NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF STATE



Vital Records Improvement Fund Grant Program for City and Town Clerks

May 2006 -- January 2008

Introduction

In May 2006, the NH Department of State (DOS) hired Dr. Douglass Teschner to work with the Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee to implement a grant and training program for city and towns clerks to preserve their vital records. This report summarizes the grant program accomplishments during the 20 month period that followed.

Key Numbers

I. GRANT REQUESTS FROM CITY AND TOWN CLERKS

Total Requests	Assessment	Assigned to	Site Visits	Consultant	Grants Complete or
from Clerks	Requests	Assessment	Held or	Assessment	Underway
		Consultants	Scheduled	Reports Filed	
157 plus 10	145 plus 10	145/145 =	145/145 =	145/145 =	122/145 plus 12
received late = 167	late $= 155$	100 %	100 %	100%	grandfathered = 134
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Thirteen additional inquiries were received, in addition to the **167** cities and towns that applied, bringing the total number of NH municipalities that applied or inquired to **180 out of 234** in the state.

II. VITAL RECORDS PRESERVATION WORKSHOPS FOR CLERKS

A. January 2007 "Basics of Vital Records Preservation" Attendance

Concord	Lancaster	Lebanon	Portsmouth	Conway	TOTAL
1/10	1/11	1/12	1/25	1/26	
47	9	17	24	14	111 participants
					from 95 cities/towns

B. September 5, 2007 "Disaster Planning: Expect the Unexpected" held 9/5/07 at NH City and Town Clerks Association annual conference, N. Conway NH Number who signed the register = 77 participants

III. EXPENDITURES (as of 1/18/08)

Assessments (145 competed at an average cost of \$1742 per assessment)	\$ 252,610
Grants (12 "grandfathered" plus 122 post-assessment, completed or underway)	584,870
Workshops	6,970
Initial consultant planning meetings	7,578
Administration	103,500

TOTAL TO DATE \$ 955,528

Of the \$955,528 in total expenditures¹, \$501,237 was allocated in FY '07 and \$454,291 thus far in FY '08 (6+ months).

Background

The State of New Hampshire's Vital Records Improvement Fund (VRIF), created in 1991 and recodified in 2005, exists for the, "sole purpose . . . to provide revenues for the improvement of the registration, certification, preservation, and management of the state's vital records. . . . Moneys in the fund shall be allocated for software applications and development, preservation efforts, hardware, communications and technical support." VRIF revenue is derived from a portion of the fees collected for copying and verifying vital records. ³

The Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee (VRIFAC), created under RSA 5-C:16, "assists the Secretary of State in administering the Fund." The members of the committee includes representatives of diverse groups that have an interest in vital records, including city and town clerks, a funeral director, a physician, a local city public health agency representative, a public member, a vital records information user, a health information specialist, and state agency representatives (Health and Human Services, Office of Information Technology, the State Archivist, the Registrar of Vital Records, and the Secretary of State).

Most VRIF expenditures over the fund's 18 year history have been used for hardware acquisitions and software development and maintenance, including providing hardware and

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¹ Note: For purposes of this report, "expenditures" are those entered into the grant program spreadsheet at the time the invoices were approved by the grant coordinator and submitted to the DOS business office for payment. The one the exception to this methodology is the administrative cost which is apportioned quarterly.

² The VRIF, which is described in RSA 5-C:15, should not be confused with the New Hampshire local government records management improvement fund created in 2002 under RSA 5:47-51. The latter program has not, as yet, been funded. While municipal officials have a statutory responsibility to care for and preserve public records (as described in RSA 41:58-59, RSA 33-A, and Administrative Rules Mur 300), state support described in this document is confined by statute to vital records preservation and management.

³ "Vital record," as defined in RSA 5-C:1, refers to a certificate or report of a (a) Birth, (b) Adoption, (c) Death, (d) Fetal death, (e) Marriage, (f) Divorce, (g) Legal separation, or (h) Civil annulment. Note: in 2007, the legislature passed a new law adding civil unions and their dissolution.

technical support to city and town clerks to support utilization and data entry in the NH Vital Records Information Network (NHVRIN). Funds are also being used by the NH Department of State Division of Vital Records to key in records data back to 1935 so that these can be included in the NHVRIN electronic database.

