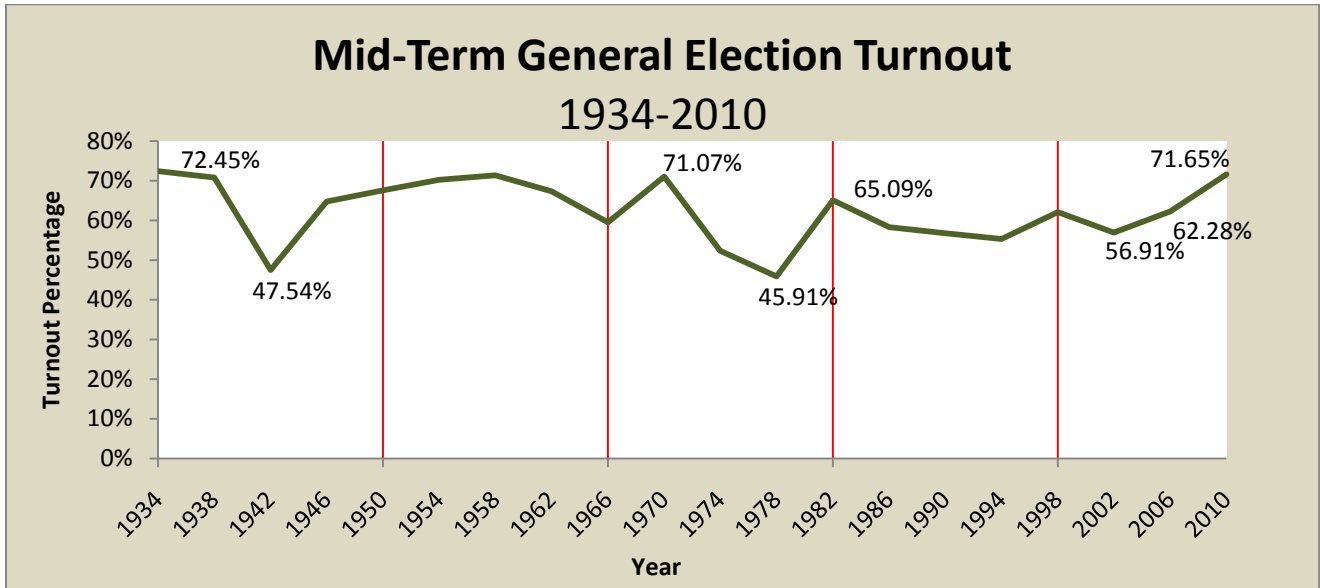
The 2010 mid-term elections had the highest voter turnout since 1934 after record setting turnout in the 2008 Presidential election. Our voter registration rolls expanded to 377,739 voters. A large number of people registered online.

Projects

- **Online Candidate Filing:** After a successful pilot in 2009, the Auditor's Office implemented online candidate filing in 2010, allowing candidates to file for local office online from any computer. Candidates could file for office any time of day or night during the candidate filing period. Candidates received confirmation when their filing was approved and were then able to submit candidate profiles and photos for the local voters' pamphlet online.
- **Expanded 24 Hour Ballot Drop Box:** The Elections Division expanded the number of secure, 24 hour ballot drop boxes in Snohomish County. Unstaffed, secure ballot drop boxes replaced the limited number of staffed Community Collections Centers and provided a unique opportunity to expand 24 hour ballot return services!
- **Email and Downloadable Ballots for Military and Overseas Voters:** The Elections Division offered military and overseas voters the opportunity to receive a ballot via email or to download a ballot from the web. These options allow our military and overseas voters more time to vote and to return their ballot before election deadlines.
- **New Ballot Return Envelopes:** The Elections Division implemented a new ballot return envelope design to improve process efficiency and save taxpayer money. The new envelope is easier to seal, has simpler instructions and saved taxpayers \$48,000.

