



To support the goals of the City of Denton and its citizens by effectively documenting, preserving, and making accessible the City's historic records.

Leadership Excellence and Enhancement Program (LEEP)

Project Report and Recommendation

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Executive Summary

It is the vision of *Document Denton* to create a municipal archive with an archivist at the helm, to provide a central location for the storage, preservation, arrangement, and access for historic documents produced by the City of Denton. The municipal archive will be a place where the employees and the public can research and engage in the rich history of Denton; a place that will provide faster resolution and better transparency to questions raised by the City Council, staff and citizens.

The City of Denton has over 35 different departments housed in over 30 locations throughout the City. Each department is required to follow the State of Texas records retention schedule, but there is no standardized process for identifying, saving, and organizing documents that have passed the retention requirements, and contain important historical information. The inability to easily locate these documents can be frustrating for city staff and citizens alike, and a drain on staff time and resources.

In our research we looked at the operations of area archives, interviewed archivist and stakeholders within the City of Denton, and gathered feedback from employees. From our findings we have compiled the following three phase plan for the establishment of a municipal archive.

Phase One

- Designate the Library as the official Archive for the City of Denton
- Update the employee off-boarding process
- Establish an annual “Trash to Treasure” event
- Determine criteria for historical documents.

Phase Two

- Include the development of the municipal archive in the City’s Strategic
- Launch an internal awareness campaign about archive services related to preservation of the City’s history
- Recruit practicum students from the local universities.

Future phases

Develop a city-wide system to identify, digitize, and preserve historical documents in a centralized location; managed by a Certified Archivist.

This report contains the information learned through our research and the recommendations. A municipal archives will support the City of Denton’s goals of organizational excellence and transparency in government.

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Introduction

As part of the Leadership Excellence and Enhancement Program (LEEP), our team was given the opportunity to identify an area of weakness that exists in the organization and develop a project that would provide a solution. As part of the LEEP orientation we toured many City departments. While at the Emily Fowler Central Library Terri Gibbs, former Director of Libraries, stated that she

“Information which is not communicated is valueless, and information that cannot be found is similarly worthless.”

- Robek, Brown & Stephens

would like to see the library become an archive for the City. Although Denton was incorporated in 1866, we learned the City has very few centrally archived records that capture historical development. The team recognized that citizens have expressed frustration with their inability to find historical information related to City government. With each department producing, storing, and disseminating information, we agreed the frustration was justified, not just for citizens, but for City staff as well.

The tendency to silo information and the library’s focus on information services sparked the idea for our project. We branded it *Document Denton* and decided to focus on archiving documents that have historic value. The goal of *Document Denton* is to lay the foundation for the creation of a municipal archive, led by a certified archivist, which will provide a centralized location to house the historic documents that currently exist unorganized throughout the City - on shelves, in boxes, in closets and offices scattered across many buildings. The archivist will provide the expertise to effectively document, preserve, and make accessible the City’s historical records, as well as be able to assist citizens and staff to efficiently find the information.

Understanding that our project and the City’s Strategic Plan need to be in alignment, we have established connections between the archive and Key Focus Areas of the strategic plan. *Document Denton* aligns with Strategic Plan Objective 1.4.1: Provide exemplary customer service; Strategic Plan Objective 1.4.3: Respond to customer inquiries in a timely fashion; and Strategic Plan Objective 4.4.2: Provide lifelong learning opportunities with the City’s library.

Document Denton is more than just dedicated space to house old papers and files. It is a commitment by the City to organize, digitize, and make available records with historic value to citizens as they provide information about our past and provide guidance for future decisions.

Project Research

The group began the project research by exploring the function and purpose of an archive. According to Richard Pearce-Moses in *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, “archive” can be defined in three ways:

- The transfer of records from the individual or office of creation to a repository authorized to appraise, preserve, and provide access to those records.
- The division within an organization responsible for maintaining the organization’s records of enduring value.
- The physical building (or portion thereof) housing archival collections.



Dallas Municipal Archive Tour

We used the following methods to learn more about the various aspects of an archive. We interviewed Jennifer Day, the archivist at the new municipal archive in Oklahoma

City, Oklahoma. She shared with us the process and steps she took to establish their archive. Our team toured the archives of University of North Texas, Texas Woman’s University, Denton County, and City of Dallas, which all have dedicated and trained staff, who serve internal departments as well as external customers. These archives were quite impressive, with shelves of historical documents properly preserved and public displays highlighting significant historic events. We contacted the Texas State Library and Archives Commission to enquire about the resources available for developing and maintaining a municipal archive. Our research of several Texas cities revealed those with an archive all have a certified archivist on staff (See City Comparison, **Attachment A**).