Some of the VRIF revenue has also been used to support vital records preservation at the local community level. In 1996, the Inlook Group was hired to conduct assessments of vital record storage and preservation needs in 34 communities. In a summary report, Inlook's Peter Parker wrote, "Almost all town clerks are very concerned about the condition of individual volumes or groups of records, but few had the time, the budget, or the necessary information to bring about improved storage of their materials."

In 1998, VRIF grants totaling \$24,693 were awarded to five municipalities: Chester, Fitzwilliam, Nelson, Pittsfield, and Rollinsford. Five years later, Inlook Group was engaged to evaluate what had been accomplished with these initial grants.

Inlook's 2003 report noted dramatic improvements and "extraordinary leveraging" with the towns raising, "about \$4.75 for each VRIF dollar they received - money which has been spent to improve both the condition of their records and the environment in which they are housed." Inlook concluded that the VRIF grants were, "so successful that the program deserves to be continued." Given the success of these initial VRIF grants, Inlook was hired to develop a business plan for further assistance.

Inlook's "Business Plan for VRIF to Support the Preservation of Vital Records," called for the hiring of a grant program administrator who would oversee a program of workshops and annual grants over a four-year period from 2004-2007. The administrator would also develop guidelines for records preservation and lists of vendors and other resources. The competitive matching grants proposed were to be made available to only those communities that had participated in the preservation workshops (thus creating an incentive for workshop participation). Assessments would also be required with the administrator conducting four assessments per year. The total cost, including administration, was projected at \$100,000 per year.

Parallel efforts were underway at the time by the New Hampshire Local Records Education Project (NHLREP). NHLREP held well-attended preservation workshops throughout New Hampshire during 2001 and 2003 and conducted a number of records assessments. NHLREP, which was operated by Dartmouth College using federal funding, is unfortunately no longer operational.

Grant Program Design

After Dr. Teschner was hired in May 2006, a seven-page description of the grant program was developed following the basic approach in the Inlook business plan, but with some important differences that resulted from discussions with the VRIFAC. One change was to eliminate the requirement of matching funds. This was felt to be potentially difficult for the clerks since there may not be existing town budget lines that could be easily accessed for that purpose.

Other changes were the result of the large surplus in the VRIF which, in June 2006, had surpassed a \$3 million fund balance. The initial Inlook plan was based on using approximately \$100,000 per year of the VRIF's approximately \$900,000 annual revenue. However, the VRIFAC wanted to see the program accelerated, given both the fund surplus and the pent-up demand for records preservation support (with no grants given in the prior eight years).

A consensus was reached that every town that applied by the 1/15/07 deadline would receive funding support, not to exceed \$10,000 per municipality. To encourage participation, the program was designed to be "user friendly" with a simple application. As adopted by the VRIFAC, the grant program description states that, "Given the current VRIF surplus, it is anticipated that approximately \$1,000,000 will be made available to city and town clerks in state FY 07."

The assessment requirement proposed by Inlook was maintained although it was agreed that communities with prior assessments could be "grandfathered" to apply directly for material support without having a new assessment.

Grant assistance was provided in four categories: (1) assessment and planning by qualified experts; (2) improvements to the records storage environment, records security, and related equipment; (3) rehousing, reformatting and conservation of vital records, including microfilming; and (4) special requests that fall outside the three other categories. The first three categories followed from the Inlook business plan, while the fourth was added to increase flexibility in response to community needs.

As it was likely that less grant money would be available in future years, city and town clerks were strongly encouraged to take full advantage of this opportunity no later than January 15, 2007.

This seven- page grant program document was approved by the VRIFAC at its July 2006 meeting. A one page summary and application form was also developed.

Marketing to Clerks

Dr. Teschner actively marketed the grant program to the clerks, initially via an email announcement on July 24, 2006 and then with a follow up mailing.

The program details, as well as "Best Practice Guidelines for Vital Records Preservation" and "Suggested Guidelines for Use of City and Town Records," were posted on the Department of State web site (http://www.sos.nh.gov/VitalRecords/VR_pres_grants.html). The former was written by Dr. Teschner based on various research and expert input. The latter was an edited version of a document received from the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover, Massachusetts.

