



**CSAC 2020 Challenge Award Nomination
Executive Summary
County Surveyor's Library & Online Map Index
<https://hummaps.com/>**

Overview: : Through staff and Community support the County Surveyor's Office created a library and online map index for access to thousands of recorded and unrecorded maps and survey documents as required by law.

Challenge: To consolidate references and reduce staff time spent on public requests and project research.

Land Surveyors and other Land Development professionals rely on historic maps and references for boundary determinations. Project research is a long tedious process that can take many hours to complete. The County Surveyor previously utilized several small basement rooms and closets to store these documents which were often needed by county staff and the public. Many hours of staff time were spent assisting the public in researching documents. Once identified, retrieving those documents took many hours of staff time as the rooms were scattered throughout the large basement corridors. Once the public determined they needed a copy of a document, copies would have to be made on an upstairs scanner and printer and then the documents were returned to the storage area. Additionally, research could only be conducted by visiting the County Surveyor's Office, which limits the availability of documents for those outside the area. A consolidated reference center and online index was needed to expedite research and reduce staff time being spent on non-billable records requests.

Solution: With no budget and a small staff our resources were limited.

In 2016 a large room adjacent to the Survey Crew office was vacated by the Clerk-Recorder Office of Elections & Voter Registration. Staff obtained permission from the County Administrative Office to occupy this much needed space. Staff immediately went to work modifying the room to make it functional. Staff dismantled old shelves, built new shelves and painted the walls. The consolidation of documents was then completed. Around the same time, a digital index to recorded and unrecorded maps was acquired by the County Surveyor from a local consultant who had compiled the index into a database over many years. The index contains over 15,000 index references with their associated map images in a geographic search format using the U.S. Public Lands Reference System as a grid.

Innovation: Taking it to the next level with community outreach.

Once the documents were consolidated and the index was purchased, two things became apparent:

The first being that there was a lot of extra space left in the room. It was envisioned that the extra space could be a research library and conference room for use by staff and industry professionals. A conference table and chairs were acquired from county surplus equipment. A surplus computer was installed to facilitate research, a large format scanner was purchased, and the Survey Section's large format plotter was moved into the library space. Outreach was made to the local chapter of the California Land Surveyor's Association (CLSA) who donated hand-built book cases made by a local Surveyor. Local Surveyors also donated antique survey equipment to be displayed in the library. They also provided additional flat files for maps. CLSA has been instrumental in helping to secure private collections of unrecorded maps. The Natural Resources Division has added their historical maps and aerial photos to the library archives.

The second being the purchased index was not compatible with the internet. A volunteer noted that the archaic index could be transformed into a web-based research tool and made it happen. The web-based search tool allows a person to click on a document link to view the document online. After the initial success of the transformation to a web based index, the County Surveyor with the help of a Humboldt State University Engineering graduate was able to migrate the web based index onto a more stable and sustainable ADA compliant platform. In addition, the web-based index can also be used on smartphones and tablets in the field which saves time for survey crews not having to return to the office to retrieve documents.

Results: With staff and community support great things can be accomplished.

The County Surveyor's Library and Online Map Index is used by the public and staff to quickly research documents. The online index has been well received by the local survey community, title companies and the public. There has been an immense cost savings in staff time spent on public requests which can now be spent on billable projects.

Replicability: You don't need deep pockets to provide better service.

With a little sweat equity and imagination, even a rural county can provide services that rival those of larger urban counties. The website source code is available to other counties.

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