We met with Terri Gibbs, the former Director of Libraries for the City of Denton, to gain a better understanding of the Library’s role in the creation of a municipal archive. Additionally, the team interviewed Jennifer Walters, City Secretary, to discuss the types of historical documents the city has and the current system for collection. We consulted with Patrick Grey, Technology Services - Application Architect, to learn about the storage capabilities of Laserfiche and how it could be used in conjunction with an archive. Our research gave us an idea of the tools and resources currently available in the City of Denton that will facilitate the establishment of an archive.

Our team then examined the types of documents the City creates and where and how they are stored. We worked with the Planning department to gain a better understanding of the varieties and

volume of documents produced and their method of organization. During interviews with Technology Services and representatives from various departments, we discussed the current records storage methods being used. The City of Denton follows the records retention schedules issued by the State of Texas for our records management processes. Pearce-Moses defines records management as “The systematic and administrative control of records throughout their life cycle to ensure efficiency and economy in their creation, use, handling, control, maintenance and disposition.”

We then distributed an archives and records survey to 475 City employees and received 128 responses (See survey results, **Attachment B**). The goal of this survey was to determine what, where, and how documents are stored, if at all. The survey confirmed that employees do not know where to look for historical items of interest. Additionally, we learned that while many departments are using Laserfiche for document storage, they also store paper copies; these may or may not be inclusive of items that should be archived. We found that several departments keep their own historical records and pictures internally. The records are not available city-wide because the departments simply do not recognize possible interest in such items once they are no longer needed for retention purposes. The individual departments may not receive requests for historical information, but the library fields these requests on a regular basis.

More than 85% of city staff surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that a centralized point for customers, both internal and external, to access City of Denton historical records would be an asset.

-Document Denton Survey

For example, the library has received questions from other City departments and citizens about:

- Utilities rates over the last 50 years
- Locations of previous landfill sites
- Photographs of past mayors, city council members, or buildings
- The provenance of the O’Neil Ford Municipal buildings
- Information about City ordinances and the previous City Charters
- Changes in city limits boundaries
- Quakertown and other historical neighborhoods

In order to gauge internal interest and to raise awareness of our project, we hosted a Trash to Treasure day at the Service Center (See promotional flyer, **Attachment C**). Members of the *Document Denton* team and staff throughout the Service Center scheduled a day dedicated to decluttering and cleaning

work spaces. We requested employees to contribute any un-needed documents or items that may have historical value. Librarians were on-site to inventory, prepare, and transport materials to the Library. Among the articles collected were plans for the historic fire stations, renderings of proposed buildings by O'Neil Ford, and photographs of employees. Without efforts like Trash to Treasure, historical items may not be recovered and preserved. The event was extremely successful; not only for collecting items, but also for educating staff.



*Plans and drawings acquired during the
Trash to Treasure event*



*Drawings of the Municipal Center Complex
O'Neil Ford & Associates*

The Challenge

In the course of daily business, the City of Denton creates records for a specific purpose or function. A record can be defined as any information, regardless of physical form or characteristic, prepared, owned, used, received, or retained in connection with the transaction of official City business. Records are created to meet three main areas of need:

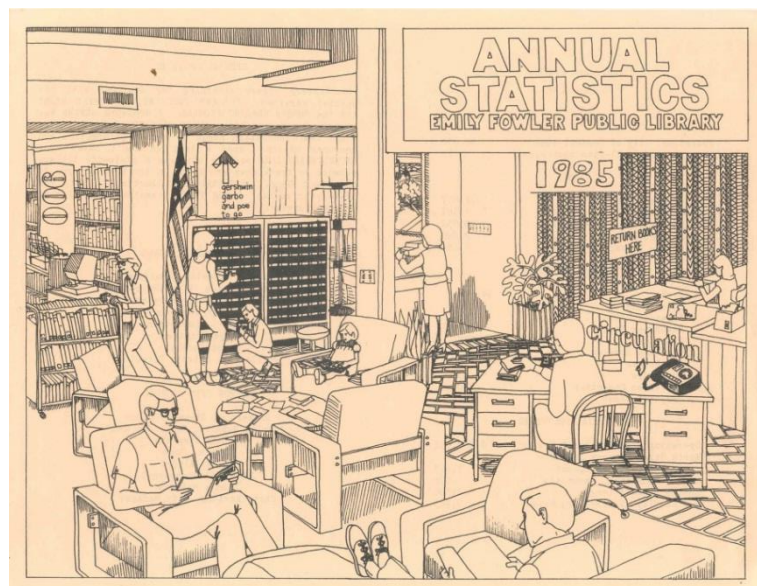
1. Legal needs. To explain the City's responsibilities, protect the City's rights, or protect the rights of the citizens. Examples include city charters and minutes of the chief governing body.
2. Fiscal needs. To establish fiscal responsibility, demonstrate accountability, and track the flow of revenue. Examples include budgets, and general ledgers.
3. Administrative needs. To support ongoing, day-to-day, administrative affairs of the government. Examples include personnel files, policies, and procedures.

Even though the City of Denton creates these records for specific reasons, they may also be historically important if they can provide documentation about events, places, or people, as Kate Lanning Minchew, observes in *Archives for Local Governments*, serving as the "official memory" of the community. The historical or archival value of a document is defined by Pearce-Moses as the ongoing usefulness or significance of records, based on the administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential, or historical information they contain, justifying their continued preservation. A document may also have intrinsic value, meaning it has some unique characteristics that makes it interesting and worthy of retention. A record may have intrinsic value because of its age, location, association with notable people, unusual physical qualities, important or controversial issues, historical events, unusual content, signatures, or attached seals.

Having access to documents preserved and arranged in an archive can help the City meet its own administrative and legal needs. It can help establish the history of a department or City building, and be an invaluable resource in the restoration of an historic structure. Clear records can help resolve adverse legal actions against the City. Archived documents provide faster resolution and better transparency to questions raised by the City Council, staff and our citizens. Preserving records makes administrative, legal, and fiscal sense, and it helps preserve historical materials for future generations. While individual departments follow the State of Texas records retention schedules, some have developed their own additional procedures for keeping departmental and City history. Through our interviews and departmental visits, we have found these procedures vary greatly and lack standardization.

For example, documents held by the City Secretary, including the minutes for the City Council and the early City of Denton birth and death registers have been digitized and are available on Laserfiche. In contrast, mid-century tax rolls were destroyed according to the record retention schedule. Although the destruction of these records properly followed procedure, their value to local history researchers and genealogists was lost. A trained archivist would be able to attach historical value to documents like these.

As the archivist John Slate states, “Besides providing for the systematic disposal of unnecessary records, records schedules indicate what needs to be kept in an archives. Schedules can help identify records that may be missing from and existing archives holding.” Other than the notations in the remarks section of the record retention schedule, the City does not have set criteria for determining historic value in a document. There is no system in place to identify these documents, digitize, and preserve the original in a centralized location. During the employee exit process when long-term employees retire, a Knowledge Transfer Questionnaire is provided in an attempt to preserve institutional knowledge. However, there is no process in place to retain potential documents with historical value held by employees upon departure.

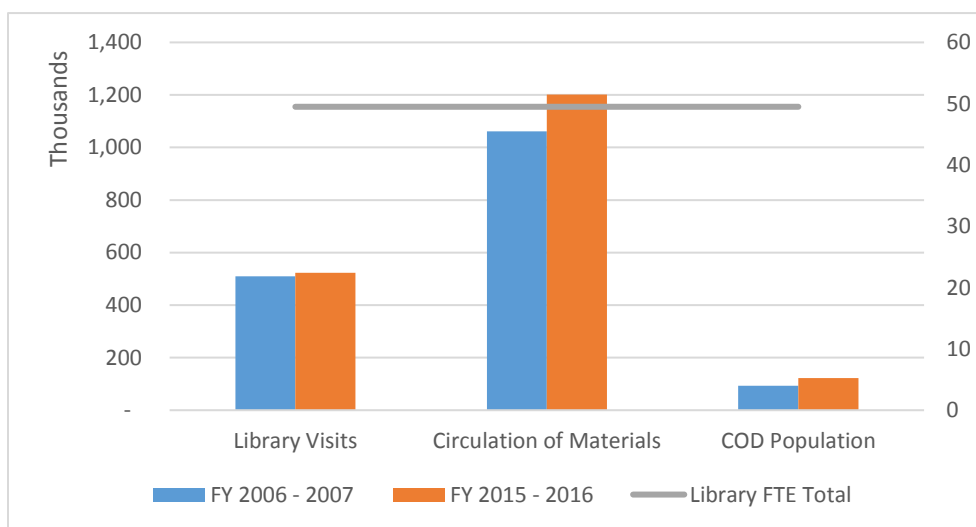


The Value of an Archivist

The *Document Denton* team recommends the employment of a certified archivist to develop the Municipal Archive. A full-time, certified archivist will be instrumental in effectively documenting, preserving, and making accessible the City's historical records.

