

Vermont State Archives and Vital Records continued from page 1

A bit of History:

In 2006, \$650,000 site selection and design funds for a new facility were appropriated. In 2008 the former Public Records Division within the Department of Buildings and General Services consolidated with the State Archives within the Office of the Secretary of State to create VSARA and provide savings not only by allowing both programs to be housed in one facility but also by providing a single professional resource to manage public records.

Also in 2008, \$1.5 million was put in the capital bill to begin construction at Middlesex. In 2009 an additional \$6.8 million was approved to complete construction and address \$700,000 in deferred maintenance to the existing record center.

VSARA consists of the State Archives; the State records and information management program; the record center, which holds little-used departmental records awaiting destruction; and an administrative services unit responsible for everything from certifying Vermont birth, death and marriage records to fulfilling notary public supervision, Administrative Procedure Act procedures, and Legislative Clerk duties.

The new facility better protects some of Vermont's most valuable and important records, while improving service delivery. VSARA is currently working with numerous agencies to create more accurate record descriptions; retention periods that reflect current legal and administrative requirements; and standards and best practices for managing digital records.

Construction included:

- o Dedicated mechanical systems that provide 100-year preservation environments for the archival areas.
- o Construction that meets the National Fire Protection Association Code 232 "Standard for the Protection of Records."
- o The use of interior building materials recommended by the Society of American Archivists for minimizing the deterioration of documents.
- o The building's exterior envelope follows the thermal, moisture, and air infiltration performance recommendations of Efficiency Vermont's "High Performance" Guide, with one of the tightest envelope air sealing tests achieved in the State.
- o A "mist fog" fire suppression system in the new vault, while all spaces are protected by an advanced air sampling smoke detection system.
- o A 120,000 gallon underground, on-site fire suppression water storage and new building fire pump providing independent suppression in the record center until area fire squads are in place.
- o A 2,000 square foot reference room that provides monitored public reference to archival records and wireless access.
- o Upgrades to telecommunication and security systems.
- o Installation of a new building-wide digital HVAC monitoring system for better monitoring and maintenance supervision.



Photo L-R: Mike Doyle of Montpelier, Gerry Myers of Bldg. and General Services with Senator. Bill Doyle and Sec. of State. Deb Markowitz during tour of the new vital records vault.

Sen. Doyle said. "This is another important step towards the preservation of the great history of the State of Vermont including the preservation of the Vermont State Constitution written in the 1700s."

The State Archives:

- o Holds public records of continuing value including the 1777 Vermont Constitution; the official correspondence of governors; legislative committee records; and other important documents.
- o Assisted over 2,000 researchers since the reference room opened.
- o Provides a wide variety of information on government and governance through its website at: <http://vermont-archives.org/>.

The Records and Information Management Program:

- o Is currently working with over 20 public agencies through its Targeted Assistance Program to create current, legally compliant records management systems.
- o Is working with the Department of Information and Innovation and other to develop standards and best practices for managing digital records in compliance with legal and administrative needs.
- o Is re-assessing current retention periods for records already in the record center so agencies can decide if their records are being preserved beyond their legal and administrative requirements.

The Record Center:

- o Holds 91,000 cubic feet of agency records awaiting destruction.
- o During 2009 responded to 12,000 agency requests for records; re-filed 10,000 individual agency files; and destroyed 8,000 boxes that had met their retention limit.

During 2009 the Administrative Services Unit:

- o Certified 6,500 Vermont vital records;
- o Confirmed 9,300 Vermont birth records for the Department of Children and Families;



Temperature controlled Archival Records Vault. R: Close up of the town of Middlesex on historical map in office area.



Gov. Douglas addresses the attendees at the Grand Opening ceremony.

