

GREETINGS

As fall rounds the corner, we are pleased to announce that our June 1 acquisition of Block Title, Inc., has progressed smoothly. Both Block Title President, Lawrence J. Block, and Vice President, Deann Zobrak have joined our staff – adding depth and diversity to our professional offerings. Turn to page three for an introduction to Block and Zobrak.

On page three, we profile not only the newest members of our team, but also two of our long-term professionals - Suzy Klimek and Kathy Matsick. Both Klimek and Matsick have an integral role in providing personalized, accurate, individual service in the best interests of you and your clients.

Page three also highlights our first mock closing session for new realtors held this summer. In the minds of most clients, closings are stressful events. It's our duty to assist you with the closing process and serve as a resource for your clients during the procedure. But we feel it's just as important that we assist new realtors by prepping them in advance of their closings. We plan to continue offering this mock closing session as a service to new realtors.

Another key aspect of our high quality service is state-of-the-art technology that keeps you abreast of the latest trends in title policy and ensures you receive precise and timely information. On pages three and four, we summarize our in-house tracking system as well as the option to enter orders via our website.

As always, technology must be partnered with personal service and your feedback. Ask us questions. Tell us what you need to know. This newsletter is meant to be a forum in which we respond to what you need. We welcome your suggestions and ideas for future newsletter topics. Please contact Marilyn Kurtz at marilyn@runkel.com or Larry Block at larry@runkel.com.

Enjoy,

Marv Pilgrim
President,
Runkel Abstract & Title



ACQUISITION OF BLOCK TITLE, INC., ASSETS

According to Marv Pilgrim, President of Runkel Abstract & Title, "Runkel helps industry insiders excel by providing them with as much information as possible about liens and mortgages, ownership, restrictions, taxes and easements. The more informed they are, the better they can perform." This mission is, in good part, the motivation behind the acquisition of Block Title, Inc. "By acquiring these high-quality title companies in north central, northern and western Wisconsin, we have broadened our services and the audience we reach," notes Pilgrim. "Both Lawrence Block and Deann Zobrak have agreed to join our staff and offer their exceptional experience and expertise to residents of northern Wisconsin," adds Pilgrim.

Runkel's expanding client base will benefit from the acquisition as the two new staff members complement the existing long-term, dedicated staff of Runkel. "We're not just here to offer title services," concludes Pilgrim. "Combining Zobrak and Block's experience with that of our staff will give clients the edge they need to succeed in this industry – with timely, accurate answers to any question they may have."



SERVICES OUTSIDE THE WAUSAU AREA

In response to a growing need for title services in northern Wisconsin, Runkel opened an office in Merrill, Wisconsin in June 1995 with John Kratz as Manager. In 1996, Runkel then purchased Lincoln County Abstract and combined these offices with our Merrill office, both operating under the name of Lincoln County Abstract. Today, this office consists of five employees – John Kratz, Sue Yunk, Sandy Toburen, Lynn Kleinschmidt and Nicole Rohde – located at 705 East Main Street.

The office is responsible for searching Lincoln, Taylor and Price counties and offers the following services

- Title insurance
- Abstracts
- Escrows
- Closings
- Letter reports
- Construction disbursements
- Tax-deferred exchanges

No matter where our offices are located, you can order services through any location and ask us to accommodate clients with closing locations most convenient to them.



AFFIDAVIT OF CORRECTION

Until recently, affidavits were used to correct a wide variety of errors. However, a recent Wisconsin Court of Appeals decision now severely restricts the use of affidavits to change or correct legal descriptions and transfer interest in real property. Unless the error does not convey an interest or the missing information is of a non-material character, affidavits should not be used to correct conveyances. It is recommended that a replacement conveyance signed by the proper parties be obtained and recorded instead. Due to this recent ruling concerning the use of affidavits, it is in your best interest – and that of your clients – to contact your title company before proceeding to avoid a potential hitch in the title process.



GET OUT AND VOTE!

Get out and vote! Our annual employee pumpkin-carving contest takes place from October 29 – November 2. Stop in, nibble on some candy, and take a moment to view some of the most creative carvings in town.



OFF-SITE CLOSINGS AVAILABLE

To better accommodate our clients' needs, Runkel arranges closings that can be completed off-site, at a mutually agreed upon location. The closing agents can meet buyers and sellers at selected sites such as the realtor's or lender's office. We determine the locations on a case-by-case basis and schedule the closings to meet the needs of your clients.



SETTING UP A RUNKEL WEB ACCOUNT

Using our website, www.runkel.com, to place orders is not only simple, but it saves you much needed time. Further, our site allows you to reserve a place at our seminars and events, and grants you access to valuable information—everything from product explanations and advance notice of new services, to the comprehensive details of the title insurance process that better prepare you for your clients.

As savvy as most of us are using the web, setting up an account can still be an intimidating task. While the process is user-friendly, we encourage users to contact Larry Block, Business Development, or Marilyn Kurtz, Director of Business Development, at 715.845.4646 for assistance. Further instructions may also be found on our website at www.runkel.com.



