



State & Local Records News

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HRAB opens applications for local records preservation grants

Thanks to an award from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), Alabama's Historical Records Advisory Board (HRAB) will soon be able to offer a total of \$50,000 to local governments and historical entities for records preservation projects. HRAB members met on July 16 to approve grant program guidelines. Government Records Division archivists of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) will oversee grant projects and administer the program.

Under HRAB's guidelines, funds may be awarded for such activities as:

- conducting records inventories and identifying historical records
- improving environmental conditions; obtaining archival containers and shelving
- cataloging, indexing, or preparing records finding aids
- hiring an archival consultant
- undertaking limited conservation or reformatting projects

There are a few restrictions on grant funds, and applicants must be prepared to provide a 50% cost-share of the total project budget. Local cost sharing may consist of direct financial contributions (such as hiring staff or purchasing equipment), a percentage of time devoted to the project by current staff, or a combination of the two. Due to the limited amount of funding available from NHPRC, awards to individual projects will not exceed \$3,000.

To assist potential applicants in planning projects and submitting applications, ADAH will hold training sessions in Decatur (Oct 9), Montgomery (October 10), Mobile (Oct 14), Birmingham (Oct 22), and Dothan (Oct 23). HRAB staff will also review draft applications prior to the official application deadline: **January 31, 2009**.

For complete grant guidelines, application forms, and training workshop information, go to: <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/hrb/reggrant.pdf> Questions may be directed to Tracey Berezansky, HRAB Deputy Coordinator, or Tom Turley, Local Government Records Archivist, at (334)242-4452, or records@archives.alabama.gov.

Records Commission News

At its meeting on July 30, 2008, the **State Records Commission** approved a new RDA for the Service Division of the Department of Finance, as well as revised RDAs for the Alabama Department of Archives and History, the Alabama Historical Commission (Black Heritage Council), the Alabama School of Mathematics and Science, the Department of Public Safety, and the Department of Transportation. It also reviewed annual RDA implementation reports from 31 state agencies.

The **Local Government Records Commission** did not meet on July 30, because its main agenda item, a revision of the municipal RDA, was

still under review by the Alabama League of Municipalities.

The records commissions' next meetings will take place on **Wednesday, October 29, 2008**, at 10:00 a.m. (State) and 1:30 p.m. (Local). Members will convene in the Region's Board Room at ADAH.

Two new members join records commissions

Newly appointed members of the State and Local Government Records Commissions attended their first meetings in April and July.

In April, Dr. John Giggie was selected to replace Dr. Lisa Dorr as the University of Alabama's representative. Dr. Giggie attended the two commission meetings held that month, although we neglected to note that fact in our June issue.

Returning to the commissions in July was Rebecca Morris, who replaces Ed Packard as the Secretary of State's representative. Ms. Morris previously served on the commissions while she was employed by the State Department of Revenue.

We welcome Dr. Giggie and Ms. Morris and look forward to their participation in the commissions' work.

Tracey Berezansky becomes NAGARA's president

At its national conference, held in Atlanta on July 23-26, the National Association of Government Archivists and Records Administrators (NAGARA) inaugurated Tracey Berezansky, Assistant Director for Government Records at ADAH, as president. She succeeds Mary Beth Herkert, the state archivist of Oregon.

NAGARA is the only organization in the USA that focuses on the interests and needs of government records managers and archivists. It

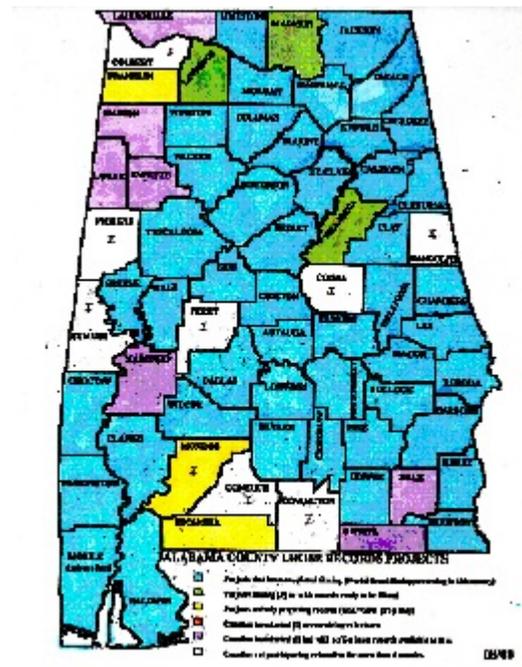
deals with archival and records management issues of local, state, and national concern.

Tracey's election is a signal honor for ADAH and allows us to undertake a leading role in this important records management organization. Congratulations, Tracey!

Loose records program finally approaching conclusion

Since ADAH and the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU) began the loose records microfilming program in 1999, 46 of Alabama's 67 counties have completed projects. The latest three to finish (after our last report in May 2007) are Hale, St. Clair, and Houston Counties.