Dr. Teschner also presented on the project at the annual conferences of the NH Association of City and Town Clerks and at other regional clerk meetings. These outreach efforts proved very successful. For example, at the three-day annual meeting at the Balsams in

October 2006, 52 clerks signed up to participate. Further, once the assessments began, many clerks told others about the process and the value of participating, further stimulating application numbers.

Initial expectations that 30-100 clerks would sign up to participate proved too conservative. By the January 15, 2007 deadline, 157 had applied: 145 requesting assessments and 12 that were "grandfathered" as a result of prior assessments (mostly done as part of the earlier VRIF Inlook assessments or though the NH Local Records Education Project).

Ten more towns applied after the deadline, bringing the total application number to 167 out of the 234 NH cities and towns -- an impressive number that demonstrated a significant demand for assistance. Program design, with the ease and flexibility of the application, also proved to be a factor in the positive number of applications.

Assessment Consultants

Given the need, under this accelerated program, for many more assessments than the four per year proposed in the Inlook business plan, it was agreed that expert consultants would be hired to conduct the site visits and write assessment reports. An RFP was developed in July 2006 and distributed to a list of as many known people and organizations with such expertise from New Hampshire and surrounding states. This RFP was also placed on the Department of State web site.

Fifteen proposals were received and reviewed by representatives of the VRIFAC. As a result of this review, reference checking, and interviews, the following organizations and individuals were awarded contracts in September and October 2006:

- Inlook Group (Peter Parker and Cynthia Swank) of Portsmouth, NH
- Northeast Document Conservation Center of Andover, Mass. (initially represented by Rebecca Hatcher and later by Angelina Altobellis and Millie O'Connell)
- Betsy Hamlin-Morin of Dunbarton, NH and Lynn Aber of Durham, NH.

Anne Ostendarp of Sunderland, MA was also awarded a contract but, upon receiving a new full-time job, was unable to complete any of the assessment work.

Philip Cronenwett of Enfield, NH was added in February 2007 to help assess the many north country towns that had applied.

Two initial meetings of the consultants were held in Concord to review the program and develop a common approach to report writing, including recommendations. The first was held on September 18, 2006. The second meeting on October 24, 2006 allowed the participants to share some of their observations from the initial site visits. Consultants were asked to organize their report recommendations in three major categories: No/low cost recommendations, long-term recommendations, and specific VRIF follow-up grant recommendations.

As specific issues arose based on site visits in the communities, there was considerable discussion among the consultants and various VRIFAC members that led to a number of polices/suggestions. One example was the policy that all conserved books would be microfilmed, if they had not already been filmed. While a common approach was valued, the consultants were allowed flexibility to make recommendations based upon their individual archival expertise.

Dr. Teschner assigned consultants to the applicant cities and towns based on (1) the order applications were received, (2) consultant availability and "best fit", and (2) proximity to the consultant's home or office location (to the extent feasible). He encouraged the clerks to set aside as much time as possible during the site visit and also encouraged them to involve other city or town leaders. The latter was seen as important for increasing community involvement and support for ongoing records preservation work.

All 145 assessments were completed in less than fifteen months. The first report (Gilford) was filed on 11/2/06 and the remaining 144 were completed at a rate of one every two business days. The final report (Temple) was filed on December 14, 2007. The average assessment cost was \$1742 per municipality.

Vendors of Archival Equipment, Supplies and Services

A key element of the program design was to directly purchase, as much as practically possible, the equipment, supplies and services recommended in the assessment reports -- rather than just giving cash grants to the towns. To achieve this, an RFP was developed and distributed in August 2006 to a list of potential vendors and placed on the DOS web site.

This RFP was designed to approve vendors to ensure provision of a wide range of supplies, equipment, and services needed. It was not required or expected that every vendor would be able to supply all items and services needed, and the DOS reserved the right to enter into agreements with multiple vendors, as appropriate, to meet the needs of municipalities and include a full range of archival supplies, equipment, and services. The application form included a sample of fourteen common goods and services for purposes of comparing bids.