TITLE TERROR

Seller identification is straightforward – in most cases. However, as the following true incidents show, identification can sometimes be anything but simple. Only because of observant title agents and closers were potential title claims prevented in these instances.

Misrepresentation.

A closing agent had Mr. and Mrs. Seller – who represented themselves as husband and wife in the closing room signing papers for the sale of a home. Coincidentally, a title company employee who knew the couple, saw their name on the closing schedule and walked over to say hello. As he approached the room, he looked through the glass partition and became puzzled because he recognized the man, but not the woman, in the room.

Without entering the room, the employee turned back and alerted the closing agent regarding his concern about the woman's identity. The closing agent returned to the closing room to ask a few questions. The couple became nervous and left the office.

Misidentification.

A closing agent asked for each seller's identification and noticed that Mrs. Seller was wearing exactly the same outfit she wore in her driver's license photo. This seemed odd, so the closer looked more carefully and noticed that the license had been acquired that very morning. As the closer asked more questions, Mrs. Seller became anxious and revealed the attempted fraud.

Potential implications.

If either attempted fraud had been successful, the new buyers would have been protected by the Owner's Policy they acquired with the purchase. However, each of the real Mrs. Sellers could have submitted a claim to the title company for her half interest in the real estate. Then, one of two scenarios could have played out:

- 1) The real Mrs. Seller would have agreed to the sale and the title company would have paid her the fifty percent she was entitled to.
- 2) The real Mrs. Seller would choose to keep the home and not sell. The title company would pay out the new buyers for the full value of the home, essentially buying back the home for the rightful Mrs. Seller.

The risk of fraud is widespread. To minimize the risk, as closing agents, it is our practice at Runkel to examine identification of all parties to a transaction. Risk cannot be completely eliminated because false identifications do exist, but requiring identification and coupling it with observant closers and title agents can help to reduce title claims.

STAFF PROFILES

KATHY MATSICK



For nearly 20 years, Kathy has multi-tasked, delegated, greeted customers, and organized offices in the Wausau area – and over half of those years have been with Runkel. Kathy is the first face people see when they enter our offices and we rely on her to make a great first impression. Kathy excels at multi-tasking, and is responsible for ordering Special Assessment letters as needed by the closing departments for insured closings. She also assists with

order entry for title insurance, updates customer lists, and orders flood certifications needed to ensure compliance with FEMA regulations. When lenders dispute FEMA's flood zone map, Kathy applies for a Letter of Map Amendment and plays an integral role in working with FEMA, the lender, township, contractor, owner and zoning commission. "After 11 years, I still get excited when I see a customer walk through the door – it never gets old. It's an opportunity to help someone," comments Matsick.

SUZY KLIMEK

In the past 16 years, Suzy has seen vast advances in title technology –especially within Runkel's in-house title plant. Until 1990, Suzy had to walk to the Register of Deeds on a daily basis. Today, she simply clicks her mouse and receives every page of every single document. "We get the full picture now, not just part of



it," comments Klimek. From there, she begins the highly detailed, not-so-simple process of posting all relevant information to Runkel's in-house title plant. She is also responsible for inputting, by hand, all documents from the clerk of courts. "It's a very intense, detailed process that requires me to be extremely accurate. Every day and every document is a new person and I have to undertake a discovery process to search out what is relevant," notes

Klimek. "I love it. I thrive on details and take pride in my accuracy."

LARRY BLOCK

Larry, former president of Block Title, is a welcome addition to our staff. He brings 20 years of title search and examination, closings, and business development experience to Runkel, as well as 12 years' experience in the banking industry. At Runkel, his main focus is business development and serving on the Wisconsin Land Title Association board of directors as the Regional Director for the northeastern portion of Wisconsin. "In making the decision to merge with Runkel, the most important factor was ensuring our existing customers would have continued out-



standing service. We knew Runkel could do that – they provide high quality work in a timely and professional manner," notes Block. "I'm pleased to be part of such an exceptional team and look forward to meeting new customers and sharing my years of experience with them."

DEANN ZOBRAK



Prior to joining Runkel in June, Deann Zobrak served as Vice President of Block Title. Deann began her career in the title industry 17 years ago and during that time she has gained experience as a searcher/examiner, production processor, closer and general office manager. At Runkel, Deann concentrates primarily on closings, but she has begun facilitating searches as well. "I've enjoyed my years in the title industry because I enjoy the intensive,

detailed work and meeting a broad range of people," comments Zobrak. "I've enjoyed introducing my prior Block clients to the staff at Runkel. I have complete confidence that these individuals are receiving high quality service through Runkel, while gaining a decided advantage because of the high tech assets that Runkel can offer. Our in-house services ensure peace of mind for every one of our clients."



