



# State & Local Records News

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## Legislature reestablishes state Historical Records Advisory Board

**D**uring its recently concluded session, the Alabama legislature passed a bill to reestablish a state Historical Records Advisory Board (HRB). Under guidelines of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), such boards serve as the “central advisory board of historical records planning” in their states. Any state wishing to apply to NHPRC for historical records project grants must have a board in place. Alabama has not had an active board since concluding its Local Government Historical Records Grant Program in 1996.

Unlike our earlier board, the newly created one will be broadly based, with representatives from: the Alabama Association of Municipal Clerks and Administrators, the Alabama Circuit Clerks Association, the Alabama Genealogical Society, the Alabama Historical Association, the Alabama League of Municipalities, the Alabama Library Association, the Alabama Press Association, the Association of County Commissions of Alabama, the Birmingham Civil Rights Museum, the Black Heritage Council, the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries, the Probate Judges Association, the Society of Alabama Archivists, the Sons of the Confederate Veterans, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

ADAH Government Records Division staff members are currently working with these agencies

on appointments and have applied to NHPRC for an administrative grant. At HRB’s first meeting (which is scheduled for August 24), it will begin developing a new statewide plan for historical records preservation.

Our HRB bill’s passage marked the successful conclusion of a four-year campaign. Special thanks are due to our legislative sponsors, Senator Quinton Ross and Representative Charles Newton; to ADAH development officer Johnny Crawford; and to Frank Brown, ADAH legislative liaison. More information on HRB’s plans, as they unfold, will be carried in future issues of *State and Local Records News*.

## State and Local Government Records Commissions approve new RDAs

**A**t its meeting on April 26, 2006, the **State Records Commission** approved a new records disposition authority (RDA) for the Department of Children’s Affairs. It also approved RDA revisions for the Department of Agriculture and Industries, the Department of Public Health, and the State Personnel Department. Finally, the commission heard annual RDA implementation reports from 34 state

agencies and authorized a revised disposition for state agency bid records (see below).

Also meeting on April 26, the **Local Government Records Commission** approved a revised RDA for local health care authorities, as well as revised disposition for subsidiary financial records related to federal grants (see below).

The commissions' next meetings will be held on **Wednesday, July 26**. The State Records Commission will begin at 10:30 a.m., and the Local Government Records Commission will convene at 1:30 p.m. Both meetings will be held in the new Regions Board Room on the third floor of ADAH.

## Changes in retention periods for state bids, local grant files

**O**n February 23, 2006, the legislature amended *Code of Alabama* Sections 41-16-24, 41-16-27, and 41-16-54, relating to the Competitive Bid Law. The amendment ended the permanent retention of "all original bids together with all documents pertaining to the award of the contract[s]" over \$7,500, and declared that the disposition of these records "shall be . . . in accordance with a retention period established by the State Records Commission."

Accordingly, on April 26, the State Records Commission set a retention period for state agency bid records of seven (7) years after the end of the fiscal year in which the bids were opened. Duplicate copies of bids (where the originals are maintained by the Finance Department's Division of Purchasing) shall be retained three (3) years after the end of the fiscal year in which the bids were opened.

Copies of this change in retention have been sent to all state agencies with approved RDAs. The same information is available on the ADAH website at [www.archives.state.al.us/officials/staterda.html](http://www.archives.state.al.us/officials/staterda.html).

Also on April 26, the Local Government Records Commission revised the disposition of

grant-related accounting and purchasing records. This change was proposed by the Examiners of Public Accounts, who discovered that some county agencies do not file grant-related financial records separately from similar records that do not relate to grants. Whereas local government RDAs require routine accounting and purchasing records to be retained "2 years following audit," Federal Rule 1354 mandates a 3-year retention of such records that document federal grants. For records created near the end of an audit cycle, "2 years following audit" may not amount to three full years. Therefore, grant-related accounting and purchasing records will now be scheduled separately, placed with other grant files, in local RDAs.

This change will be included in the next edition of each county and municipal RDA as it is issued. Meanwhile, the change has been announced on the ADAH website at [www.archives.state.al.us/officials/grantacct.pdf](http://www.archives.state.al.us/officials/grantacct.pdf).

