

# Johnston Register Of Deeds Lowers Various Fees

Johnston County Register of Deeds Craig Olive, whose campaign promises centered around a more taxpayer-friendly office, has lowered various service fees at the Deeds office in Smithfield.

Mr. Olive has announced that the \$5 fee for notary certification has been eliminated. Mr. Olive explained that the fee to verify notaries of legal documents can be expensive for individuals and businesses. Mr. Olive also reduced the price of 11 x 17 map copies from \$1 to 10 cents.

"These fees are like hidden taxes," Mr. Olive said in a press release. "I will continue to look at ways to reduce fees in this office to help the citizens of Johnston County."

Mr. Olive has also developed an automated solution for the application of marriage licenses that has reduced staff time required for marriage license applications by an average of 70 percent. Mr. Olive also added a debit system for copies in the office. This system increased the number of paid copies by customers of the office, since all copies were now paid for, replacing an honor system that resulted in a lower number of paid copies. This allowed Mr. Olive to lower fees for copies in the office.

The automation efforts that have received the most positive feedback from the commercial real estate community have been the increases in the amount of digital information available both in the vault and the Internet, according to Mr. Olive.

Mr. Olive used an Automated Enhancement and Preservation Fund to complete back file conversions of historical deed book information. As of March 1 of this year, more than 60 years of data is available to the public both in the vault and remotely over the Internet.

In addition, imaged versions of the index books back to 1940 will be available to the public in both the vault and remotely over the Internet in the near future. The project is scheduled for completion on April 30.

"Mr. Olive's goals are to someday have a completely digital vault," a press release read.