

# Titus County Clerk's Office Records Archival Plan for FY 2016

## I. Statute

The 77<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature passed HB 370 to allow *border* counties to assess a \$5.00 Records Management and Preservation Fee for the preservation of older records filed with the County Clerk. The 78<sup>th</sup> Legislature passed SB 1731 amending the original legislation allowing *all* counties to collect this fee with the Commissioners' Court approval. This legislation amends Local Government Code, Section 118.011 (g), to enable the Commissioners' Court to adopt a Records Archive Fee for the preservation and automation of previously filed and recorded records.

The court established a fee of \$5.00 to be collected at the time of filing or recording of any public record with the exception of documents filed by the state.

SB 526 passed by the 79<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature repeals the Local Government Code, Section 118.025 (a)(4) regarding definition of "Records Archive" as public documents filed with the County Clerk before January 1, 1990 and adds language to allow the County Clerk to designate records that are part of records archive plan, with approval of Commissioners' court in a public meeting (September 21, 2010). The bill repealed the Local Government Code 118.011 (g), and 118.025 (k), relating to the expiration date of September 1, 2008.

HB 1513 passed by the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session amends Sections 118.011 (b) and (f) of the Local Government Code to increase the amount of the County Clerk's Records Archives Fee (assessed when a non-court document is presented to the County Clerk for recording or filing) from not more than \$5.00 to not more than \$10.00. The increased fee is set to revert to the \$5 amounts on September 1, 2019.

## II. Purpose

The County Clerk's Records have been exposed to deterioration from usage and unfavorable elements in some of the storage areas. Although the office is progressive in the preservation of current records by utilizing the Records Management Fee, funding has not been sufficient to conserve all of the oldest records or to electronically preserve, restore and re-index these records that have priceless historical value. In order to preserve and enhance the integrity and reliability of the existing system for recording and preserving public documents; the County Clerk seeks to preserve existing original record books by restoration, digitizing, re-indexing these records and importing newly created images and data into the existing computer system.

## III. Revenue

### FY2016

Projected Revenue	\$ 45,000.00
Budgeted Expenditure	\$ 43,500.00

#### **IV. Restoration and Preservation Projects**

The goal of the County Clerk's office is to:

- Preserve 1800's record books by removing mold, de-acidifying, and placing in water-proof, fire-proof containers
- Modernize and upgrade old records systems in the office.
- Continue to add records and information to existing computer system.
- Eliminate or reduce manual look-ups and searches.
- Expedite record searching by having more records available for electronic retrieval.
- Provide more public information via the Internet.
- Preserve original records by reducing daily manual usage.

#### **Project for FY2016**

- Preserve Volumes 28-34 of the original Deed Records,
- One Volume of records Transferred from Red River County to what is now Titus County dated 1838-1908. Some of these records are from the Republic of Texas.

#### **Projects for future years:**

- Continue to preserve old volumes of records from the 1800s - particularly rural school record books.
- Digital re-creation, indexing and microfilming of the following records:
  - Survey Record Books that are over 100 years old
  - Deed Books
  - Birth and Death Record Books

#### **V. Length of Project**

Due to the enormous volume of records in the Titus County Clerk's Office, the records archival projects will be an ongoing process for many years to come.

#### **Summary**

The Legislature has provided a means to raise revenue for the records management and preservation of older county records. The records archive "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 all contract services will be done through standard purchasing procedures. Approval and implementation of the plan will insure the preservation of priceless historical records for future generations.