Sixteen proposals were submitted and evaluated for (1) general approach and compliance with the terms of the RFP; (2) established reputation as a vendor of archival supplies, equipment, and/or services; and (3) cost based on the sample item comparisons. As a result, purchasing agreements were developed in October 2006 with the following companies:

- University Products to supply archival supplies and equipment.
- Paige Company to supply record storage cartons.
- <u>Gaylord Brothers</u> to supply metal shelving (not installed), microfilm readers, and other supplies and equipment.

- <u>Donnegan Systems</u> to provide installed metal shelving.
- Brown's River to provide microfilming and book restoration services.
- <u>Joseph J. Marotti Co.</u> to provide book restoration.

The assessment consultants were given the various catalogues of these companies and instructed to include an appendix in their assessment reports that listed their specific recommendations for follow up grant funding (including quantities and catalogue numbers of items to be purchased).

Follow Up Grants

After the assessment reports were completed and given to the towns, Dr. Teschner contacted the clerks to undertake follow up grants as recommended by the consultants. For the most part, the clerks played a key role in making decisions although, in some communities, the town administrator, a selectman, deputy clerk, or another designated person assumed that responsibility.

Dr. Teschner wrote up the specifics of what was agreed to and send it back to the clerk for approval. He also ordered the various items from the vendors. In some cases, clerks were asked to get local bids (such as for the hard-wired fire alarms). For some items, such as fire extinguishers, the town did the purchasing and the grant program reimbursed the town.

The VRIFAC gave Dr. Teschner the authority to make these decisions without the need for committee review which made the grant program very responsive to the needs of the clerks. In cases where out-of-the-ordinary requests were made, he sought the advice of others, such as State Archivist Frank Mevers, whose assistance to the project proved invaluable.

Common supplies, equipment, and services that were purchased included:

- Fireproof cabinets
- Steel shelving
- HOBO data loggers
- Document cases, archival boxes, file folders, and binders
- HEPA vacuum cleaners
- UV light filters
- Book conservation
- Microfilming
- Microfilm reader/printers
- Water alarms
- Fire extinguishers
- Hard wired fire detection and intruder alarms.

Communication with the clerks has been mostly conducted via email, except in the few cases where clerks do not have email addresses. This has resulted in rapid decision

making, with the same information being distributed to all interested parties, and creation of written documentation of all the orders and decisions.

Consistent with the program design, the benefit to each city or town was to not exceed \$10,000 (including the cost of the assessment).

Records Preservation Workshops

One of the key recommendations of the consultants at the October 24, 2006 meeting was that the clerks needed more information to help them better understand the fundamentals of records preservation and strengthen their capacity to implement the assessment recommendations. As a result, the Department of State and the Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee sponsored a one-day vital records preservation workshop at five locations around the state in January 2007. The workshop instructor was Ms. Lori Foley, Field Services Director of the Northeast Document Conservation Center.

Each six-hour workshop focused on preservation planning, basic definitions, the nature of specific records materials, and how records deteriorate. Key components of a preservation program were highlighted, including environmental controls; disaster preparedness; security, storage & handling; reformatting, binding & repair; and conservation treatment. The importance of collections care, written policies, and staff and user education were incorporated.

100 of the 111 workshop participants submitted a written evaluation form, and feedback was very positive. For example, 99% reported that the workshop met or exceeded their expectations. Typical written comments were as follows:

- "Very thorough presentation by a real pro,"
- "A very important meeting,"
- "Great presentation! Friendly, straightforward, easy to follow. Lots of information presented in a logical format. Ample provision for participants to ask questions."
- "State is doing a great job in making sure that each town has a basic understanding of the importance of taking good care of our records."
- "Great workshop helpful in giving a place to begin on this overwhelming topic."

Participants also asked for additional workshops on disaster planning, conservation and treatment options, collections care, digitization issues, records security, and other topics.

As a result of this success, the grant program was asked to organize a workshop as part of the fall 2007 annual conference of the NH City and Town Clerks Association in N. Conway, NH. The workshop entitled "Disaster Planning: Expect the Unexpected" was conducted by Lori Foley during the afternoon of September 5, 2007. 77 participants signed the official register.