*"I love working in Elections -
ever changing - ever
improving - always
interesting...and always on
the cutting edge..."*

*Dianna Harper,
Voter Registration Examiner*



Elections

In February, a special election was held featuring 12 levy and 2 bond issues for eight school districts as well as a King County Library District levy for Bothell voters. Voter turnout for the special election in February was 36.51%. Another special election was held in April featuring a City of Everett EMS levy and levy and bond measures for the Index, Marysville and Monroe school districts which resulted in a 33.64% turnout.

Candidate filing in 2010 took place during the first week in June. 102 people filed for federal, state, and local positions (74% men, 26% women). Another 577 people filed for precinct committee officer elections held in the primary.

August 17 was the date of the primary election, in which 375,946 registered voters were eligible to vote. The turnout was typical of a mid-term primary at 38.61%. The general election was held on November 2 and contained 9 statewide ballot measures, a U.S. Senate race, two U.S. House races, state legislative races, state and district court positions, the county prosecuting attorney race and a public utility commissioner race. The turnout was the highest seen in a mid-term election since 1934 with 71.65% of the 377,739 eligible voters participating.

33.38% of participating voters returned their ballot at the Auditor’s Office or at one of eight 24-hour ballot drop boxes rather than through the mail. This was up from 17.65% of participating voters in the primary.

Contact Information	Customer Service Information
Snohomish County Election Garth Fell, Manager 425-388-3444 www.snoco.org/elections	Administration Building West, 1 st Floor 3000 Rockefeller Ave, M/S 505 Everett, WA 98201 Monday – Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm

Licensing and Animal Control Services Division - Licensing Services

To provide licensing services which protect people, personal property and the health, welfare and safety of county residents

Core Services

- Title and license vehicles and vessels in Snohomish County
- Oversee and audit eighteen local vehicle licensing subagents
- License adult businesses and adult business employees
- Permit public events
- License private/commercial kennels in unincorporated Snohomish County
- Issue dog and cat licenses for unincorporated county and for the City of Everett

2010 in Review

The Licensing Division's revenues were slightly less than previous years, though the staff were kept busy processing over 300,000 vehicle/vessel titles and registration transactions in 2010.

Projects

- **New Cashiering System** - The Licensing Division implemented a new cashiering system that improves record keeping, decreases processing time, and allows for better statistical reporting.
- **Cross Trained Staff** – A member of our Recording staff was fully cross trained and passed all requisite exams to work as a certified Licensing Examiner. The staff member now works full time in the Licensing Division, as we shift resources to meet current needs.