Houston County, which completed filming in July 2007, produced 31 rolls of estates and marriage records (1903-1941). In August, St. Clair County followed with 34 rolls of estates, marriages, and circuit court files (1890-1915) from both the Ashville and Pell City Courthouses. Hale



Alabama's loose records program as of September 2008

County's project, finished in October, yielded 37 rolls of estates and guardianships (1867-1950).

Microfilming is almost complete in Lawrence County and will begin soon in Madison County. Recently, the GSU has decided to offer county projects the option of utilizing digital imaging instead of microfilm. Talladega County's records will be digitized, as will records from the Jefferson and Montgomery County circuit courts. (These two counties previously completed microfilming projects.)

Elsewhere, Escambia County has nearly finished records preparation, and Franklin County continues preparation work. A new project began in May at the Old Courthouse Museum in Monroe County. In all, we expect to complete projects in between 52 and 56 counties before loose records work eventually concludes.

More counties added to AGS loose records database

Meanwhile, the Alabama Genealogical Society continues its efforts to create a statewide database of loose records microfilm. This project, which began in 2006, incorporates and standardizes existing indices from loose records projects or—if necessary—creates indices for projects that were not originally indexed. Web guru Jim Anderson coordinates the work, and many other AGS members contribute time collecting county index information and entering the data.

As we went to press, the all-name database included over 50,000 entries from at least 17 of the following counties: Baldwin, Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Choctaw, Clarke, Clay, Cullman, DeKalb, Henry, Jefferson, Montgomery, Russell, Shelby, Tallapoosa, and Tuscaloosa. Others will be added soon.

For complete information on this project, or to search your ancestors on the AGS database, see the project website at: <http://lrp.algensoc.org/lrpw/loader.html>.



Historical probate records transferred to the Marshall County Archives

Marshall County Archives in final stages of completion

Alabama's newest local archives, Marshall County's, is moving toward completion. Housed in a former car dealership across from the courthouse in Guntersville, the facility provides about 2,000 square feet of storage space. Currently, it holds historical volumes from the county probate office; original county newspapers; and files microfilmed during the county's loose records project, which was completed in 2005.

Betty Taylor, Margene Black, and Rosemary Darnell of the Marshall County Preservation Committee serve as part-time volunteer staff for the archives. At present, they are still organizing the records and setting up shelving and equipment provided by Probate Judge Tim Mitchell. Judge Mitchell credits the late Billy Cannon, former chairman of the county commission, with securing funding for the archives.

This fall, Marshall County will apply for a HRAB local records preservation grant to finish outfitting the facility. Ms. Taylor hopes that the archives can open to the public within the next few months.

Conference of state archivists convenes at ADAH



SARC state archives directors meet at ADAH

On May 8-9, the Southeastern Archives and Records Conference (SARC) held its annual meeting at ADAH. Directors and staff from the state archives of seven states—Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee—were in attendance.

The conference featured sessions on collections management, digitization, records management, and reference, along with the directors' meeting. In the records management session, ADAH state records archivist Richard Wang led a discussion of electronic records, e-mail, outreach/training for government employees, record center operations, privacy/confidentiality concerns, and functional appraisal. Collections staff focused on dealing with confidential information and disaster planning; reference staff discussed providing online assistance and digitization partnerships with Ancestry.com. The digitization group explored the uses of ContentDM. SARC archivists will continue their exchange of information until the association meets next year in Florida.

If you are interested in reviewing session notes and conclusions from the SARC meeting, please contact Tom Turley at (334)353-4607, or Tom.Turley@archives.alabama.gov.

Looking for information about Alabama heritage and culture?

If you are interested in Alabama heritage and culture or have records, photographs, posters, or other valuable pieces of Alabama history that you would like to share with others, check out AlabamaMosaic at <http://www.alabamamosaic.org>. Images, text, and sound about Alabama arts, education, industry, history, literature, and *more* are available for viewing.

Initiated under a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and now administered by the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries (NAAL), AlabamaMosaic is an online repository of digital materials on Alabama's history, culture, places, and people. Its purpose is to make unique historical treasures from Alabama's archives, libraries, museums, historical societies, and other repositories electronically accessible to Alabama residents and to students, researchers, and the general public in other states and countries.

Currently, 25 organizations have contributed digital copies of their treasures to the online digital collection. Several contributors run their own digital collections, which they link to the AlabamaMosaic server. Other contributors rely on the AlabamaMosaic server to house their materials.

Whatever your level of expertise, if you have valuable historical collections to contribute to AlabamaMosaic, the members of the collaborative will work with you to get your materials online. If you have a small collection of valuable materials you would like to contribute to AlabamaMosaic, please contact any of the individuals listed at <http://www.alabamamosaic.org/contact.php>.