While librarians and archivists jobs seem similar, the two differ significantly in the way they arrange, describe, and use the materials in their collections. Archivists receive special training in managing materials, which are unique and often irreplaceable, in archival collections. The expertise and specialization of an archivist is invaluable and cannot be provided with current library staff. Chart 1 shows the increased usage levels provided by the library services, the increase in the City of Denton population and the library services full-time equivalent employees.

Chart 1:



The Archivist will work to build a partnership with each department to establish a systematic approach to preserving departmental history (See Archivist Job Description, **attachment D**). The position is unique due to the global nature of the work that requires a different funding strategy. For this reason, a cost allocation distributed among General Government and Utilities is recommended. The Archivist will track time working with each department in order to have a more accurate allocation in future years. Due to the complexity and specialization of launching an archive, this position will report to the Emily Fowler Central Library Branch Manager.

In addition the archivist will:

- Identify, collect, preserve, and make accessible records, resources, and personal papers of enduring historical, legal, administrative, and fiscal value that document the social, economic, and political development of the City of Denton.
- Analyze, develop, and provide written standards and procedures for the care and maintenance of city records, including those created and/or maintained in electronic format.
- Make the records accessible in order to meet the research and information needs of city staff, future decision makers, residents, students, genealogists, and researchers.
- Available to the departments to help organize their records, both electronic and physical.
- Educate the community about the municipal Archives.
- Use the professional standards and ethics of the Society of American Archivists and the Academy of Certified Archivists to guide archives policies and procedures.

Multiple grant opportunities are available to municipal archives. Grant funding amounts vary depending on the project scope and funding source (See Listing of Relevant Grants, **attachment E**). The Archivist will apply for grants in an effort to offset project costs. Minimal funding is proposed for document storage materials. The Archivist will use current Library resources but will require additional materials to preserve historic items properly.

Based on the research conducted by our team, the success of the Municipal Archive is dependent upon the addition of an archivist to champion the program. Without continuous project leadership and organizational priority, the City's institutional knowledge, departmental projects, and municipal history will be lost for future City leaders, staff and citizens.

Recommendation

It is the vision of Document Denton to create a municipal archive with an archivist at the helm, to provide a central location for the storage, preservation, and arrangement of historic documents. The municipal archive will be a place where the employees and the public can research and engage in the rich history of Denton; a place that will provide faster resolution and better transparency to questions raised by the City Council, staff and citizens.

We propose that this be accomplished in a three phrase approach which would include:

Phase One

- **Designate the Library as the official Archive for the City of Denton**
- **Define “historical criteria” for documents**
- **Update the employee off-boarding process**

At this time when an employee leaves the City of Denton they complete an off-boarding process. As part of this process, a Knowledge Transfer Questionnaire is provided in an attempt to preserve institutional knowledge. We recommend adding an item to the checklist asking if the employee has in their possession any documents that have historical value. (See *Is it Trash or Treasure* flyer, **attachment F**)

- **Locate appropriate storage space**
- **Establish an annual “Trash to Treasure” event**

Phase Two

- **Include the development of the municipal archive in the City’s Strategic Plan**

A municipal archive will allow the City to meet the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan by:

- Providing exemplary customer satisfaction by being able to respond to customer inquiries in a more timely fashion.
- Utilizing technology and data to assist in making well-informed management and operational decisions,
- Promoting life-long learning opportunities through the City’s library facilities,

- Supporting organizational excellence by acquiring, organizing, maintaining, securing and preserving the knowledge and information generated by the City of Denton; making it easily available through physical, digital, and online portals.
- **Launch an internal awareness campaign about archive services related to preservation of the City's history**
- **Recruit and utilize practicum students from University of North Texas and Texas Woman's University**
- **Develop Performance Measures**



Sample awareness campaign

Future phases

Develop a city-wide system to identify, digitize, and preserve historical documents in a centralized location; managed by a Certified Archivist.