*"I love helping people
and I know I am
supported and
encouraged to do so."*

*Susan Patton,
Licensing Examiner*

Washington State DOL Cost Saving Measures

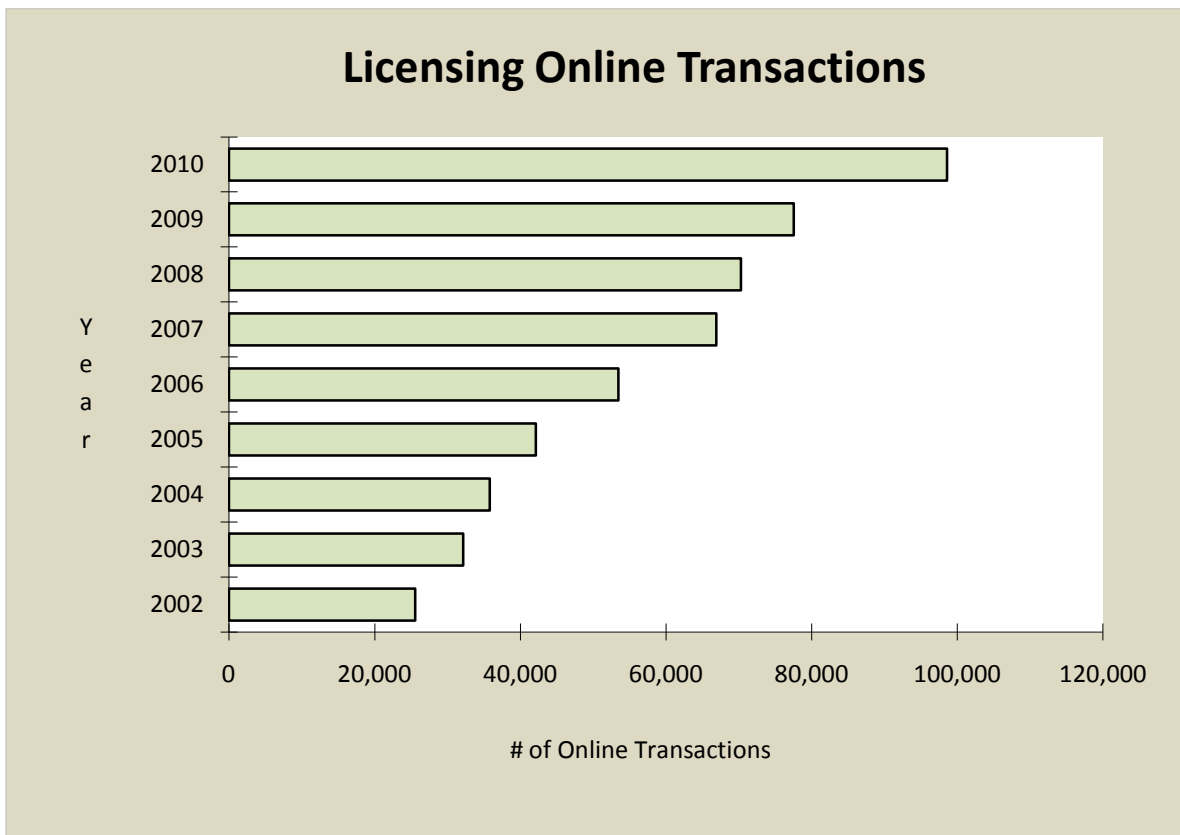
Boat Renewal Notification - As a cost saving measure, the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) eliminated post-card renewal notices for boat licenses. This impacted Licensing staff with increased phone calls and questions from confused citizens who were previously mailed notices to renew their boat licenses. As more cost saving measures are implemented by DOL, we will continue to look for new methods of providing our customers with the information they need to complete their licensing transactions with the county.

Volume of Transactions

The Licensing Division processes a high volume of licensing related transactions each year. In 2010, staff processed 8,109 vehicle/vessel titles, more than 203,000 vehicle license transactions, over 5,600 boat license transactions and close to 100,000 internet transactions. The Division licenses second hand dealers, pawnbrokers, bathhouses and provides public event permits. In addition, the Licensing Division provides administrative support to the Animal Control Services unit relating to pet licenses, kennel licenses, animal related businesses and animal related complaints.

Internet Renewals

We experienced a 27% increase in the number of customers who completed their licensing transactions online. Using the internet for licensing transactions provides customers with more service options. The internet saves time – no need to stand in line to complete your transaction; the internet is convenient – services are available any time of day or night; and the internet is economical – no need for stamps and no need to take a trip to the county campus to complete your transaction. In 2002, when we first made the internet available to our customers, 25,573 customers completed their licensing transactions using the internet. In 2010, 98,587 customers utilized the internet for their licensing transactions.



Contact Information

Licensing and Animal Control Services
Vicki Lubrin, Manager
425-388-3371
www.snoco.org keyword search - licensing

Customer Service Information

Robert J. Drewel Building, 1st Floor Customer Service Center
3000 Rockefeller Ave, M/S 306
Everett, WA 98201
Monday – Thursday, 9:00am – 5:00pm
Friday, 9:00am – 4:00pm
Closed Daily, Noon – 1:00pm

Licensing and Animal Control Services Division – Animal Control Services

To provide services aimed at protecting people and property, controlling animal behavior and guarding against mistreatment or abuse of animals

Core Services

- License dogs and cats in unincorporated Snohomish County
- Return lost pets to their owners
- Investigate animal complaints, dog bites, animal attacks, animal hoarding, cruelty and neglect
- Inspect commercial/private kennels and animal related businesses
- Educate citizens on county code and state law pertaining to animals
- Assist law enforcement to secure animals when needed
- Capture and impound stray animals

2010 in Review

The Animal Control unit responded to over 2,500 animal complaints throughout unincorporated county. Our Officers reunite lost pets with their owners, capture and transport stray animals to local shelters, capture loose livestock, conduct investigations, and issue civil violation notices. In 2010, Animal Control Officers were given the added responsibility of inspecting kennels, grooming parlors, and pet shops due to the elimination of our Business License Inspection unit. In addition, an Animal Control Officer position was eliminated mid-year. Through it all, the unit continued to perform its duties with professionalism and integrity.