## ADAH enlists folklife archivist, student workers

**I**n mid-April, ADAH hired Trey Bunn as its folklife archivist, filling a position funded by the Arts Council and the Alabama Folklife Association.

Trey is a recent graduate of the University of South Carolina's School of Library and Information Science. He already has a good deal of experience in archiving audio recordings.

As one of his first projects, Trey is working with state records archivist Richard Wang on an RDA for the Alabama State Council on the Arts. Audio/Video recordings, and other artifacts created and maintained by the Alabama Center for Traditional Culture, are scheduled for transfer to the Archives after completion of the RDA.

ADAH has also obtained the services of three part-time student interns for the summer. Joining us in May were two undergraduates, Sarah Burak from Troy University, and Amber DeBardeleben from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Sarah has begun cataloging museum artifacts, and Amber is assigned to preservation/conservation. However, both will perform a variety of tasks during their time at ADAH. In June, they will be joined by Michelle Dowdell, a graduate student in archives from Auburn University.

## Morgan County hires new archivist

In February, the Morgan County Commission hired John Allison, a native of Decatur and a former intern for the Birmingham Public Library Archives, as Morgan County's second full-time archivist. He succeeds Susan Bzdell, who died in December after serving in the position for ten years. Local genealogist Edna Earl James had managed the archives during the interim after Susan's death.

John is a graduate of Birmingham-Southern College and holds a master's degree in history from the University of Maryland. Most recently, he was a researcher for the National Archives and the Library of Congress. Since arriving in Decatur, John has worked to strengthen the archives' records disposition services and is updating the inventory of its holdings. ADAH wishes him every success in his new position.

## Conference plans to protect records from another Katrina

On April 18-20, archivists from nine southeastern states, plus officials from several federal agencies (e.g., NEH, NHPRC, FEMA) and private records preservation agencies (AASLH, ARMA, NAGARA) met at Georgia's state archives to plan for saving records from future hurricanes. The Council of State Archivists (CoSA) sponsored the conference.

Hurricane Katrina, which devastated Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi last September, has been called "the world's worst natural disaster"

for records in over thirty years. According to a conference press release, Katrina's destruction of public archives included "not only historic treaties and photographs, but many more mundane yet critical modern documents like birth and death certificates and car titles." Hank Holmes, director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, said that "it is time for [each] state archives to set itself up as an agency of response."

CoSA is asking each hurricane-threatened state to complete: (1) an **assessment** of "current preparedness strengths and weaknesses" of state archives and records programs; (2) "a **basic preparedness document** . . . including key contacts, designated roles and responsibilities, and suppliers of essential goods and services" during a disaster; and (3) a "**toolkit**" (guidelines and resource directory) for emergency response. By September 30, the Archivist of the United States will report to the President on each state's level of preparedness, as well as the forthcoming challenges of a "long-term initiative for Emergency Preparedness for Archives and Records."

For more information Alabama's role in these plans, contact Linda Overman, ADAH Preservation Officer, at (334)353-4726, or [Linda.Overman@archives.alabama.gov](mailto:Linda.Overman@archives.alabama.gov).

## Wallace Museum Foundation collection comes to ADAH

Following an agreement and a deed of gift between the Wallace Museum Foundation and ADAH, the department received custody in May of the collections of Governors George C. and Lurleen B. Wallace.

Two truckloads of material (over 900 cubic feet), which had been stored in an Atlanta warehouse for several years, recently arrived at the ADAH Records Center. The collection of state government records, private records, and artifacts includes correspondence, campaign material, news clippings, books, magazines, photographs, films, video- and audiotapes, 33-rpm record albums,

plaques, and commemorative coins. A bass boat often used by Governor Lurleen Wallace was shipped to ADAH as well.

Along with this material, ADAH received custody of a museum collection housed in the Lurleen B. Wallace Building in Montgomery. That collection, which includes books, records of both governors, records of the Wallace Museum Foundation, furniture, portraits, and other artifacts, will soon be transferred to ADAH.

The size of the collection, as well as the limited number of processing archivists on our staff, will unfortunately keep the Wallace Collection closed to research for some time.