Feedback from City and Town Clerks

The clerks have been very enthusiastic about the grant program. These are some sample observations received via email:

I once again extend my deepest thanks to you, our consultants, restoration and supply company reps, and especially the folks at NHVRIN who made this possible. Having the restoration done and having the "keep safe" capabilities for our records is a private goal accomplished and a huge boon to our Town Clerk's office. Thank you all tremendously!

Nancy Cowan, Deering

Thank you again for your direction and enthusiasm - I would not have accomplished this by myself!

Linda Plunkett, Newbury

The project is just about complete, and it is certainly a huge transformation. We are all very pleased and gratified. I must say, it wasn't easy, but now that we're past all that moving and sorting, well worth the effort. Again, thank you very much.

Jane Ireland Rye

Thank you very much for all of your help!! This was a wonderful program!

Gwen Melcher, Claremont

Thank you so much for doing such a wonderful job and being so helpful, and making this grant so easy to do. Also, the classes you offered were very informative.

Sue Waddington, Shelburne

I really appreciate your efforts in orchestrating the necessary purchases and preservation work. Any clerk who doesn't take advantage of the grant the state is offering is really missing the boat.

Sandi Allard, Lebanon

Just wanted to say thank you from Lyman for the hope of properly preserving our records. Dr. Philip Cronenwett visited us today and he was the best! We are very inspired. Realistic, but inspired. Thank you for making this process actually enjoyable and fun.

Carol Messner, Lyman

Boscawen saying a big THANK YOU for such a rapid response to our situation with our old records back to the 1700's. What nice folks you all are. Pam Lorden, Boscawen

Betsy and Lynn were wonderful! They did a very thorough job with my assessment. The report will be extremely useful to me for planning my future needs. Thank you for all of your help.

Sue E. McKinnon, Newfields

I cannot stress to you enough how helpful that class was last Thursday. I was amazed at how much I learned. Sometimes I think we get so set in our ways that we sometimes don't realize what is available to help us preserve and maintain our many records. I have a whole new respect for what needs to be done here in my office. Marilyn S. Bedell, Monroe

I found Lynn Aber's report and her visitation to be extremely careful and thorough. She was a pleasure to work with through this process--her attention to detail is amazing. Hardly a day goes by when we do not (truly) appreciate our new storage facilities and the

consolidation of all our records stored (consistently) in their new protective sleeves and boxes! Thanks for a job expediently well done! Becky Benvenuti, Newmarket

I cannot express how pleased I am at the speed and efficiency of your work!!!!

Pam Seaver, Madbury

THANK YOU THANK YOU!! I feel like it's Christmas - I just received my file folders, etc today. It makes me want to get right into the files and have fun! You guys are the best-quick response! Having some direction in what to do and where to go for help is wonderful and this process is not intimidating as it first looks. A lot of small towns, I hope, will take this opportunity and run with it!

Deb Clark, Charlestown

Observations and Lessons Learned

The grant process to date has demonstrated a number of important lessons for providing records management assistance in the communities. These are summarized as follows:

<u>High Level of Interest.</u> While clerks are busy people caught up in the day to day priorities of their office, they are also committed to the long term nature of records management given the opportunity for training and support.

<u>Assessments are a Vital Tool.</u> Having a site visit by an expert with a follow up report provided the clerks with a clear "blue print" to move forward and take action.

Rapid Response and Flexible Design Maintain Momentum. The clerks were able to quickly see the impact of their involvement; the grant administrator's authority to make routine decisions without the need for committee review proved highly beneficial in this regard.

<u>Training</u>, <u>Site Visits and Grant Assistance Work Best Together</u>. This multi-faceted approach has had a positive, synergistic impact.

<u>Direct Payments to Vendors Are More Effective than Cash Grants.</u> While labor intensive for the state, this approach proved very effective in ensuring that the towns received precisely what they needed, consistent with the assessment reports.

<u>Town Leaders Need Education.</u> In many towns, the clerks involved other municipal leaders with a positive result. One clerk observed: "This is making the town more responsible." As noted by Inlook (see attached), education of town managers, town administrators and select boards is necessary to long term local government records preservation.

<u>Leveraging of Support Is a Likely Long-term Result.</u> While it is perhaps too early to know for sure, it appears likely that the vital records grants will leverage involvement of the cities and towns in other efforts to preserve local records (for example, establishing active municipal records committees). This might prove to be the greatest long term benefit of this grant program.

