Managing Records: Paper and Digital

Presented by:

Tony Wright
City Archives Officer for the City of Grand Rapids

Background

 Twenty-six years of experience with local government records and archives.

 Twenty-three years of experience in Michigan working for the City Kalamazoo and the City of Grand Rapids.

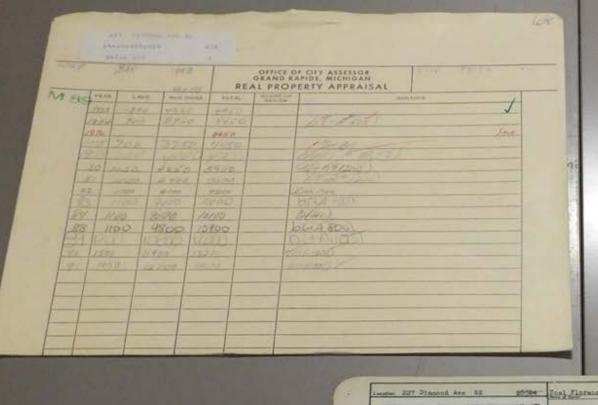
 Experience with retention schedule development, employee training, archival preservation, digitizing records, and microfilming.







- We have records for the Village of Grand Rapids and the City of Grand Rapids (1838 to the present).
- We have 21,664.55 cubic feet of records. This does not include over 22,000 building plans and an estimated 25,000 to 55,000 images.
- We also store records for the Grand Rapids Public Schools, Ottawa County, and the Dominican Sisters of Marywood.



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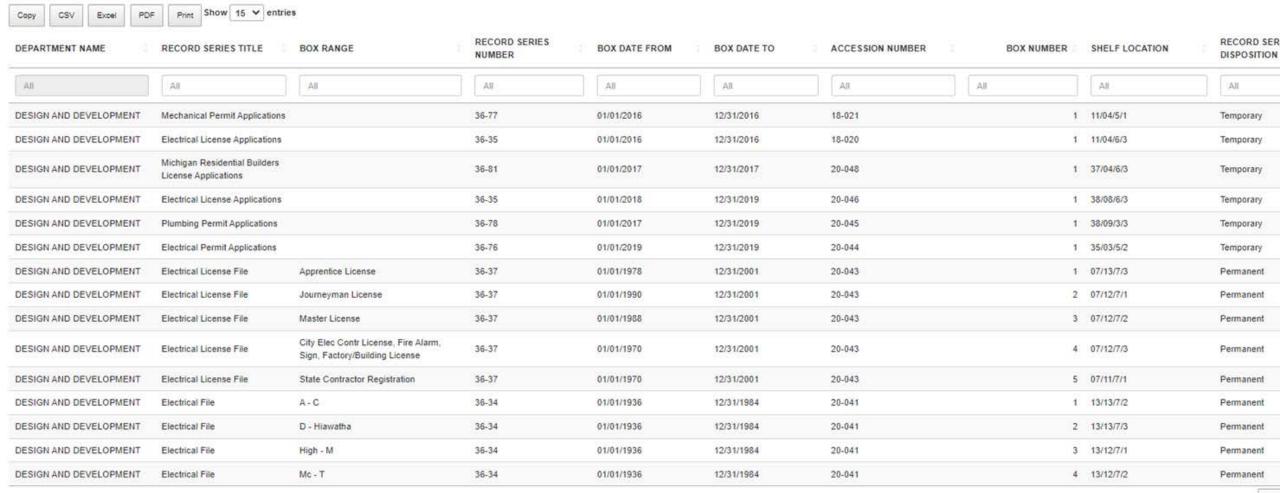
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- We have an inventory of our holdings on an Access database.
 Our database lists all boxes, and in some cases, the folders as well. It includes shelf locations and destruction dates.
- Destruction is completed on a yearly basis and requires the signatures from department or division liaisons. Our records are shredded to the point of pulverization.
- We also track all requests using Access.

Design and Development -

Planning -

Design and Development Shelf List



Showing 1 to 15 of 672 entries

Previous

 We share our space with the Grand Rapids Public Museum and Kent County.

 Our building has key card entry and is monitored by a security staff.

 We have a temperature-controlled facility, and we control the relative humidity of the facility.

- Our staff completes 1,500 to 2,500 requests per year.
- We have a records retention schedule that was approved by the State of Michigan. We also have developed guidelines for electronic records management.
- Our electronic policy includes guidelines from the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA).

Key Points to Electronic Records

• Understanding Records: The Federal Records Act defines US government records as: ...all recorded information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by a Federal agency under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of data in them.

Access vs Preservation

Electronic Files (1 to 5 Years)

 These records are generally temporary records by the day-today work of a department. An example would be water bill stubs with a two-year retention period.

 Online storage is acceptable for records that have this length of lifecycle.

 Application upgrades may be necessary to ensure continued access throughout lifecycle.

Electronic Files (5 to 10 Years)

 These records are generally less active. An example would be impounded car records, which have a 10-year retention.

 Off-line storage is recommended for records that have this length of life-cycle.

If kept electronically three issues may arise...

Electronic Files (5 to 10 Years)

- Multiple version issues. Multiple people working on the records may create duplicates or differences, and the original will have to be controlled centrally, which increases the amount of time spent on monitoring the files.
- System upgrade issues. An application update or hardware update can introduce access problems and increase the amount of time spent monitoring the hardware and software.

Electronic Files (5 to 10 Years)

 Migration issues. If the records are stored in vendor-supplied software, problems may arise when migrating to a different or updated system. Companies supplying a software solution may not be around forever.

Electronic Files (10 Years to Permanent)

- An example of these records would be certain contracts and agreements, which have the retention of 10 years following the contract's expiration. Due to the length of some contracts, this can extend to a retention of well over 30 years.
- Off-line storage is highly recommended.
- Migration, system upgrades, and other issues regarding the software and hardware are almost inevitable.

Electronic Files (10 Years to Permanent)

It is required that all permanent records be transferred to paper or microfilm formats. If this is impossible, a standard sustainable file format must be used.

A single staging computer not connected to a network should be used to access permanent electronic records. This measure may seem strict, but it is necessary to ensure that those records are protected and secure forever. That the records are themselves permanent speaks to their importance.

If permanent records are transferred to paper or microfilm, a digital copy may be used to fulfill access needs.

Know Your Resources

 Michigan's Records Management Services – 517-335-9132 or recordscenter@michigan.gov.

- They have retention schedules that are agency-specific online and general schedules for local government. They also provide guidance and training.
- Historical Societies, local libraries, and regional records repositories.

My Contact Information

Tony Wright (awright@grcity.us) – 616-456-3114

 https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/City-Archives-and-Records-Center