



ROCKY MOUNTAIN RECORD

NARA

“FASTPACK” DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND PACKING SERVICE FROM NARA’S FEDERAL RECORDS CENTERS

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The National Archives and Records Administration, Rocky Mountain Region (NARA), Federal Records Center Program (FRCP) offers document preparation and packing services or “FastPack” services for competitive fees. No job is too big or too small! The Denver Federal Records Center (FRC) staff are experts in the business and have done the heavy lifting for agencies for some time now.

FastPack is a full-service solution for our customers where we, the FRCP come out to our customers’ offices, prepare inventories, SF135s, pack and prepare boxes for transport and/or transport boxes to the FRC as a new transfer.

For example, the USDA Forest Service, recently centralized their administrative operations in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This effort involved preparing and moving thousands of records, from ten regions to the new office in New Mexico.

The FRCP sent teams to more than eight states and more than ten cities. The team inventoried more than 4,000 cubic feet of agency records, boxed or re-box the records, prepared the SF135s, and arranged the documents for shipment. Some 2,300 cubic feet of these records were eventually shipped to the Denver FRC as part of this large Forest Service FastPack reimbursable project.

Tom Willoughby, Laura Rogers and Dorothy Cox were praised and complimented for their willingness, ability and efficiency in completing all tasks during the Forest Service project.

Using FastPack services from the FRCP allows agencies to manage their personnel to allow full productivity focusing on program related tasks while the FRC personnel complete the packing and hauling of files and boxes. Pricing is competitive and estimates are free and include all tasks related to the project.

(See FastPack information bottom page 4 of this issue)



Tom Willoughby prepares the content box list required for efficient retrieval of specific agency records stored at the FRC.



Laura Rogers boxes up records for shipment to the FRC.

“OLD FORT LARAMIE”

by Eric Bittner, Reference Archivist,
National Archives Rocky Mountain Region

The image shown below is the former cavalry barracks at Fort Laramie in central Wyoming in the spring of 1909. This barracks building was constructed in 1874, and at times housed infantry as well as cavalry troops stationed at the fort. It is one of the few remaining complete structures at the Fort Laramie National Historic Site. It has undergone some refurbishment, and currently features reproduced sleeping and living areas. Fort Laramie was the most important trading and then military post in the American west. Originally constructed as a private fur trading post, it was purchased by the Federal government in 1849, and functioned as a military post until its closure in 1890.

Following the closure of the

fort, equipment and some of the buildings were sold at auction, and the surrounding land was opened for homesteading. Beginning in 1937, the State of Wyoming took steps to preserve the site, and in 1938 the Federal government also took interest in the permanent preservation of Fort Laramie.

The photograph below appears with others depicting Fort Laramie as it appeared in the early 1900's when engineers from the Bureau of Reclamation were working their way along the North Platte River gathering data for future irrigation and water storage projects. The North Platte Project constructed dams and water diversion and storage

facilities in Nebraska, Kansas, eastern Colorado and central Wyoming. The series of which this photograph album is a part of contains several hundred albums and many thousands of images relating to the location, construction, and operation of dams, canals, and irrigation projects throughout the western United States. The photographs were mostly taken by photographers working for the Bureau of Reclamation, and collected by the Office of Chief Engineer in Denver, Colorado. These records and others are available for research at the National Archives' regional archives in Denver.

Document citation:

“Old Fort Laramie, May 2, 1909” North Platte Project, Album No.1 Construction Photograph Albums, 1903-66 Office of the Chief Engineer Records of the Bureau of Reclamation (Record Group 115) National Archives and Records Administration—Rocky Mountain Region

The photograph below depicts Fort Laramie as it appeared in the early 1900's

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**Mailing Address: P.O. Box 25307 Denver, CO 80225
Hours of Operation: Monday—Friday 7:30am to 3:45pm**

CLOSED ALL FEDERAL HOLIDAYS



Photo of Fort Laramie

Courtesy National Archives

NEW MEXICO Digital Preservation Conference A Success!

By Mark Ferguson, Director, Records Management Division
Rocky Mountain Region

On June 4-6, 2008, the Rocky Mountain Region co-hosted a digital preservation (“DigIn”) conference at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. The conference drew over 125 attendees from Federal, State, and Local governments, universities, cultural institutions and private sector businesses. An impressive array of speakers helped to make DigIn a success:

- Mark Conrad, Archives Specialist, Electronic Records Archives, NARA
- Richard Marciano, Director of the Sustainable Archives & Library Technologies, San Diego Supercomputing Center
- Ken Thibodeau, Director, Electronic Records Archives Program at NARA
- Rosemary Pleva Flynn, Librarian and Manager, Energy and Environmental Research Center
- Richard Pearce Moses, Director of Digital Government Information, Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records
- L. Reynolds Cahoon, Director—Advanced Programs, Lockheed Martin Company
- Jorge Roman and Shelly Spearing, Los Alamos National Laboratory
- Cathy Hartman, Assistant Dean of Libraries for Digital Information Technologies, University of North Texas Libraries
- Mark Phillips, Head of Digital Projects Unit, University of North Texas Libraries
- Craig Ball, Attorney and Technologist
- Jason Baron, Director of Litigation, Office of General Counsel, National Archives and Records Administration
- Daphne DeLeon, Administrator, Nevada State Library and Archives

Here are some of the interesting ideas and lessons learned provided in certain of the conference presentations:

☞ We need to avoid tunnel vision in addressing electronic records issues and not focus on just one aspect alone; view the “big picture” and pursue integrated solutions through systematic approaches. We should consider the idea of treating email messages as their own record series instead of trying to ask users to segregate individual messages into specific series. Users will avoid the “Yes/No” prompts when filing messages. We should not try to change user behavior but save it all (if necessary), and find better ways to search it. Appraise the messages by function, by the sender’s position in the agency, and other high level criteria. For example, email messages from agency decision-makers would be kept longer than messages from those with routine duties. (Richard Pearce Moses.)