IN-HOUSE TRACKING SYSTEM

Need a relevant document from 1927? Runkel has it. Since its inception, Runkel has maintained a library of all industry-related documents – an in-house title plant unique to central Wisconsin. An integral tool for the title plant is our in-house tracking system. Every day, we receive downloads of every single Register of Deeds document and obtain all Clerk of Court records. Ms. Klimek reviews all materials and independently codes them according to our in-house system so that all employees can easily access and track records. Notes Klimek, "This information is used to generate mortgage reports, so I verify everything I receive. I then recode the documents to match our internal numbering system so our searches can easily pull up everything they need concerning an individual and a property – anything that could influence a closing."



THE CLOSING PROCESS

Closings can be stressful for new realtors—when you're new to the process you have questions too numerous to count. At Runkel, it's our job to make you look good – competent, timely and informed. To this end, Runkel held its first Mock Closing course for new realtors in August. The feedback we received was very positive and we are currently taking reservations for the months of October, November and December.

The closing course is designed to

- give you step-by-step instructions on how to prepare in advance of a closing
- explain what parties are present in the closing room and why
- clarify all documents involved and who does what with those documents
- prepare you for the common questions clients have concerning the documents
- define what IDs are valid for the loan process
- instruct you on how to explain the loan documents to clients
- elaborate upon the closing process "wrap up"
- offer you a complete explanation of a title commitment
- provide you with a binder that you can use as a point-of-reference.

Please join us for this free course. Space is limited, so contact Marilyn Kurtz at marilyn@runkel.com, or Larry Block at larry@runkel.com to register. We look forward to sharing our professional experience with you as you make the transition into your new real estate career.



WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING.

Customer. CoVantage Credit Union is a non-profit financial cooperative, owned and operated by its members and managed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Founded in 1953, CoVantage is presently one of the most secure financial institutions in Wisconsin, with offices scattered across northern Wisconsin and Michigan. Currently, the membership base is approximately 50,000, with assets totaling over \$561 million.

In their own words.

On Runkel as a resource. Angela Stephens, Financial Service Officer. "Runkel has been a wonderful resource for us. We utilize their services for our mortgage closings, as well as quick searches on

properties for home equity loans. When we need something expedited, Runkel has always been able to come through for us. Runkel has proven to be very fast, efficient and accurate and the communication between our mortgage department and their staff is excellent, which is very beneficial to our members."

On peace of mind. Sue Janssen, Manager. "The sale or purchase of a home is a high stress event for our members and we do all that we can to alleviate that stress. Runkel is an excellent advocate in this. Not only does Runkel handle the complexities of title searches in a proficient, professional manner, but they communicate with the member to arrange a closing time and location that benefits the member."

On personality. Timothea Fermanich, Commercial Loan Officer. "Not only does

Runkel resolve all title problems that may arise, they actually sit down with our members at the closing and facilitate the closing itself while explaining everything to the member. People are faced with a lot of paperwork at a closing, which can be rather intimidating. But the Runkel staff are so personable, professional, informative and approachable that clients feel secure in the process."

On handling the unexpected. Sue Janssen, Manager. "If something unexpected does happen in the middle of a closing – a change on the behalf of one of the parties – Runkel will make the necessary changes, instantly refax the documents and complete the job when they're supposed to. They are very versatile and competent."



SAVE THE DATE: OCTOBER 11, 2007 ALTA FALL SEMINAR

Not all title policies are created equal, so how do I customize a title insurance policy to benefit my clients?

How do I handle a short sale situation when my seller is over-extended?

Attend our ALTA fall seminar on October 11, 2007 for an in-depth look at how you can tailor title insurance policies with endorsements for items such as zoning and parking. During the second half, we'll discuss closing errors – specifically what you can do if your clients don't have enough money to bring to the closing. The seminar will be held at the Jefferson Inn from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. A full breakfast will be provided.

The presentation will be given by Lisa A. Petersen, underwriting counsel for Chicago Title Insurance Company and

Security Union Title Insurance Companies. Petersen's responsibilities include statewide underwriting for both companies. Ms. Petersen is a member of the State Bar of Wisconsin and the Milwaukee Bar Association. She is also a member of the Wisconsin Land Title Association where she is Chair of the Education Committee and a member of the Board of Directors. Ms. Petersen is the Immediate Past President of the Wisconsin Land Title Association. She received her BA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and her JD from Northern Illinois University and is a frequent lecturer on title issues across the state.

We also conduct on-site seminars, at your request, presenting topics of appropriate interest to your staff.



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TITLE TECHNOLOGY- E-RECORDINGS

The future of document recording in the County Register of Deeds office is E-Recordings. Currently, 7 out of 72 counties in Wisconsin are accepting mortgages, assignments of mortgages, and satisfactions of mortgages for electronic recording.

How does it work? Under the current setup, you download the appropriate county's software and establish a submission fee account for recording fees. Once that is completed, you scan in your appropriate document for recording and email it to the County Register's office for recording. The County Register's office will then review the document, time stamp it, and assign a document number to the submitted piece. The recorded document is then e-mailed back to you, along with the recording information. It is anticipated that all 72 counties in Wisconsin will have the E-Recording capability by the year 2012.

