

Voice from the Vault

By Gregory Sanford

Recent Web Offerings From the Archives

Over the last few months I have occasionally provided updates on some of the legislatively mandated projects the Archives is working on. Recently we have put material from two of those projects, the pilot municipal scanning project and the municipal land record commission, up on the Web.

The Municipal Scanning Project was created to develop practical, hands-on experience on the use of scanning technology in municipal offices. In working with the participating municipalities, the Archives developed some general guidelines for anyone considering a scanning project. These guidelines are available at: http://vermont-archives.org/records/standards/pdf/VSA_Imaging_Guidelines.pdf

The guidelines are arranged in three sections: project planning; architecture and technical specifications; and implementation. The section on planning offers a range of management questions and analyses to consider when contemplating the use of scanning in your office. The architecture and technical specifications section offers system design perspectives to support access and long term management requirements. The implementation section touches on important practices from indexing to risk management.

The web page also provides links to the Request for Quotes (RFQ) and "Initial Cut Checklist" developed by the municipal scanning project participants. Both items may serve as models for writing a request for proposals and evaluating the responses. We posted the guidelines in response to the steady stream of inquiries we receive about scanning public records. Too often record custodians at all levels of government are simply told that scanning will create efficiencies and either confront information technology decisions made elsewhere or are asked to proceed with implementation without any guidance.

Therefore the general goal of the guidelines is to provide municipalities and other government entities a framework for informed decision making about whether, or how, to implement scanning. The guidelines were drawn from similar efforts adopted by other states. The Archives will continue to monitor those efforts, as well as make adjustments based on the experiences of the on-going pilot scanning project.

The second Web posting is for the minutes and support material being generated by the Municipal Land Records Commission and can be found at: <http://vermont-archives.org/records/vtmlrc/index.htm>.

The Commission, which builds upon the work of two previous commissions, has a broad range of responsibilities. In general it is looking at ways to move toward the consistent use of information technology for records affecting title to land; a funding mechanism to support IT at the municipal level; and an education program for municipal officers on best practices for managing land records. The Web site allows you to follow the work of the Commission and to comment on the Commission's work. The Web site was developed by Tanya Marshall, a member of the Archives staff who chairs the Commission and who is also working on the Judicial Records Project, a joint effort of the Court Administrator and the Archives.

We hope you find these sites useful and we welcome any comments.