Conclusion

Having access to documents preserved and arranged in an Archive can help the City meet its own administrative and legal needs. Access to these documents can help establish the history of a department or City building, they can be invaluable in the restoration of a historic building or structure. They can even help prevent adverse legal actions against the City. Archived documents can provide faster resolution to questions raised by the Council, City Staff and our Citizens, and better the perception of transparency in City government. Preserving records makes administrative, legal and fiscal sense, and saves historical materials for future generations.

A municipal archive is more than just dedicated space to house old papers and files. It is a commitment by the City to organize, digitize, and make available records with historic value to citizens as they provide information about our past and provide guidance for future decisions.

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Attachments

Attachment A: City Comparison

City	Population (2010 Census)	Municipal Archive Organization	Archive FTEs	Archive FY 2015-16 Budget
Austin	790,390	Austin History Center, Austin Public Library	14 FTE	\$ 1,203,053
Dallas	1,197,816	Division of City Secretary's Office	2 FTE	\$ 171,583
Denton	113,383		0 FTE	\$ -
El Paso	649,121	Division of Information Technology Services	2 FTE	\$ 749,539
Fort Worth	741,206	Division of Library	6 FTE	\$ 437,878
Houston	2,099,451	Division of Library	44 FTE	\$ 3,502,753
Irving	216,290	Funded by Hotel Occupancy Tax Funds	2.5 FTE	\$ 267,534
San Antonio	1,327,407	Division of City Clerk's Office	32 FTE	\$ 3,446,923

Attachment B: Survey Results

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Weighted Average
I am able to easily find historical documentation or data for my department.	7.81% 10	29.69% 38	20.31% 26	35.94% 46	6.25% 8	128	2.97
My department would support and contribute to a centralized municipal archive.	30.71% 39	44.09% 56	22.83% 29	2.36% 3	0.00% 0	127	4.03
My department has adequate procedures in place to preserve documents or items that may have historical value.	17.46% 22	32.54% 41	24.60% 31	19.05% 24	6.35% 8	126	3.36
My department has a filing system for physical documents to make items easy to locate.	14.29% 18	41.27% 52	15.08% 19	24.60% 31	4.76% 6	126	3.36
My department saves documents and records using a unified naming scheme.	13.39% 17	27.56% 35	18.11% 23	31.50% 40	9.45% 12	127	3.04
An archive will assist my department to manage documents that, by law, must be permanently retained.	33.59% 43	39.06% 50	19.53% 25	6.25% 8	1.56% 2	128	3.97
There is one person in my department who is responsible for coordinating records management.	9.45% 12	26.77% 34	18.11% 23	36.22% 46	9.45% 12	127	2.91
Centralized records management and an archive would be a great benefit for my department.	35.16% 45	39.06% 50	20.31% 26	4.69% 6	0.78% 1	128	4.03
My department utilizes Laserfiche to store documents in an effective manner.	30.71% 39	34.65% 44	15.75% 20	14.17% 18	4.72% 6	127	3.72
A centralized point for customers, both internal and external, to access City of Denton historical records would be an asset.	42.52% 54	42.52% 54	11.81% 15	3.15% 4	0.00% 0	127	4.24
Improved record keeping will ensure that important records and information, or "Institutional Knowledge," are retained after someone retires or leaves the City of Denton.	51.56% 66	39.06% 50	5.47% 7	3.13% 4	0.78% 1	128	4.38
I am able to easily find historical documentation or data for other departments in the City of Denton.	3.91% 5	4.69% 6	28.91% 37	42.97% 55	19.53% 25	128	2.30



Trash to Treasure Day

Tidy your workspace and save the City's history.

Bring your unwanted, unused, out dated, or past retention documents, maps, photographs, interesting finds to the Service Center training room.

Library staff will be on hand to help identify items that have historic value and are candidates for the Municipal Archive.

Solid waste staff will be available to properly dispose of any documents no longer needed.

Thursday, December 8 , 2016

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Service Center Training Room

Prize awarded for the most "historic" item discovered.

Pizza will be served

**For more information contact:
Laura Douglas (8749) or Cassey Odgen (7195).**



City of Denton Archivist

Job Summary:

Under general direction, is responsible for the development, collection, acquisition and preservation of the Historical Municipal Archives program under Library Services.