The Economy's Impact on Animal Control

As families struggled throughout the county, pets too fell victim to the economy. Animal Control received complaints of pets left behind in foreclosed homes while other pets were surrendered to local animal shelters because their owners could no longer afford them. Animal Control Officers also worked with horse owners who were struggling to provide the necessary amount of feed for their livestock.

"I enjoy both the opportunity of problem solving the challenges I meet in the field as well as the successes I experience when assisting both the citizens of Snohomish County and the animals in their care."

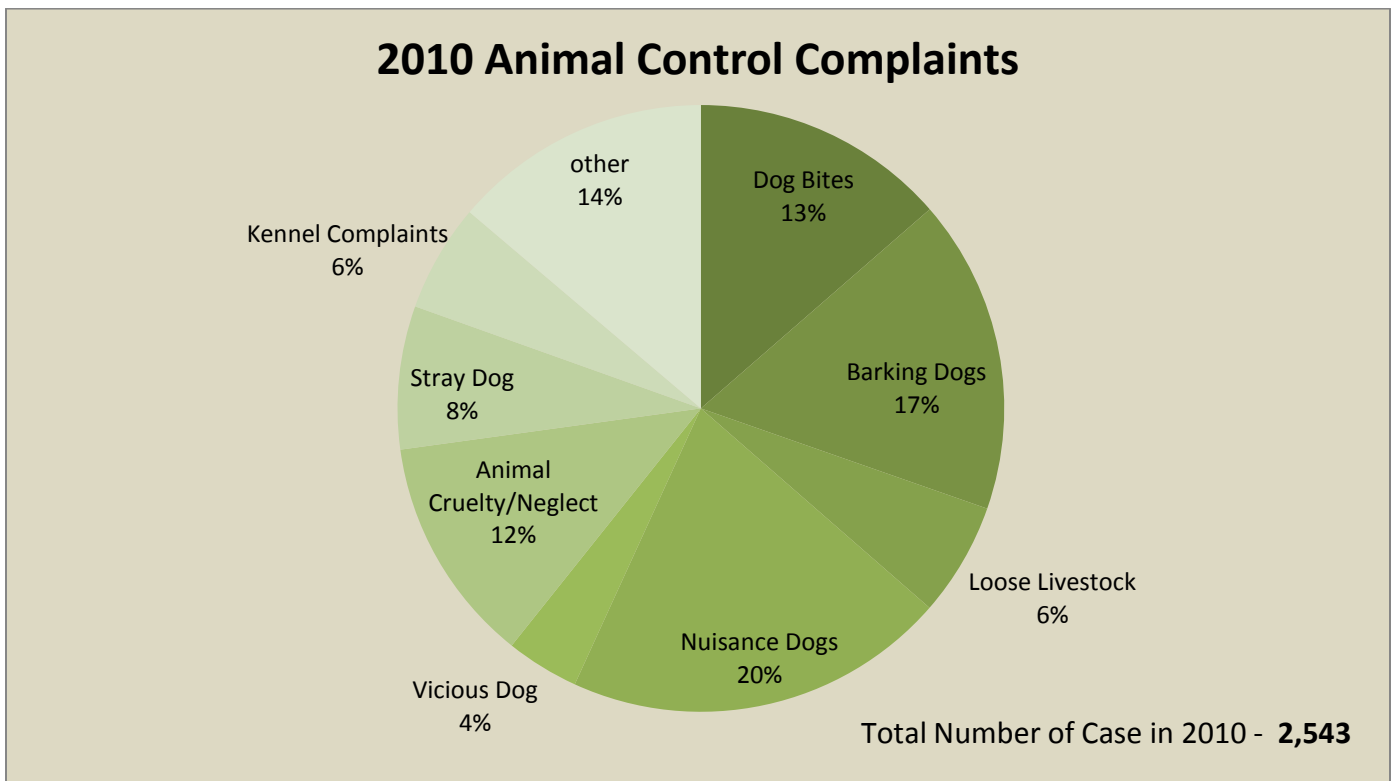
*Paul Delgado,
Animal Control Services Enforcement Officer*

