

NEWS



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For Immediate Release:

Statewide Electronic Notarization System Launched in Philadelphia

The National Notary Association's revolutionary Program, comprised of the Electronic Notary Seal (ENS) and the National eNotary Registry, powers the Commonwealth's eNotarization system, which will aid economic development and consumer protection.

Philadelphia, PA – Today, the Philadelphia Records Department, Pennsylvania Department of State, the National Notary Association (NNA) and a team of the Commonwealth's county recorders launched a statewide electronic notarization system during an event at the National Constitution Center. The NNA is the non-profit professional association for America's 4.5 million Notaries Public.

“Today’s launch marks the dawn of a new age in records management in our City, in our State and soon throughout the country” stated City of Philadelphia Managing Director, Pedro A. Ramos. “Most importantly, this new system will allow for safe, secure document management while speeding up the process for customers, reducing paperwork and improving the government’s efficiency.”

As official state-appointed witnesses for important transactions, Notaries provide a critical service in protecting the public against forgeries, mortgage fraud and increasingly, identity fraud.

"Governor Rendell and I implemented this initiative to encourage economic development in the Commonwealth by providing a fast, easy and secure eNotarization system," stated Secretary of the Commonwealth, Pedro A. Cortés. "The system permits qualified Pennsylvania notaries public to perform notarizations electronically and securely. We are using the latest technology to help us better serve Pennsylvania consumers while continuing to safeguard important documents and records for accuracy and dependability."

Supported by technology leaders Microsoft and GeoTrust, NNA developed the integral components of the high-security, fraud-deterrent system – the nation's first-ever statewide, operational eNotarization network – that is expected to serve as a working model for the nation.

“eNotarization will change the landscape of county recording and notarization by replacing older business practices and technologies and sculpting the environment with newer and more efficient ones. But security must be maintained and that is why we are so pleased to work with the NNA to develop a secure system,” said Joan Decker, Commissioner of Records for the City of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia’s Records Department has implemented Level 2 ("born paper" and converted to electronic documents) and Level 3 ("born digital" and fully electronic at creation) e-recording in its document recording operations, which places the City at the forefront of cities conducting transactions in electronic space. Among e-recording’s many benefits, are faster turnarounds, internal efficiencies to the Records Department and submitting companies and fewer document rejections that will save time and money.

Philadelphia’s Record’s Department is one of four (counties) in PA that will participate in the PA e-notarization effort through the PA Secretary of State's Office. Pennsylvania is one of a handful of states taking the lead in e-notarization.

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Philadelphia’s Department of Records works to ensure that Philadelphia's municipal records are appropriately controlled and managed. The Department sets records management standards and procedures for all departments, boards, commissions and agencies, and it manages key central recordkeeping operations and services such as the City Archives, the Records Storage Center, the Recorder of Deeds and the Central Reprographics Services. The Department also directs public access to municipal records and establishes and collects fees to cover the cost of providing copies of records. As an agent for the Commonwealth and City Revenue Departments, the Records Department also collects realty transfer taxes and document recording fees. And, as the official City tax registry, the Department maintains the City's real property database and tax maps.

Founded in 1957, the National Notary Association (NNA), a non-profit professional organization, is committed to the professional development of Notaries throughout the United States by providing education, support and advocacy. The NNA educates law makers, businesses and state officials on best notarial practices and leads efforts to make necessary changes to state and federal laws and regulations.

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Pennsylvania Launches Electronic Notarization System to Provide Efficient and Secure Transactions

The National Notary Association's ENS Program, comprised of the Electronic Notary Seal (ENS) and the National eNotary Registry powers the Commonwealth's eNotarization system, which will aid economic development and consumer protection

(LOS ANGELES, California)—January 24, 2006—The National Notary Association (NNA), in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of State and a special team of the Commonwealth's county recorders, will launch a statewide electronic notarization system February 2 at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. The NNA is the not-for-profit professional association for America's 4.5 million Notaries Public.

Supported by technology leaders Microsoft and GeoTrust, the NNA has developed the integral components of the high-security, fraud-deterrent system: an Electronic Notary Seal (ENS) and a National eNotary Registry. As the nation's first-ever statewide, operational eNotarization network, the system is expected to serve as a working model for the nation.

As official state-appointed witnesses for important transactions, Notaries provide a critical service in protecting the public against forgeries, mortgage frauds, and increasingly, identity fraud. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Notaries are important players in the battle against fraud.

Recognizing that consumers and businesses would benefit if sensitive, high value transactions could be streamlined and notarized securely by Notaries using standardized Electronic Notary Seal digital certificate credentials, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania worked with the NNA to create an eNotarization system that would incorporate the fundamental and protective components of notarization, notary seals (ENS) and real time authentication of Notaries (National eNotary Registry.) County Recorders representing Chester, Lancaster, Philadelphia and Westmoreland counties worked hand in hand with the NNA to implement the ENS Program, a secure online web application that will enable the delivery of standardized Electronic Notary Seals to Notaries allowing businesses to develop secure electronic notarization systems for recording electronic documents in the Commonwealth.

“eNotarization will change the landscape of county recording and notarization by replacing older business practices and technologies and sculpting the environment with newer and more efficient ones. But security must be maintained and that is why we are so pleased to work with the NNA to develop a secure system,” said Joan Decker, Commissioner of Records for the City of Philadelphia.

Those who attend the February event will be able to see the results of this effort: a fast, efficient system offering unparalleled levels of consumer protection against fraud and forgery.

“This program has certainly been a long time coming. After two-and-a-half years, we’re finally able to provide an e-commerce solution to our customers,” said Steve McDonald, Lancaster County Recorder of Deeds. “The NNA’s technology and expertise has given us a system that enhances the security of electronic transactions without sacrificing efficiency.”

Businesses and governments nationwide are looking to adopt electronic notarization, and the NNA’s expertise answers this need. The primary goal of the ENS Program is real time authentication of notaries allowing anyone using the system to verify the validity of an Electronic Notary Seal.

In addition to Pennsylvania government leaders, the NNA worked with industry leaders who understand the importance of efficient and secure business processes.

Microsoft, working with the NNA’s eNotarization and Information Technology departments, architected the web-based ENS program and integrated it into secure servers; it is this technology that powers the NNA National eNotary Registry. “Microsoft is excited about teaming with the National Notary Association to create the first system to support notarization of electronic commerce documents in Pennsylvania. This opens the door to significant efficiencies in business process as current technology is applied to the notarization process,” said Warren Lewis, Managing Director of the Banking Industry Division of Microsoft’s Financial Services Group.

GeoTrust, Inc., a leader in digital certificates, whose True Credentials® system will provide the secure delivery of digital certificates to Notaries through the ENS Program, expressed confidence in the ability of Pennsylvania’s eNotarization system to deter fraud and forgery by providing the capability of detecting unauthorized alterations to documents.

“This dynamic new aspect of e-commerce will help Pennsylvania’s Notaries guarantee the highest levels of consumer protection. GeoTrust is proud to be a partner with the NNA in advancing this system through the use of digital certificates,” said Joan Lockhart, Vice President of Marketing for GeoTrust, the world’s second largest digital certificate provider.

Across the country, states are looking to adopt electronic notarization and the Pennsylvania model is garnering interest. “Pennsylvania’s joining the Electronic Notary Seal Program marks exciting and ground-breaking progress in eNotarization,” added Dr. Richard J. Hansberger, the NNA’s Director of eNotarization. “We look at this program as a national model for business and state government and our goal now is to replicate the program in several other states in 2006.”

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About the National Notary Association

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