



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2011 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 11, 2011

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Municipal Archives Digital Collection

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: City of San Antonio

Jurisdiction population(s): 1.373,668 million

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2010, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: January Year: 2010

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 2011. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Sheryl L. Sculley

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of San Antonio

Name: Leticia M. Vacek

Title: City Clerk Jurisdiction: City of San Antonio

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Edward Benavides

Title: Chief of Staff Jurisdiction: City of San Antonio

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CITY OF SAN ANTONIO – 2011 ICMA AWARD ENTRY:

PROGRAM EXCELLENCE AWARD/LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK - MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES DIGITAL COLLECTION

The City of San Antonio (CoSA) has a rich history and is one of the most historic cities in Texas and is the 7th largest city in the nation. As a city with a recently established archival program, there is much work to be done in building a presence of the City's archives. Archives contain records of enduring value created in the daily governmental affairs in an effort to carrying out and documenting our City's progress and history.

The mission of the Office of the City Clerk (OCC) is to facilitate access for our internal City Departments and the public, of current and archived records. Archival records include, but are not limited to: minutes, ordinances, correspondence, photographs, reports, maps, and plans generated by officials and government employees on a daily basis. The OCC is responsible for storing, digitizing, and preserving official documents of CoSA in accordance with Texas Local Government Code 201.002.

Problem Assessment:

During the calendar years 2007, 2008 and 2009, the City of San Antonio prepared approximately 2,064, 2,400, and 2,800 open records requests, respectively. Thus, Leticia M. Vacek, City Clerk; recognized the need for a Municipal Archives Digital Collection (MADC).

This opportunity focused on four areas:

1. The number of open records requests being voluminous.

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2. Physical access to historical documents caused damage to the records.
3. Citizens and researches were unable to find time to take off work to view records.
4. The processing time in making records available to the public.

Working people in San Antonio find it economically difficult to travel downtown to pay to park their vehicle and pick up requested records. A digital collection search provides research results immediately, and is a convenient alternative, as well as, creates openness and transparency in Government. Our mission statement indicates that "San Antonio will provide the institutional foundation to support government and promote public trust and awareness". Transparency promotes accountability and provides information to the citizenry. The MADC Program contributes to the City's greater mission of open government, to archival preservation of historical documents, and to facilitate access to these records.

Program Implementation and Costs:

The OCC created a MADC - <http://www.sanantonio.gov/clerk/ArchiveSearch/>. The digital collections currently house records from 1770 through 2011:

- San Fernando de Bexar Minutes & Ordinances, 1770-1832 (355 pages)
- Spanish Minute Book One & Two, 1815-1835 (464 pages)
- Journal A Spanish and English translation 1837-1849 (820 pages)
- Alamo Property Plat and Field Notes 1849 and 1885 (2 pages)
- City Council Ordinance Book One, 1850-1868 (handwritten) (203 pages)
- Historical Figures documents, including:
 - General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna Letter, dated 1843;

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- President of Mexico Porfirio Diaz Letter, dated 1895;
- US Senator Henry Clay, dates 1852 (14 pages)
- City Charters – 1870, 1885, 1899, 2001, and 2008 (825 pages)
- Death Records, 1875-1890 (298 pages)
- City of San Antonio Election Results, 1876-1937 (283 pages)
- Trueheart Engineering Maps, 1899-1901 (1,084 pages)
- Brackenridge, Mahncke Parks, San Antonio River 1905 and 1908 (2 pages)
- City Council Ordinance Books, 1915-1964 (22,070 pages)
- City Council Meeting Minutes, 1916-present (80,169 pages)
- City Block Red Tax Maps, 1920-1990 (933 pages)
- City Council Ordinances, Resolutions, Agendas, 2008-present
- Mayor Henry Cisneros Collection (275 pages)

MADC debuted on January 12, 2010. OCC staff digitized and indexed 108,470 images and 6,962 sets of City Council Minutes and Ordinances for world wide access.

These collections are searchable using 30 index fields and conform to the Dublin Core Standard. Additionally, Adobe Acrobat files are full-text searchable.

Grant support from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) allowed for the creation of the City's first MADDC. A partnership between OCC & Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) towards specific development of the MADDC component cost \$102,912, plus 360 internal resource hours.

Measurable Outcomes:

In a 13-month period, the MADDC has received 5,009 visits and 31,906 searches. This resulted with a Local Government Operations Cost Reduction, as two staff members managing archives and monitoring researchers were eliminated but staff

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continues to operate efficiently. It has also resulted in Improved air quality protection by significantly reducing greenhouse emissions (5,009 trips * avg 10 mile roundtrip = 50,090 miles. Equivalent to 309 lbs of Hydrocarbons; 2,308 lbs of carbon monoxide; 153.5 lbs of Nitrogen Oxides; and 101 lbs of Carbon Dioxide.) and had a positive community impact by reducing researchers' travel time, allowing for more personal quality time, as well as reduction in fuel costs (equivalent to 3,339 gallons/yr).

Additionally, through outreach efforts with several private and public agencies such as the San Antonio Conservation Society, Los Bexareños Genealogical Society, Texas A&M University San Antonio History Department, and the University of Texas at San Antonio, several researchers have published works. The published works cite the MADC as one of their resources. Texas State Library and Archives Commissioner Martha Doty Freeman and Maria Watson Pfeiffer recently completed an intensive report on Archival Research on New City Blocks 248, 293, and 915, "Comprising the new Police Headquarters Location; and the current PD Headquarters for the Proposed New Federal Courthouse in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas" for the General Services Administration. Mr. David McDonald, who is writing a book on Jose Antonio Navarro (1795-1871), has conducted research using several of the MADC's. Another researcher, Ed Gaita, is publishing a book entitled "Streetcars of San Antonio", and is citing use of the collection *City Council Proceedings 1849-2005*. Daniel E. Snell, President of Maverick Land Surveying Company, is also performing research using MADC.

The MADC aims to open doors for historians, architects, surveyors, developers, geographers, archaeologists, historic preservationists, and all those who have a stake in how the layout of CoSA has changed over time.

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Lessons Learned:

We have learned that simple search features are needed. Although the digital collection is an excellent source for outreach and brings awareness, it cannot be the sole method for improving accessibility to our city's history. The vision of creating a History Center is needed to showcase the City's archival collections. Accordingly, the City Clerk began a conscientious effort by cultivating public and private partnerships.

The MADC delivers high resolution images. Despite using state-of-the-art technology, loading large files take time. It is necessary to explore electronic file compression options without jeopardizing image quality. The intended outcome for smaller file sizes serves the purpose of narrowing the "digital divide," that is, improved E-Democracy and E-Government access for citizens. In a case where files load slowly, researchers may abandon their efforts.

In order to create an improved search experience, the MADC will be monitored regularly for discrepancies. Redesign will include "FAQ's" which highlight search capability and an index of collections for clarity.

Our successes have taught us that challenges encountered during the planning and implementation of the MADC were resolved through internal partners. This partnership example providing digital collections for CoSA serves not only the City's needs, but should strengthen advocacy of the creation of digital collections in other governments.