The Role of the Community in Animal Control

The Animal Control Unit's workload is dictated by animal related complaints received from the community. We rely on Snohomish County residents to make us aware of stray dogs and cats roaming neighborhoods, dog bites and attacks, potential animal neglect and abuse, loose livestock, or any other dog, cat or livestock related issue that impacts both the quality of life in our communities as well as the quality of life of animals.

The Varied Tasks of an Animal Control Officer

Each Officer is assigned to a geographic area of unincorporated county. Their days are fast paced, never dull and might include a complaint that two large bovines are traveling west on a busy commuter road in east county, or that a vicious, stray dog is roaming a neighborhood south of Arlington, or perhaps an Officer is needed to testify at an animal abuse or neglect criminal proceeding. Animal Control Officers respond to complex, emotionally charged situations with compassion and professionalism.



Contact Information

Licensing and Animal Control Services
Vicki Lubrin, Manager
425-388-3440
www.snoco.org keyword search – animal control

Customer Service Information

Administration Building West, 1st Floor
3000 Rockefeller Ave, M/S 306
Everett, WA 98201
Monday – Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm

Recording Division

To serve as the official repository and provide public access to all land transactions and contractual documents for Snohomish County

Core Services

- Record paper documents presented
- Process electronically submitted documents for recording
- Index recorded documents for public access
- Make recorded documents publicly available
- Issue marriage licenses
- Help customers search recorded documents
- Provide certified copies of recorded documents

2010 in Review

The economic recession continues to impact the Recording Division. Recording volumes and recording revenue were less than the previous year. The number of documents recorded that were related to refinancing and foreclosures remained strong while the documents recorded that were related to home buying were stagnant. A bright spot in the Recording Division is that more customers are utilizing our electronic recording services – saving our customers time and resources by not having to visit the county campus to record their documents.

Projects

- eREET – Electronic Real Estate Excise Tax: In the last quarter of 2010, Snohomish County became the first county in the state to accept real estate excise tax documents electronically for processing. eREET was a collaborative project involving the Treasurer’s and Assessor’s Offices, the Department of Information Services, and a contracted vendor. Now title companies can submit, pay for, file and record real estate excise tax documents from their business locations – saving time and resources for both the title companies as well as for the home buyer.
- Microfilm Conversion: The Recording Division embarked on a project to convert all official public records that are currently on microfilm to a digital format that will be accessible through the web. The Recording Division has close to 3,000 rolls of microfilm that contain records back to the 1880s. The conversion project will take more than a year to complete, will eliminate the need to maintain expensive microfilm reader machines, and will improve customer access to recorded documents.
- Digitizing Maps: Digitizing maps saves money and time. The Recording Division now partners with the Snohomish County scan center to digitize maps in-house. Previously an outside vendor produced microfilm copies of all recorded maps for the Recording Division. Now that maps are digitized, customers receive higher quality map copies and no longer have to view maps on microfilm readers.

