

DISTRICT CLERK – POLK COUNTY, TEXAS  
PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION RECORDS PLAN

District Clerk's Records Technology Fund Overview

The District Court Records Technology Fund is authorized in Texas Government Code 51.305. Section 51.305(d) requires the authorized fee to be used for "the preservation and restoration of the district court records archive." Section (f) states, "the district clerk shall prepare an annual written plan for the preservation and restoration of the district clerk's records archive." The Commissioners Court is required to hold a public hearing on this plan and to publish notice of such hearing in a newspaper no later than 15 days prior to the hearing.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this document is to define the restoration and preservation, digital capture, storage, retention and management of archived records belonging to the District Clerk's Office. Records maintained in the District Clerk's Office have been identified to fall under the category of "Preservation and Restoration Plan" that will provide reproduction and archiving of such records for space availability purposes. It is the intent of the District Clerk to follow guidelines set by the Texas State Library and Archives Commissioner.

GOAL

The goal is to reproduce and archive all documents, regardless of type, as efficiently as possible. The District Clerk's office also intends to restore records, suspending or reducing deterioration of public records, improving the public access to these documents in a manner that reduces the risk of deterioration, and possible reducing or eliminating paper documents.

SCOPE

The scope of this document includes the following:

- \*All District Clerk records filed at the Polk County Courthouse
- \*Plans to restore and preserve records with significant historical value
- \*Future plans are to improve public and governmental access and provide an archive for records that have or will be imaged.

This document addresses the restoration and preservation needs of the District Clerk Records Archive. No other departments are addressed.

## SECTION ONE: RECORDS CURRENTLY IN REPOSITORY

### INVENTORY

The office of the District Clerk maintains the records of the 258<sup>th</sup> and 411<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts of Law as well as records filed in the County Court at Law. Currently the District Clerk's office holds over 100 books and several thousand paper files that are related to civil and criminal actions which have occurred since the founding of Polk County in 1846.

## SECTION TWO: RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION

### PERMANENT RECORDS

All records from 2005 to present have been imaged through a third party vendor who maintained a copy of our images offsite. To enhance the current archiving procedure and to bring our system current with the ability to interface with efilng, we have contracted to move all of our images from the third party vendor to our case management system and their imaging system. Once completed, all of our images will be in one software and will have the capability of interfacing with efile and of being viewed online. As time permits, personnel will be back scanning cases prior to 2005. Additionally, we have provided images of our current criminal cases to a third party vendor for viewing of our documents on-line at anytime for approved users. As we build our cases through the conversion of our documents from our previous imaging vendor, more of our criminal case documents will be available online. This would be an ongoing service that would be available for judges, court staff and the general public when the need arose.

## SECTION THREE: FUTURE PLANS

We intend to begin a preservation project to identify historical records from those slated for conversion to digital format so they can be restored and preserved. We hope to work with community volunteers to assist in identifying our historical and significant documents to keep costs down. We will need to acquire materials used to preserve those historical records. We intend to research grants available to assist these activities. The need for this project will continue as long as the District Clerk has paper records awaiting conversion to digital.

The annual revenue from District Court Records Archive Fund will not be sufficient to fund all these activities, so the District Clerk is not requesting extensive expenditures from this fund at this time. This will allow the fund to accumulate revenue in order to fund more significant projects in the future.