



Where the Pros Turn for Insight

By Ron Free
Executive Vice President, Property Insight

The requests come in from all over Chicagoland: an attorney has to contact property owners near an address that's undergoing a zoning change; an engineering firm needs to establish property right-of-way before roadwork can begin; a surveyor wants a plat map in Will County.

No request is too arcane—or too urgent—for Property Insight's Xpress Services team.

"We once got a call from a customer who was actually going into surgery," recalled Joe Wasilkus, a 30-year veteran of title research working from Property Insight's downtown Chicago office. "He was being wheeled into the operating room, and he called in and said his search needed to be completed by the time he was out of surgery.

The procedure went well, and his order was waiting for him when he was taken to recovery.

"Customers are often in a hurry," he added. "That they need it yesterday is standard operating procedure for us."

Property Insight is well known as a provider of automated title plants in Greater Chicago. Its Cook County plant is recognized as the official public record, with transactions dating back to 1840. Its founders saved tract book records from the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, records that are preserved today in its downtown office.

Since its formation in 2002, the company has quietly automated and upgraded title plants in nearly 200 counties across the U.S., and converted more than one billion documents to dig-

ital images that can be electronically retrieved. Less known, perhaps, is its Xpress Services team, which each day scours the company's vast electronic and paper repositories to meet customer demand for information to file a lien, confirm property ownership or create a chain of title.

Jeanne Makas and John Barnard work in Property Insight's Carol Stream office, processing requests for eight Chicagoland counties. Jeanne has 15 years of experience in title searching; John has more than 25.

"We work with customers who may not know what information they need to solve a particular problem," said Jeanne. "So we talk it through with them and recommend a solution."

Most requests come from attorneys. One search, according to Joe, is a Zoning Variance Notification list, where a customer provides a property address and Xpress Services provides ownership information within a specific radius around the subject property.

"Attorneys use that information to notify owners that zoning is changing for a particular property," he explained.

For complex searches, the team defers to Norb.

Norb is Norb Tyrus, the dean of title searching in the Midwest. He has 40 years of experience and he works in the downtown office. He has a well-deserved reputation for expertise in commercial property searching.

"Once I got a call from a law firm whose client was in jail," recalled Norb. "They needed a

search completed in order to get him out."

So, Norb and his team went to work, not wanting someone to spend any more time as a guest of the County than was necessary.

Why do customers seek out Property Insight? "We have the most experienced staff in both Chicago and the suburbs," explained John. "Our team knows the areas better than anyone... they know where to find information. They can anticipate if there are going to be problems or difficulties with a search," he added.

Bringing reliable information to bear on a particular need is a specialty of the Xpress Services team.

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Ron Free is Executive Vice President of Property Insight, a division of Fidelity National Financial. You can reach Property Insight at 877.747.2537 or visit them online at propertyinsight.biz.



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