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FRIDAY FAST FACTS

Friday September 16, 2022

A MALWARE MESS FOR SUFFOLK COUNTY AND ALL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

The Suffolk County Government, including the Suffolk County Clerk, has experienced a cyber intrusion including a possible ransomware attack on September 7, 2022. As a result, the Suffolk County Clerk and all their systems are currently offline, including the on-premises intranet systems in Riverhead.

The County Clerk's office maintains all the records required for title searching and recording.

At the present time there is no estimate on when the matter maybe corrected.

As a result:

- The county clerk's records, including the deeds, mortgages, judgments, liens, court filings, and easements and covenants are currently not accessible.
- The county recording departments are not recording documents including electronically filed documents, although they are accepting documents for future recording.

Abstracts, Incorporated is still closing transactions:

- All our underwriters are allowing us to move ahead with closings.
- Each underwriters' conditions vary, but all require a signed indemnity from buyer and seller to the transaction.
- Underwriters may revise their conditions as the situation progresses, as the gap period and current effective dates of the reports become longer.
- Our office pre-pays all New York State transfer taxes upon closing, so no penalties or interest will accrue regardless of the County's ultimate re-opening date.
- We can still search municipal data including surveys, certificates of occupancy, street reports, housing and building violations, tax searches, State UCC's (not County UCC's) bankruptcy and patriot searches.
- Title clearance is not affected by the outages.

What you can do to assist:

On all new orders please supply a copy of the sellers or current owner's title policy. Since we underwrite for all the major underwriters, this will help us expedite future searches tremendously once the county is up and running.

We will continue to update you as the situation progresses. If you have any questions, please contact us at 516-683-1000 or 631-369-0200

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