Records commissions planning annual awards program

At its meeting on July 30, the State Records Commission approved the Government Records Division's plan for an annual awards program. Each year, this program will recognize state, county, or municipal agencies; publicly supported colleges and universities; or local historical entities that have made special accomplishments in records management or preservation. If, as expected, the Local Government Records Commission approves the program in October, awards for 2008 will be announced in April 2009.

Awards. The awards will consist of Governor's Certificates of Appreciation, presented by the commissions. Information on award recipients will be published in *State and Local Records News*, on the ADAH website, in press releases distributed by the Alabama Press Association, and in publicity resources available to the recipients.

Criteria. Nominations are encouraged to recognize meritorious work "above and beyond the call of duty." The mere fulfillment of routine archival or records management responsibilities will not qualify for an award. Special consideration will be given to innovations, contributions, or accomplishments that will have a lasting impact on an agency's records program, or that create benefits that extend beyond the agency itself. Here are examples of qualified activities:

- State agencies, colleges, and universities must be fully compliant in RDA development, implementation, and reporting. They must also have in place a centralized records liaison structure and a fully developed archives or records management program.
- Local agencies must be fully compliant with their RDAs and use them frequently for records preservation and destruction. They assist ADAH staff in updating and improving the RDAs during their biennial revisions.

- Agencies can show increased initiative, innovation, or commitment of resources and manpower to archival or records management programs. For example, they can hire additional staff; develop records centers, archives, or electronic records programs; create publications or training materials; extend their archival or records management programs (in the case of localities) to other agencies in the county or municipality; or provide training to other state or local government employees.
- Agencies must demonstrate compliance with best practices in the fields of archival preservation and/or records management.

Nominations. Nominations for an award may be made by individuals, the agency itself, ADAH staff, or members of the State or Local Government Records Commission. To document relevant activities, each nomination should include supporting materials, such as narratives, news clippings, photographs, publications, or other recognitions of accomplishment. Nominations must be submitted to ADAH each year before December 1. Government Records Division staff will review the nominations; the appropriate commission will select the winner(s) at its January meeting. The State Records Commission will present no more than one award annually, the Local Government Records Commission no more than two. If there are no qualified state or local nominees in a given year, the commission(s) will not issue an award. Meetings at which awards are made—like all records commission meetings—are open to the public.

Detailed award guidelines and nomination forms can be found at: <http://archives.alabama.gov/awardsform.pdf>. If you have questions, contact the ADAH Government Records Division at (334)242-4452, or records@archives.alabama.gov.

IMLS sponsors archival continuing education grants

The Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federal funding agency, has granted Louisiana State University \$280,000 to spearhead a three-year effort to establish a sustainable program of continuing education for archivists in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Elizabeth H. Dow, who heads the archives track in LSU's School of Library and Information Science, will serve as principal investigator.

In the proposal to IMLS, Dow argued that in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama—the Mid-Gulf Coast South—historical repositories of all sizes depend in part, and in some cases completely, upon the work of staff who have little or no formal training in the proper management of archival materials. For the sake of its historical records, the Mid-Gulf Coast South, which has no regional organization of archivists, requires an organization dedicated to addressing its need for continuing education in the management of historical documents.

The project began in July 2008 and will run through June 2011. During its first 18 months, the project will focus on arranging for and offering continuing education (CE) opportunities in all three states. During the second half of the grant period, it will continue to offer CE opportunities but will focus on developing the organizational and financial structures of an organization that will continue to offer these CE opportunities after grant funding has ended.

Initially, Dow and Laura McLemore, Head of Archives and Special Collections at LSU-Shreveport, will represent Louisiana on a steering committee that will establish schedules and procedures. Julia Marks Young, Director of the Archives and Records Services Division of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson; and Jennifer W. Ford, Head of Special Collections at the J.D. Williams Library of the

University of Mississippi, will represent Mississippi. Tracey Berezansky, Assistant Director for Government Records at the Alabama Department of Archives and History; and Martin Olliff, Director of the Archives of Wiregrass History and Culture and Assistant Professor of History at Troy State University-Dothan, will represent Alabama. Within the first year, the steering committee will ask the three states' professional organizations to provide another representative to the steering committee.

The project will start by using the growing number of free Web-based educational materials as its workshop materials. It will bring local practitioners together with an experienced professional to work through these Web-based materials in groups. The professional—"The Mentor in the Room"—will answer questions, clarify concepts, and generally offer support as the participants work through online units. Ideally, no participant will need to travel more than an hour from home, so the mentor and classmates can become a supportive local network.

These CE opportunities will cost so little that repositories or individual workers can afford to take them on a regular basis, but they will not be free. The grant pays for the extraordinary costs of creating this project, which include support for the organizational meetings, publicity materials, administrative assistance, etc.; but it does not include funds for the cost of providing the CE opportunities. The steering committee will develop a pricing structure based on the actual cost of presentation, estimated in the proposal to IMLS as from \$20 to \$50 per participant.

The need for continuing education is not unique to the Mid-Gulf Coast region. If successful, this project will develop a model that could very well apply to any region with similar needs.