



State & Local Records News

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HRAB applies for \$70,000 from NHPRC for historical records preservation

Early in March, Alabama's Historical Records Advisory Board (HRAB) applied to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) for nearly \$70,000 in funds for historical records preservation. The NHPRC is offering such awards under its State and National Partnership (SNAP) Grant Program.

The Government Records Division of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) will administer the grant if funds are awarded. This would be the Archives' first grant for local records preservation since its regrant program of 1993-1996. If funded, the new program (which is based on the HRAB's recently developed strategic plan) will have four components:

- The HRAB will partner with other interested organizations (such as the Society of Alabama Archivists) to develop a training program that will instruct records holders on proper procedures for preserving historical records. During the 18-month grant period, the HRAB will hold three training workshops on the care of historical records, local archives development, and other records-related issues and concerns.
- ADAH will establish an online directory of local records repositories in Alabama, including both contact and holdings infor-

mation for each repository. It will also create a clearinghouse of information on best practices, training materials, and resources pertaining to historical records access and preservation.

- To build statewide support for preserving historical records, ADAH will create and distribute press releases and other publications promoting the HRAB's mission, its web resources and training opportunities, and other grant-related programs.
- The HRAB will reinstate a regrant program, which will be open to non-profit historical agencies as well as local governments. With a maximum of \$50,000 available if the regrant portion of our application is approved, the HRAB will provide small grants—\$5,000 or less—for limited, short-duration records projects. The awards will also cover some records-related equipment and supplies.

Although it is likely that the HRAB will receive at least \$20,000 to institute portions of its plan, regrant funds are awarded competitively with other states. The NHPRC will make decisions on SNAP Grants in May. If Alabama's program is fully funded, the HRAB should be able to begin accepting regrant applications as early as July.

For more information about this grant or other HRAB records preservation activities, contact Tracey Berezansky, Deputy HRAB Coordinator, or local records archivist Tom Turley, at (334)242-4452, or records@archives.alabama.gov.

Winston County dedicates new archives; Marshall County's on the way

On January 25, Winston County held an open house to dedicate its newly constructed county archives building. Erected on land provided by the county, the archives was partially funded by a grant obtained through Congressman Robert Aderholt's office; and by a donation from the family of Dr. Thomas Malcolm Blake, who practiced medicine in Double Springs for nearly fifty years. Dr. Blake's birthplace was on the site of the new archives, which will also house a museum built in his honor.

With about 2,400 square feet of storage space, the Winston County Archives will provide climate-controlled storage for historical probate records, and other county records, formerly held in the courthouse and several off-site storage areas. Much of the interior work was done—at minimal expense—by two skilled carpenters on the county maintenance staff. The entire building cost only \$50,000. After shelving is installed and the records are moved in, volunteers from the Winston County Genealogical Society will staff the new archives until funds can be found to hire a full-time archivist.

Meanwhile, Marshall County has nearly finished converting a former car dealership near the courthouse in Guntersville into an archives. It will be staffed by members of the Marshall County Preservation Committee and will initially hold historical records from the county probate office. We will report further on Marshall County's archives in a future issue of *State and Local Records News*.



The new Winston County Archives in Double Springs

These two new facilities will bring the total number of Alabama's county or municipal archives to 19. We expect more funds for such initiatives to become available as Alabama's historical records grant program continues to develop.

State Records Commission approves agency RDAs

At its meeting on January 23, 2008, the **State Records Commission** approved a new RDA for the Alabama Music Hall of Fame Board and revised RDAs for the Alabama Credit Union Administration and the Alabama Department of Public Health. It reviewed annual reports from 30 state agencies and 26 state colleges and universities.

Again, the **Local Government Records Commission** did not meet in January, because the Secretary of State's Office has not yet undertaken a revision of the RDA for county boards of registrars. One is needed to reflect recent changes in Alabama's voter registration system. A draft revision of the RDA for county probate offices was held over and will be presented for approval at the commission's April meeting.

The records commissions' next meetings are scheduled for **Wednesday, April 23, 2008**. The State Records Commission will convene at

10:00 a.m., and the Local Government Records Commission will begin at 1:30 p.m. Both meetings will be held in the Regions Board Room on the third floor of the ADAH.

Dr. Jeff Jakeman rejoins state and local records commissions

Dr. Jeff Jakeman has recently been reappointed to serve as Auburn University's representative on the State and Local Government Records Commissions. Dr. Jakeman, a former ADAH staff member, teaches in Auburn's history department and heads its graduate program in archives. He previously served on the records commissions from 1992 until 2005.

Dr. Jakeman replaces Dr. Joe Turrini, who left Auburn last fall to accept a position at Wayne State University. We are pleased to welcome Jeff Jakeman back to his place on the commissions.

Government Records Division welcomes new staff members

Two new staff members, Drew Davis and Clarice Crosby, joined the Government Records Division in February. Drew comes to us from Auburn University, where he will graduate in May with a master's degree in history and archives. Last summer, he worked for the division as a student intern. Drew is currently processing records from the Governors George and Lurleen Wallace collections that the ADAH obtained from the Wallace Museum Foundation in 2006.

Clarice will work in the division's records reformatting unit and will be primarily responsible for ADAH scanning operations. She has a background in micrographics work and was previously employed in private business. ADAH is pleased to welcome these two new employees to our staff.

Ask the Archivist

Question: *What kind of building makes a good local archives?*

Finding a suitable building for an archives is not easy. The best solution is to design and build a facility "from the ground up," but a locality may not have sufficient funds. Some Alabama counties or municipalities have successfully adapted old banks, public health buildings, or train depots. These guidelines can help local agencies to evaluate potential sites.

Construction. Concrete block construction is ideal. Avoid old wooden buildings (firetraps), basements (floods and dampness), and attics (weight restrictions, heat). High ceilings maximize shelving capacity and lower costs. Floors should be concrete slabs and must be able to tolerate a minimum load of 300 lbs. per square foot. Records storage rooms should not be carpeted. The site should be free of environmental hazards such as leaking roofs, overhanging water pipes, nearby furnaces, broken windows, or cracked walls.

Location. The site chosen should be close to other county or city offices, as storing records "across town" increases problems of access and security. To assist in transport, records should be located on the building's ground floor or have access to a reliable freight elevator.

Security. If a building must be shared with other agencies, the records area should have a private, controlled entrance that is separated from other tenants by a firewall. Doors not used as the primary entrance should always be locked. To protect records from theft, light damage, or disaster, windows in storage areas should be covered or fitted with blinds that filter ultraviolet light.

For more information on this topic, see the leaflet "Records Storage Centers," available on the ADAH website at: <http://www.archives.state.al.us/officials/reccenter.pdf>. For help from ADAH staff in assessing candidate archives buildings, contact the Government Records Division at (334)242-4452, or records@archives.alabama.gov.