



Model Digital Government Leadership Award from Granicus

Doug Kelly, Project Manager and Yvonne White, Sr. Business Analysis of Granicus, presented Smith County Clerk, Karen Phillips and Official Public Records staff with the Granicus Model Digital Government Leadership Award.

Doug Kelly spoke before presenting the trophy to say, “Granicus provides technology that empowers government organizations to create better lives for the people they serve. By offering the industry’s leading cloud-based solutions for communications, meeting and agenda management, and digital services to more than 4,000 public sector organizations. So when choosing recipients of this award Karen and her office were among 4,000 Granicus clients and so it a very prestigious award for us to give out. This is Granicus highest honor of excellence for those leading the way in the public sector digital transformation.

I came here in 2014 and was part of the deployment team for the land and vitals software working very closely with Karen and her staff and I have worked with Karen for a long time over the years and she is very active pro-active forward thinking county clerk. I’ve had the opportunity to work with County Clerks from California all the way to Road Island and all the way in between. Karen is very forward aggressive in enhancing her office digitizing old records, indexing old records and I can say it pretty simply that Smith County’s records have become her life’s work which is a very nice thing to be able to say about a County Clerk, so you are very lucky to have her.”



The Smith County Clerk's office in Tyler, Texas began a "scan and return" process when we made Granicus our software provider for our Official Public Records. Granicus' software has allowed the clerks to scan in a customer's document immediately upon approval, stamp the document as "filed with the Smith County Clerk's office", and hand the original back to the customer. Easy Peasy!

Our customers love knowing their document is officially filed, with the original back in their hands; and the process only taking a few minutes out of their day. When documents are received in the mail they are returned to the customer the next day, after being scanned, file stamped, and receipted.

Before Granicus the document would be returned approximately a week later, and now and then they were lost in the mail. The documents stacked up on tables and carts waiting to be scanned, reviewed, an image made brighter or clearer, a label to be printed and attached to an envelope, the envelope stuffed and lastly run through the mail machine to affix the appropriate postage. There were ten full-time clerks processing these documents and the documents would finally be placed back in the mail to be returned to the filer by day five or six.

Utilizing Granicus' software, we have saved time for the clerks, money on postage, envelopes, and labels. Our customers are happy, our clerks are happy, and our office is more efficient than ever before.

Granicus has also provided the County Clerk's office with a tool called [ROAM](#). ROAM (Rapid Online Access Method) is a portal allowing the public to view our Vital Statistics, Official Land Records, and documents having gone through Commissioner's Court. Our customers can go onto our ROAM site from the County Clerk's web page and search for information, pay to print the document, or secure a monthly subscription in order to search unlimited records. Customers can conduct their business from their offices, homes, or from any mobile device with the proper capabilities. Their search time can be from 8:00 to 5:00 or 1:00 in the morning. This has saved time and money for companies and individuals that need to search our records for their business or personal use. Per statute our clerks are not responsible for searching records so having our ROAM site available to the public has given our customers a way to conduct the search themselves, without having to travel down town, find and pay for a parking space, and spend hours at our office searching for their needed document(s).

For several years the County Clerk's office has been offering E-Recording capabilities in our Official Public Records department for attorneys, banks, lending organizations, title and insurance companies. This allows the documents to be electronically filed, saving time and money for businesses and individuals. The County Clerk does not charge a fee for this service, and businesses enjoy scanning the documents in to electronically send to us, thereby never losing sight of the original. The document is automatically "filed" with the County Clerk upon acceptance by the clerk. No more waiting for the originals to get to our office, then waiting for it to be returned. Prior to E-Recording we had several company runners bringing in boxes of documents several times a week. Of course, the runner had this job for a number of years and knew our clerks well so it wasn't just a quick drop off but twice a day it became a walk down memory lane so the runner and the clerk could catch up with what was going on in the life of their friend. Again, moving to E-Recording has sped up the process of receiving and filing the customer's document(s). An added bonus is the companies using E-Recording don't have their employees keeping the roads hot. On the contrary their employees are now in the office doing the work. Their clerk scan in the document *as soon as their customer signs on the dotted line* making the transaction complete. Business owners love E-Recording and so does the County Clerk.

Even though our customers were slightly unnerved at the thought of us changing software vendors, after the conversion to Granicus everyone loved the ease of learning the new application. Additionally, the conversion went off like a dream and there was no data lost. The Smith County Clerk's office appreciates the Granicus software and their Team of good folks who have saved on our expenses at every turn.

*Karen Phillips,
Smith County Clerk*



Granicus Commissioner's Court Presentation

11-6-2018

In 2010, the year before I took office I sat with each clerk to see the procedures that took place at their desk.

Within 90 days of taking office I knew the county needed new software for the Official Public Records and Vital Statistic Dept.

I believed the process for filing instruments in the Official Public Records Dept could be more efficient.

I followed a FILED document from start to finish and it touched the hands of nine (Full Time Deputy Clerks) and was returned to the customer (on average) 5 business days later **and as crazy as it sounds** the process for filing an instrument was in a department that resided on TWO floors (The 3rd floor and in the basement).

I **reviewed** Demonstrations from 13 Software Vendors and **discovered Granicus**. In my opinion, Granicus was the best software for Smith County and is extremely user-friendly. This meant less time training new employees and **happy customers** who dreaded learning a new software.

By switching software vendors a realization occurred. We were seeing an average savings of **\$20,000 a month** in reduced vendor "Support and Maintenance Fees"

With the help of the Granicus Team our paper-based system for citizen filing became a digital one. The Granicus ROAM On-Line access was an **added bonus** allowing customer access to review, and purchase copies

in the privacy of their own homes without traveling to the down-town clerk's office.

As the months passed a revelation of even greater savings was discovered.

We noticed on average, a \$3,000 monthly savings with the purchase of **FEWER** labels, envelopes, & postage.

To give you a visual, in 2010, *prior to my taking office*, the actual expenditures for postage was \$30,300.

In **FY17** the actuals for postage were only \$11,369. This number reflects **Almost** *2/3's less expenditures for postage alone*.

Last but not least, an undetermined amount of man-hours were now available for the department so the deputy clerks began scanning projects to digitize old Birth & Death Records.

I'm honored to receive the "Modern Digital Government Leadership Award" on behalf of my staff who daily do the work for the citizens of Smith County.

Making the move to a better software package wasn't difficult, once I determine it must be done.

Seeing the savings and happy customers was a great reward in itself. **Receiving this award today was never expected** but I'm Over the Top excited to have been selected as a recipient when Granicus considered more than 4,000 public sector organizations across the United States and landed on the Smith County Clerk's Office.

Thank You Granicus for honoring our office and the Deputy Clerks
who daily accomplish great things for the Citizens of Smith County.