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Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

ELECTRONIC LAND TITLE SYSTEM SPEEDS ACCESS

VICTORIA – The province has launched a pilot project that will allow land title documents to be submitted online from anywhere in the province quickly and efficiently, Minister of Sustainable Resource Management Stan Hagen announced today.

“Electronic filing benefits British Columbians by providing the professionals they hire equal access to the land title system no matter where they do business,” said Hagen.

The new electronic land title filing system will gradually bring firms online until the system is fully implemented around the province by April 1, 2004, to handle a potential of approximately one million transactions per year.

The first transaction, a mortgage submitted in Victoria, took only 15 minutes from the time the clients came in to sign the documents until they were submitted to the Victoria Land Title Office through the electronic filing system, were assigned pending numbers and the land title office reported back to the lawyer. Overall, the electronic filing system will reduce the time for submitting documents from a few hours or a few days to a few minutes.

“The successful processing of the first transaction is another important step in getting electronic filing online,” said Hagen. “This is part of our government’s New Era commitments to cut the cost of paper flow and to give all citizens and businesses better on-line access to core services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

Under the current paper system, a paralegal has to prepare an electronic document, then prints it out and has it signed by a lawyer or notary. The form is couriered or delivered by hand to a land title office, where LTO staff scans the document to turn it back into an electronic version.

The new electronic filing system streamlines and simplifies this process for many types of documents: The paralegal types in then prints the electronic document, the lawyer or notary signs it, an electronic signature is added, the paralegal pushes a button and the document is electronically submitted directly to the Land Title Office.

The electronic forms are identical to the paper forms currently in use and the business processes are the same for each. Courses are being offered by the Continuing Legal Education Society for lawyers, paralegals, secretaries and other conveyancing staff.

The Law Society of British Columbia certifies the electronic signatures, which will be needed by lawyers and notaries to affix a digital signature to electronic land title office transfer documents, using a secure authentication system.

NOTE: More information about the Electronic Filing System, including an FAQ, is available at http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/landtitle/EFS_web_site/index.htm online.

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Visit the province's Web site at www.gov.bc.ca for online information and services.