

**Panola County Clerk
Records Archive Preservation and Restoration Plan
2017**

The purpose of this plan is to outline the preservation and restoration of the County Clerk's records archive for the upcoming fiscal year. Our goal is to digitally image and archive all records stored in the County Clerk's office in a standardized, universal format, while simultaneously restoring and preserving the original records. This process will provide access, minimize deterioration of existing records and assist in developing the County Clerk's disaster recovery capabilities.

The **Records Management and Preservation Fee**, LGC 118.0216 and 118.052, provide for "records management and preservation services performed by the county clerk after the filing and recording of a document in the records of the office of the clerk" and authorizes the collection of \$10 per recorded document and \$5 per new civil or probate case filed in the County Clerk's Office. The **County Clerk Records Archive Fee**, LGC 118.025, provides for "the preservation and restoration services performed by the county clerk in connection with maintaining a county clerk's records archive" and authorizes the collection of up to \$10 per recorded document, with Commissioners' Court approval. The funds generated from the collection of the Archive Fee are expended only for the preservation and restoration of the County Clerk's records archive. In FY 2015 alone, recording and filing generated approximately \$140,000 from these two fees combined. In 2016, these fees have generated approximately \$70,000.

Scope

Open/Public Records

The County Clerk's real property records range in date from prior to 1850 to the present, and contain over 2,100 books of recorded documents and numerous index books. All land record books and indexes have been microfilmed and reproduced in book format. Land records from 1947 to present are indexed, imaged and available to the public. In addition, most land records from mid-nineteenth century to present have been indexed electronically, and those index references are readily available online; however, images of those documents are available only in book format. Conversion of the microfilmed images to digital records and verifying the indexing of those documents is an ongoing long-term project, and is currently outsourced. With approval and funding, we would like to continue this project back to sovereignty.

Probate, mental health, civil and criminal cases date from approximately 1850 to present. Probate, civil and criminal case records are open to the public. With the advent of mandatory e-filing in civil and probate cases, and our determination to be paperless, we are creating very few new paper case files. Criminal e-filing will also become mandatory in the next few years. County Clerk staff will continue to preserve and convert paper case files to digital files to conserve space and enable the public to access those open records electronically.

Commissioners' Court Minutes are currently created and recorded electronically, and have been scanned and indexed back to 1996. These records are available electronically, and in book format. Our plan is to continue to digitize these records, as personnel and equipment are available.

There are a number of miscellaneous books that are frequently referenced by staff and/or the public that would benefit from being digitized, so that the original books may be preserved. Our plan is to begin the restoration and conversion of our miscellaneous books in the near future, as personnel and equipment are available.

Closed Records

Birth, death and marriage records date prior to 1900, and military discharge records date to early 20th century. *The original books are the only records available in most cases.* Scanning and indexing vital records and military discharge records, including index books, is an endeavor we have only recently started. Our plan is to continue, as personnel and equipment are available to work on this project. We would like to have all vital records indexed and imaged in the next three years. These records aren't entirely open to the public, but digitizing would make it much easier to track and retrieve these records when necessary.

Restoration and preservation of the older, hand-written books is also being considered. Much of the time, the original book is the only record available. Books will be prioritized by their historical value, current condition and retention requirements, and with approval and funding, restoration and preservation can be completed by professionals to ensure the legibility and accessibility of these public documents for future generations.

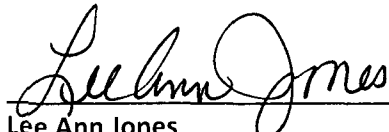
Summary

Finally, progress has been made in digitizing of the records available on microfilm, and making those open records available to the public electronically. Records remaining to be digitized and books to be restored and preserved have been inventoried, and careful consideration is being given to the importance of the records of County Clerk's office. It is our desire to preserve the history of Panola County and its citizens in the best way possible, with the most efficient use of taxpayer funds. With approval of the Commissioners' Court, we will continue to implement, in phases, the preservation of records in our care.

Notice of Public Hearing
On a Plan for the Preservation and Restoration of the
County Clerk's Records Archive


Notice is hereby given that a public hearing on a plan for the preservation and restoration of the Panola County Clerk's records archive will be held pursuant to Local Government Code 118.025(g), at a special meeting of the Panola County Commissioners' Court, in the Commissioners' Courtroom, Panola County Courthouse, 110 South Sycamore, Carthage, Texas, on Monday, August 22, 2016 at 9:00 AM.

Dated this 25th day of July, 2016.



Lee Ann Jones
County Judge, Panola County

Attest:



Bobbie Davis
County Clerk, Panola County

WHEREAS, Section 118.025 of the Local Government Code reads as follows Sec 118.025(b) The commissioners court of a county may adopt a records archive fee under Section 118.011(f) as part of the county's annual budget The fee must be set and itemized in the county's budget as part of the budget preparation process The fee for "Records Archive" under Section 118.011(f) is for the preservation and restoration services performed by the county clerk in connection with maintaining a county clerk's records archive; and

WHEREAS, the above-referenced fee shall be collected by the County Clerk at the time a person, excluding a state agency, presents a public document to the county clerk for recording or filing; and


WHEREAS, (d) of Section 118.025 of the Local Government Code reads: "The fee shall be deposited in a separate records archive account in the general fund of the county, and


WHEREAS, (g) of Section 118.025 reads: "The county clerk shall prepare an annual written plan for funding the preservation and restoration of the county clerk's records archive " "The commissioners court shall publish notice of a public hearing on the plan in a newspaper of general circulation in the county not later than the 15th day before the date of the hearing. After the public hearing, the plan shall be considered for approval by the commissioners' court Funds from the records archive account may be expended only as provided by the plan All expenditures from the records archive account shall comply with Subchapter C, Chapter 262 ";

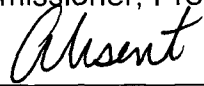
NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED by the Commissioners' Court of Panola County, Texas, meeting in Open Session at a properly scheduled meeting of said Court, that the sum of **TEN AND NO/100 (\$10.00) DOLLARS** be collected by the County Clerk from each person(s) when a public document is presented to said clerk for recording or filing beginning January 1, 2017.

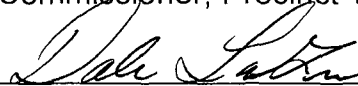
PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED this 25th day of July, 2016


County Judge Lee Ann Jones



Honorable Ronnie LaGrone
Commissioner, Precinct One


Honorable Frank R. Langley, Jr.
Commissioner, Precinct Three


Honorable John Gradberg
Commissioner, Precinct Two


Honorable Dale LaGrone
Commissioner, Precinct Four

ATTEST:


County Clerk Bobbie Davis