

July 20, 2015

Panola County Commissioners' Court
Panola County, Texas

RE: Records Archive, Preservation & Restoration Plan

Dear Mam/Sirs:

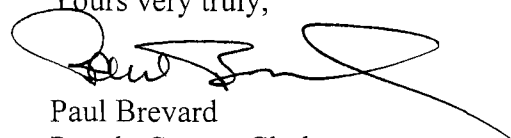
Pursuant to Section 118.025 of the Local Government Code, I request the Commissioners' Court to adopt the County Clerk Record Archive fee of \$10.00, effective January 1, 2018. *6 PB*

As per instruction of the Local Government Code section 118.025(g), I hereby submit my 2016 annual written plan for funding the preservation and restoration of the county clerk's records archive.

The fees collected under this plan must be set & itemized in the county's budget as part of the budget preparation process. The Commissioners' Court should publish notice of a public hearing on the plan in a newspaper of general circulation in the county no later than the 15th day before the date of the hearing. After the public hearing, the plan should be considered for approval by the Commissioners' Court.

I respectfully request the Panola County Commissioners' Court to take the above actions with hearing date being August 24, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. Your help will be appreciated.

Yours very truly,



Paul Brevard
Panola County Clerk

Panola County Clerk's Records Archive, Preservation and Restoration Plan 2016

I. Background (Statutory History)

The 77th Texas Legislature passed HB 370 in 2001 to allow *border* county's to assess a \$10.00 Records Archive Fee for the preservation of older records filed with the County Clerk. The 78th Legislature passed SB 1744 amending the original legislation allowing *all* county's to collect this fee with Commissioner's Court approval. The County Clerk has been collecting this fee since 2003 and will continue to collect this fee at this time.

This legislation amends Local Government Code, Section 118.025, to enable the Commissioner's Court to adopt a Records Archive Fee for the preservation and automation of previously filed and recorded real property and vital statistics records as part of their regularly adopted annual budget. **House Bill 1513, 83rd Legislative Session, increased the fee to 'not to exceed \$10; effective 1/01/2014.** The statute provides that this fund be used only for the preservation and restoration of the county clerk records, and authorizes effective preservation and efficient retrieval of the large amount of legal documents that are required to be preserved.

II. Bill Summary

- **Began** on approval of the Panola County Commissioner's Court with Court Order # 2003-8.
- **Termination:** The 79th Legislature extended this bill indefinitely.
- The \$10.00 fee is assessed on any instrument, document, paper, or other record that the County Clerk is authorized to accept for filing or recording (deed or official public records, assumed names, marriage licenses, civil case filings).
- The fee may be used **only** to provide funds for specific records management and preservation, *including* for automation purposes – **in accordance with this written plan.**
- Changes to the plan must be approved by Commissioner's Court. The plan may be modified as required.

III. Purpose

Some of Panola County official records have been computerized and automated in electronic format since the late 1970s. The County Clerk's office is progressive in the preservation of current records, utilizing the original Records Archive Fee from 1991 *forward*. However, this funding *has not been sufficient* to electronically preserve and restore the older documents that have a priceless historical value. In order to preserve and enhance the integrity of the existing system for recording and preserving public documents, the County Clerk seeks to preserve existing original records by restoring or re-creating old volumes, digitizing older microfilm and paper records, re-indexing old handwritten and typed indexed books and converting all older media into an electronic format and importing this newly created data into the existing computer system.

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IV. The overall goal and vision of the County Clerk's office is to:

- Modernize and upgrade old record systems in the office.
- Continue to add records and information to your existing computer system.
- Eliminate or reduce manual lookups and searches.
- Expedite record searching by having more records available for electronic retrieval.
- Create a complete electronic records back-up for disaster recovery.
- Provide more public information to the citizens of the County via the Intra/Internet.
- Continue to eliminate the need for paper records.
- Preserving original records by reducing daily usage.
- Reclaiming much needed space in the public records area.

V. Annual Revenue Estimate

Official Real Property Records	2175/annually	
Marriage Records	120/annually	
Civil/Criminal Filings	685/annually	
Total	2,980 Filings Annually	X \$ 10.00 = \$ 29,800.00
	Interest Earning	200.00
	Total Revenue	\$ 30,000.00

VI. Restoration, Preservation and Automation Projects

Real Property Records: Projects include computerized re-indexing and converting all real property records to electronic images and importing new records to the existing real property computer system and Panola County internet site.

Phase 1: (This phase completed in 2010)

Re-indexing of real property records and electronic conversion of 1979 to 1969 existing microfilm to images, matching to the re-indexed grantor/grantee data and importing to the computer and internet:

Approximately 55,000 instruments Cost \$ 149,490

Phase 2: (This phase completed in 2011)

Re-indexing of real property records and electronic conversion of 1968 to 1957 existing microfilm to images, matching to the re-indexed grantor/grantee data and importing to the computer and internet:

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Approximately 58,600 instruments

Cost \$ 190,991

Phase 3: This phase was completed in 2012. Re-indexing of real property records and electronic conversion of 1956 to 1952 existing microfilm to images, matching to the re-indexed grantor/grantee data and importing to the computer and internet:

Approximately 17,589 instruments

Cost \$ 54,000

Phase 4: This phase was completed in 2013. Re-indexing of real property records and electronic conversion of 1952 to 1950 existing microfilm to images, matching to the re-indexing grantor/grantee data and importing to the computer and internet:

Estimated \$ 29,313

Phase 5: This phase was completed in 2014. Re-indexing of real property records and electronic conversion of 1950 to approximately 1947 existing microfilm to images, matching to the re-indexing grantor/grantee data and importing to the computer and Internet.

Estimated \$ 30,000

Phase 6: Re-indexing of real property records and electronic conversion of 1947 to approximately 1944 existing microfilm to images, matching to the re-indexing grantor/grantee data and importing to the computer and Internet.

Estimated \$30,000

Phase 7: Re-indexing of real property records and electronic conversion of 1944 to approximately 1940 existing microfilm to images, matching to the re-indexing grantor/grantee data and importing to the computer and Internet.

Estimated \$30,000

VIII. Length of Projects

It is estimated that these projects and future phases will take approximately 7-10 years to complete and implement. Some projects may be considered as on-going and paid monthly as revenue is collected.

Summary

The Legislature has provided a means to raise revenue for the records management and preservation of older county property and vital records. This "user" fee is an alternative to raising taxes or spending general fund monies to accomplish these projects. This plan will be implemented in "phases" as money is accrued and deposited into a special revenue account. The completion of the initial phases will preserve the original records, provide more space in the public records area, and continue to modernize the Clerk's office through available technology.