Essential Job Functions:

Appraises, organizes, and processes archival collections.

Oversees collection management and determines unit task priorities; monitors collections for problems regarding preservation or research access.

Digitizes archival materials and creates finding aids.

Provides reference assistance with research inquiries involving archival materials; answers questions and gives advice on preservation of documents.

Conducts inventory of documents and unprocessed collections and creates finding aids.

Scans and photographs documents and creates meta-data for web access.

Assists with curating and appraisals to determine function, authenticity, and value.

Creates exhibits for display in archival cases and outreach activities on City of Denton related subjects.

Prepares grant applications and budgets.

Conducts archival training of the Municipal Archives Programs.

Participates in long and short-range work planning.

Stays current with laws, regulations, and techniques involved in archival work.

Performs related duties and fulfills responsibilities as required.

Job Requirements:

A Master's degree from an accredited college in Library Science, Archival Science or related field.

One (1) years of experience in archival records, collection and researching historical records, library systems, or related field.

Certification with the Academy of Certified Archivists, highly desirable.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

Knowledge of current archival processes.

Knowledge of principals, techniques and methods for preservation of physical and electronic records.

Knowledge of computer programs such as MS Office Suite.

Knowledge of MP3 conversion.

Knowledge of Texas history.

Knowledge of municipal government.

Knowledge of records management.

Ability to coordinate activities with other municipal departments.

Ability to work a shift that may include nights and/or weekends.

Ability to communicate clearly and effectively with a variety of stakeholders, both verbally and in writing.

Ability to analyze technical and statistical data and make evaluations.

Ability to supervise, train, and evaluate assigned staff. .

Ability to develop and maintain good working relationships with employees, management, and the public.

Ability to maintain good public relations with conservation organizations and property owners concerned in the community's historic preservation planning.

Ability to work with the public and interested citizen groups in establishing meaningful goals and objectives for historic preservation of the City's records.

Physical Requirements:

Ability to lift/carry

Attachment E: Listing of Relevant Grants

Source National Historical Publications & Records Commission

Grant Name Access to Historical Records

Purpose Support projects that promote access to America's historical records to encourage understanding of our democracy, history, and culture.

Deadline December 2017

Award Up to \$100,000

Grants

Available 10

Cost Sharing Required

Source National Endowment for the Humanities

Grant Name Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions

Purpose Preservation Assistance Grants help small and mid-sized institutions improve their ability to preserve and care for their significant humanities collections.

Deadline May 2017

Award Varies

Grants

Available Varies

Cost Sharing No

Source Texas State Library and Archives Commission

Grant Name TexTreasures Grant Original

Purpose Provides assistance to libraries to provide access to their special or unique holdings and make available to library users across the state.

Deadline March 2017

Award \$25,000 max

Grants

Available Varies

Cost Sharing No

Source Institute of Museum and Library Services

Grant Name Spark Grants, Planning Grants, National Forum Grants, Project Grants and Research Grants

Purpose Grants to libraries for projects that will address challenges, and advance practices, within the library and archive fields.

Deadline June 2017

Award Up to \$25,000

Grants

Available 12

Cost Sharing No

Is It Trash or Treasure?

Build the City of Denton Municipal Archive.



Some records created, filed, or used by departments during the course of business may be worthy of preservation and special care. These records may have a continuing importance because the information is useful for administrative, historical, or research purposes.

What makes records historically valuable?

A local government record (document, map, photograph, report) may be historically important if it:

- Provides significant evidence of government business (how it functions and does its work) or
- Provides significant information about people, places, or events involving government

Administrative Value

Records with administrative value typically pertain to the origin, development, activities, accomplishments, and functions of an agency. Examples of such records include:

- Annual reports
- Board meeting minutes
- Policy and procedure manuals
- Selected correspondence
- Publicity campaigns

Intrinsic Value

Records with intrinsic value have unique characteristics that make them interesting and worthy of retention. A record may have intrinsic value because of its:

- Age or time period
- Location (example: Courthouse Square)
- Association with famous people
- Unusual physical or aesthetic qualities
- Important or controversial issues
- Historical events
- Unique, special or unusual content
- Signatures or attached seals

If your department has materials with possible historic value, send them to the Denton Public Library to be considered for the City of Denton Municipal Archive.

Contact Laura Douglas at laura.douglas@cityofdenton.com or x8749.