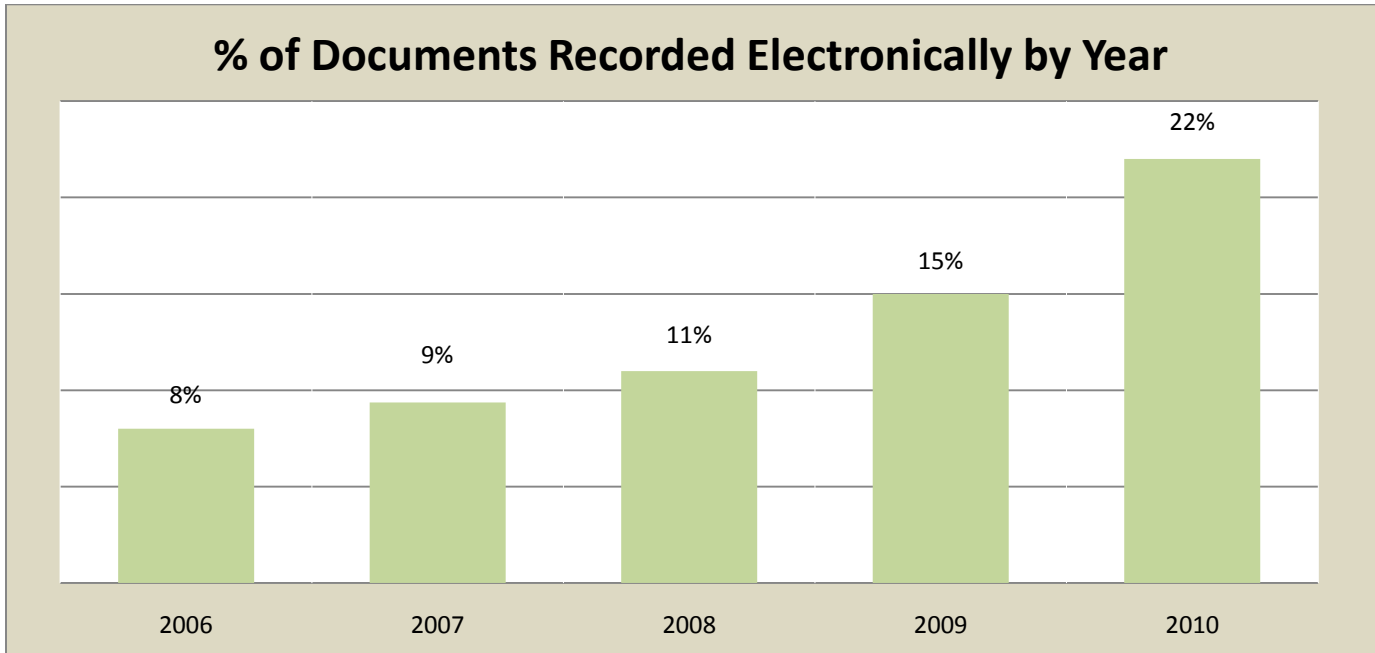
“When a customer looks me in the eye and sincerely thanks me for helping him solve a problem he’s been frustrated with, that’s a good feeling.”

*April Sawyers,
Legal Document Examiner*

eRecording (Electronic Recording)

Snohomish County has been a leader in accepting documents for recording that are submitted electronically. eRecording is quicker, involves no paper, does not require postage, and eliminates waiting in line at the Customer Service Center. Title companies, banks and other similar organizations are the primary users of eRecording services.

Since 2003, the percentage of documents recorded electronically has grown each year. In 2010, twenty two percent (22%) of all documents recorded entered the system electronically – a 47% increase over the previous year.



Customer Service

The Recording Division can assist customers in person at our Recording Customer Service Counter and at our Public Records Counter. In addition, customers can request assistance by phone, email, mail and through our website. Our qualified staff can quickly process documents for recording, can assist customers with document searches both online and on microfilm and process marriage applications.

Contact Information

Recording Division
Garth Fell, Manager
425-388-3625
www.snoco.org keyword search – public records

Customer Service Information

Robert J. Drewel Building, 1st Floor Customer Service Center
3000 Rockefeller Ave, M/S 204
Everett, WA 98201
Monday – Thursday, 9:00am – 5:00pm
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2010 Auditor's Office Facts

- \$7.9 million general fund operating budget
- 51 full-time staff:
 - 4 Administration
 - 11 Elections/Voter Registration
 - 22 Licensing/Animal Control
 - 14 Recording
- Elections: 377,739 registered voters
750 precincts in the county
- Licensing/Animal Control: 307,259 vehicle/vessel transactions processed
17,833 pets licensed in unincorporated county and Everett
- Recording: 206,532 documents recorded
3,812 marriage licenses recorded

Snohomish County Auditor's Office
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3000 Rockefeller Avenue
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www.snoco.org/departments/auditor

