

2011 ANNUAL REPORT 2011

The year 2011 saw one major change in personnel with the retirement of assistant RMO Mary Jo Lanphear and the appointment of Rosemary Switzer in her place. The transition has been smooth since Rosemary is a fast learner. She processed 50 cubic feet of archival records, served 250 in-house researchers, and answered 147 e-mail and 95 telephone inquiries. In addition, she attended 30 hours of leadership training and several other workshops on records and archives management. She also developed a disaster preparedness –plan for the department. Within the year, Rosemary has become a major asset to the department.

The Department of RAIMS remained popular for tours from colleagues, including the Town Clerks of the County. We sponsored several workshops to improve the skills of records managers from western New York. For Ontario County staff, we provided a workshop through the State Archives on disaster readiness planning, The workshop was attended by forty staff members from various departments within the County. Donna McCormick trained several new employees of the County in departmental records management and submission of records to RAIMS.

County Clerk Jack Cooley and Human Resources Director Mary Krause accompanied the RMO to Albany to receive the Cheryl Steinbach Annual Archives Award for Excellence in Local Government Records Management – a major honor for Ontario County. An award of this magnitude would have been impossible without the RAIMS staff, the cooperation of all County departments and the great support of the Board of Supervisors.

The Department of RAIMS strives to compress as many permanent records as possible through electronic scanning and the creation of computer generated microfilm. Although we provide electronic records for easy access, we assure permanency of vital records through the creation of microfilm. Electronic records are simply too volatile to trust their permanent existence. The microfilm staff created 774,000 microfilm records and a similar number of electronic records for documents with a permanent retention schedule, plus microfilm backup of 165,000 historical documents from the 19th century. The department also completed the electronic conversion of 260 oversized Surrogate Court books through a LGRMIF grant. Although the original paper copies of these books will be retained, the electronic copies will improve retrievals significantly, while protecting the originals.

During 2011, the Department of RAIMS received 928 cubic feet of records from the various departments and was able to destroy 821 cubic feet. This means that the Records and Archives Center received 107 cubic feet more than could be destroyed. The staff had to retrieve 2989 files and send them back to the departments. Of course, all of them were eventually returned to storage. In addition, 3,911 files needed to be interfiled in existing storage boxes. Donna McCormick was responsible for most of this work.

The Records and Archives Center housed a total of 15.260 cubic feet of records in 2011. It is obvious that the compression of records is absolutely essential to avoid filling the Center with paper. We will never avoid having paper, but we must find every possible means to keep that to an absolute minimum.

One additional time consuming task is FOIL. It does not only occupy the Records Access Officer 40% of the time, but has become a significant burden to the County Attorney's Office, particularly Kris Thorsness, the DA Michael Tantillo and the Sheriff's records center, especially Colleen Rice. My thanks go out to all of you.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the RAIMS staff for all their work and the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator and staff for their support of the Department of RAIMS. It is they who help make this department a great example of taming the paper tiger.

THE STAFF:

Dr. Hans-J. Finke, Records Management Officer and Records Access (FOIL) Officer

Dr. Preston Pierce, County Historian (PT)

Rosemary Switzer, Assistant Records Management Officer

Donna McCormick, Retrieval Clerk

Robin Cuppernell, Microfilmer

Kristine Martin, Microfilmer

Debbie Sawin, Microfilmer

Elizabeth Alcivar, Clerk (PT)

And, of course, Basil and Bailey who are our bosses.