(left to right) Jason Baron, Director of Litigation, Office of General Counsel, National Archives and Records Administration, Barbara Voss, Regional Administrator NARA Rocky Mountain Region and Steve Adams, Senior Records Analyst and Conference Organizer.

☞ E-mail messages are growing exponentially in Federal mailboxes. President Reagan’s administration, which used email at the dawn of the technology, yielded about 2 million messages. President Clinton’s administration generated 32 million. The variety of “electronically stored information” (ESI), is enormous. In a tobacco industry litigation it took six months and 25 lawyers and archivists to winnow down 20 million email messages to 20,000 for discovery. No one has this much time. Information retrieval is a hard problem for the following reasons: the fundamental ambiguity of language, human errors, Optical Character Recognition problems (in scanning), non-textual ESI (.wav, .mpg, etc. formats) and a lack of helpful metadata. Lawyers and other researchers need to find ways of improving rates of recall and precision so as to find a greater number of relevant documents, while spending

less overall time and cost sifting through “noise”. Mere ‘keyword’ searches will result false-positive results (irrelevant ESI retrieved), false-negative results (relevant ESI missed and not retrieved), and “dark matter” (relevant documents not found by keyword searches alone). Alternative search methods include using Boolean Strings, fuzzy searches, probabilistic models, statistical (clustering) models, machine learning approaches, categorization tools, and social network analyses. Success in using any automated method of technology will be enhanced by a well thought out process with substantial human input on the front end. The use of search and retrieval tools does not guarantee that all responsive documents will be identified in large data sets. Moreover, different search methods may produce differing results. (Jason Baron.)

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☞ We should be viewing the management of records/information from a holistic, organizational “ecosystem” perspective - linked to strategic business outcomes. Establish a coalition of key players and thought leaders to assess current and future states using a capability model. Use a “systems approach” to understand dynamics, and use an enterprise architecture-centric framework for analysis. We should plan for short, medium, and long term management of records including Persistent Digital Object Preservation. (L. Reynolds Cahoon.)

☞ Electronic Knowledge Management (eKM) means being able to synthesize related facts, form hypotheses, draw conclusions, articulate additional questions, and make decisions with confidence, using accumulated electronic information. Trying to extract knowledge from the ever-increasing volume of data present problems for the providers of information and for users. Providing

context increases precision, but screens out many good matches. General searches yield too many documents, and it is impossible to sift through them all. A typical “knowledge hunt” necessitates dozens of queries, conducted in series, taking lots of time and yielding results in a somewhat disjointed order. The solution is to use smarter tools that allow broad searches but only retrieve highly-relevant content, organize and annotate results, focusing attention on “the good stuff,” extract key concepts to allow a big-picture view at both the collection and document levels, and automate linkage among documents where none existed prior to the search. (Jorge Ramon and Shelly Spearing.)

☞ The NARA Electronic Records Archives is currently under development with its first increment available in late June of 2008. There are four keys to the digital future in which ERA will play a significant part for Federal

agencies. Archival information systems need to be open to new kinds of e-computers without leaving home or office. Systems need to be able to grow in order for records such as (GIS, digital aerial imagery, computer-aided design, etc.) to meet rising or changing user expectations, such as the demand for obtaining electronic records from desktop to process, store, and provide access and accommodate increasing numbers and frequency of use. They also need to be able to evolve in response to changing IT (obsolescence) and changing business requirements. Finally, a system needs to provide closure to ensure the preservation and presentation of authentic records, lifecycle management of e-records, and be consistent with established archival principles. (Ken Thibodeau.)

☞ Data Grids are a series of “middleware” services; software that sits between applications and data sources. Data grids allow you to access data in any format

(databases, stream data, web, documents, images, tables, etc.) stored in any storage program (file systems, tape silos, etc.) and stored anywhere over a wide-area network. Data grids do not have to know the system addresses, paths, protocols or commands needed to retrieve the system. They are good for scalability where you have millions of files and petabytes of data. They can evolve across generations of software, and they can deal with technologies not yet dreamed of. They are currently being used to manage complex science data such as biomedical informatics, seismic data, and real-time sensor readings. They will be a key component of the NARA ERA system. (Mark Conrad and Richard Marciano.)

Slide presentations from the DigIn Conference are located at: <http://www.archives.gov/rocky-mountain/records-mgmt/conferences/digital-preservation.html>



FastPack
Packing and delivery service

Do you have an office full of records but no one to help you send them to the FRC?

Let the experts at the Rocky Mountain Region FRC do the heavy lifting! With FastPack, our experienced staff will box up your records, fill out all the paperwork, and transport the records to the FRC for you.

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Watch for the upcoming ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION FY-2009 Workshops Schedule

Register for workshops and briefings through:
<http://nara.learn.com/recordsmanagement-training>
or request a registration form by e-mailing us at:

workshop.denver@nara.gov

Call: (303) 407-5720 or Fax: (303)-407-5731

Need to register for a specific KA course to complete your NARA certification requirements? Please let us know.