

## 2007 RAIMS Annual Report 2007

The Year 2007 was an exciting period in the history of the Department of Records, Archives and Information Management Services (RAIMS), but it also was a disruptive period for the staff. By April, most of the expansion/renovation of the Records and Archives Center, started in Fall of 2006, was completed. The staff that had cheerfully endured dust, noise, noisy test alarms, and quarters in the middle of construction, moved into the new and vastly improved quarters.

The microfilm/imaging crew that had been housed in very cramped quarters, is now in an imaging center about 5 times as large as previously. This area is an indication of the future emphasis within the department. Electronic imaging – with computer-generated microfilm as backup for permanent records – will become the primary task in future years. With more and more records being created by County government, electronic compression has become an absolute necessity unless we double the storage space for paper records every ten to fifteen years. Electronic records have the additional advantage of reducing record searches by as much as 90 percent, thus permitting County staff to provide more efficient service to the taxpayers.

Electronic records, although convenient and versatile, lack the safety of paper or microfilm. For permanent records, especially from the County Clerk's Office, the Department of RAIMS combines the best of two worlds: The electronic records of deeds, mortgages and various other County Clerk permanent documents are also used for creating computer-generated microfilm for safer storage. A total of 14,500 feet of computer-generated microfilm, using the Kodak Archive Writer, was produced in 2007. In addition, the imaging crew produced 361 "traditional" microfilm rolls, representing 72,200,000 pages of paper that need not be stored. (It should be remembered here that the microfilm machines were not operational until May). There was one disappointment in moving to electronic imaging combined with computer-generated microfilming. The RMO had purchased a Canon hybrid machine (through a grant) that produces simultaneous TIFF images and COM microfilm. The machine was to make imaging DSS permanent records more efficient. Unfortunately, the variety of paper types, the overuse of staples, and different paper sizes made it virtually impossible the scan/microfilm DSS records with the Canon. The machine works well, however, with court records, Sheriff's documents and any other record series with reasonably good paper.

In the more traditional records management area, business continued as usual except when the contractors closed off various areas of the building. The disruption of service to departments was minimal, and retrievals actually increased somewhat over 2006. We added 1,100 cubic feet for storage and destroyed 575 cubic feet, a net gain of 475 cubic feet. This does not count the "surprise" by DSS, where with extra help, the staff did not send the usual 150 cubic feet to be microfilmed, but sent over 1,000 cubic feet instead. The RMO is still trying to decide what to do with that influx since he does not have the necessary staff to handle the additional load.

With removing of cubic boxes from shelves in the original storage area and relocating them eventually in the new addition, crews from the jail and other "volunteers" through the legal system helped move furniture and over 10,000 cubic boxes. The jail crew was especially enthusiastic about the work and they were a joy to have. Perhaps donuts, cookies, juice and good coffee were some incentive, but the prisoners seemed to enjoy being here. Our thanks go to the jail crew, the "volunteers" and the supervisory staff that came along.

The one area where the impact of construction work was most noticeable was in the area of historical and genealogical research. The number of researchers was cut by two thirds because the Department was closed to outside visitors through April. The construction/renovation was advertised on the departmental web pages and as a result, the number of research requests by mail dropped to 105 for the year. Generally, it took most of 2007 to recover from the closing and it was only toward the end of the year that researchers and research requests started to trickle in again.

The Department of RAIMS was able to open new frontiers thanks to a grant of \$73,500 from the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund. Up to 2007, any large Libers had to have their binding cut in order to be able to electronically scan the pages. Since we have paid substantial amounts for restoration of historical libers, this method was unacceptable. Thanks to the cooperation of Kirtas Technologies of Victor, 357 volumes of Deeds were

scanned and are available in electronic format. Kirtas specifically built the hardware to accommodate large bound volumes without harming them in any way. This technology is now available to all government entities with oversized bound volumes.

The Department of RAIMS managed to stay in the public eyes through its web pages. There were 240,230 individual visits to the raims.com pages with 1.8 million “hits” and 1.4 million files accessed.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all who were involved in the successful renovation and expansion of the Records and Archives Center. The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator were true visionaries and without their support, the project could not have succeeded. I thank the staff of Buildings and Grounds, the Planning Department, the Sheriff’s Office, and particularly the staff of RAIMS who put up with disruptions, noise and dirt. There were people and organizations too numerous to mention who had a hand in the building process. To all of you, a big THANK YOU.

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