

Schaumburg: Acardo keeps promise, saves money

When John Acardo was campaigning for the DeKalb County clerk & recorder position last year, he spoke of modernizing the office and using technology to build efficiencies and save money.

One look at his office's new website – www.dekalbclerk.com – is all you need to see that Acardo is living up to his campaign promise.

“People want their government at their fingertips,” Acardo said this week.

Indeed, a lot of DeKalb County government is now a fingertip push of your computer's mouse away, as the county clerk's website features online forms, the fees for services and data explaining the office's services and how to use them.

Public record, election and government nerds could spend hours on Acardo's website poring through various documents, election schedules, etc.

And this is just the beginning.

At the end of the month, testing will begin on the platform developed to make land records searchable. Acardo is working with the assessor's office and Treasurer Mark Todd to make the clerk's website a one-stop shop for property records.

The office also is working with the group Catalyst, which partners with www.ancestry.com to get genealogical records online. Users would be able to search for free, and they could pay for any record they might want.

Acardo said Cook and Kankakee counties already are doing this and have seen a 40 percent increase in genealogical revenue. In his 2012 budget request narrative, which you can read on the website, Acardo estimated that such a service would net an additional \$4,500 in revenue annually for DeKalb County.

Acardo and his staff also are in the process of digitizing 110,000 vital records – birth certificates, marriage records, death records, etc. Doing so will cut the wait for someone coming to the office to get a copy of one these records from 20 minutes to five minutes.

Acardo's office has done all this while reducing the office's budget. According to his 2012 budget narrative, the clerk and recorder's office proposed budget is nearly 3 percent less than what was requested for 2011. These online efficiencies, combined with staff attrition and cost training, have saved the office money.

And more efficiency in the office gives the staff more time to spend on other projects geared toward increasing transparency and efficiency.

Kudos to Acardo on the advancements made in the office.