<u>Maintaining Momentum is Important to Success.</u> The successes to date cannot be taken for granted. While fewer funds may be available in future years, the VRIFAC should implement continued workshops, grants, and other opportunities to ensure that the interest developed through this program is maintained and reinforced. As observed by Inlook (see attached), "training and education of clerks must be continuing efforts."

Options for the Future

The current round of grants will be mostly complete by June 2008 at which time approximately \$1.3 million will have been expended. Despite this high level of grant activity, strong revenue growth has maintained the VRIF fund balance. The fund balance on 6/30/06 was \$3,098,126 and, on 11/27/08, was nearly the same at \$3,023,548.

The first priority for the future (hopefully accomplished in FY 08) is to undertake the assessments of ten towns that applied after the January 15, 2007 deadline and provide them with follow up grants. These towns have expressed an interest to participate, and the VRIFAC is encouraged to reinforce their interest in a timely manner.

Some options for FY 09 and future years might include:

- (1) Grants could be offered only to the 68 towns that did not apply in round one. This could require a substantial outreach effort, although there might be more interest now that "word of mouth" has created a positive buzz among the clerks. It should be noted that at least a few of these 68 towns (such as Candia and Chester) did not apply because they already had a strong records preservation program.
- (2) Reopen the grant program to all cities and towns up to a \$5000 or \$10,000 maximum request. Presumably the towns will have things they want to do, consistent with the first round assessments. The challenge is that many of these needs are beyond vital records or, if vital records, of lesser impact than those funded in the first round.
- (3) Give grants only to those towns which have sent a representative to one or more of the VRIF training workshops. This was one suggestion from the original Inlook business plan.
- (4) Increase the grant amount and take a more competitive approach, say \$30,000 grants to 20 towns only for vault work or other major projects.
- (5) Increase collaboration on grants and training with other funders, such as the Moose Plate grants, to leverage VRIF support.
- (6) Fund "circuit rider" assistance to towns by archival consultants as proposed in the attached Inlook observations. Some of the consultants who did the assessments would likely be interested in providing this "hands on" assistance. The State Archives may be receiving a small grant from the federal National Historical Publications and Records Commission that could be applied for this purpose as well.

- (7) Expand the grant program beyond vital records only by working with the Secretary of State and the legislature to (a) allow use of the VRIF for preserving non-vital records or (b) obtain funding for the existing (but unfunded) NH local government records management improvement fund created in 2002 under RSA 5:47-51.
- (8) Provide annual workshops on records preservation topics for clerks and others at locations around the state. The January 2007 workshops were highlight successful, and this model should be continued. While there would also be benefit to doing a workshop at the annual clerks conference as was done in September 2007, the multiple site workshops would likely have more long-term impact and the cost is relatively modest.

To conclude, the work to date represents a major accomplishment for the VRIFAC and Department of State. At the same time, the current effort must be viewed as part of an ongoing commitment rather than a "one time" grant program. While grant funding will likely be less in the future, the VRIFAC is advised to think creatively to find ways to sustain this progress using available resources.

Douglass P. Teschner January 18, 2008

Attachment: Thoughts and Observations by Inlook Group, Dec. 31, 2007

Inlook Group: Thoughts and observations relating to site visits conducted as part of Vital Records Preservation Grant Program 2006-2007

- 1) Training and education of clerks must be continuing efforts. Using NEDCC for preservation and disaster preparedness workshops may be the simplest method. Regional workshops definitely popular and way to encourage participation. Other, shorter training efforts may be part of Clerks' "School" or annual Clerks' meeting.
 - A) Clerks need training and a best practices list, similar to the one with preservation tips, for how the older paper vitals, birth records especially, should be organized and maintained arranging, indexing, handling inserts. Also need advice about how to arrange and maintain marriage intentions and burial permits.
 - B) Assuming that towns will be on their own going forward, also need to have best practices/ guidelines for filming and digitizing.
 - C) Joint grant-writing workshop w/ NH Conservation License Plate Grant Program also may be helpful as few clerks have grant-writing experience.
- 2) Education of town managers, town administrators, select boards is also necessary relating to the records, and especially storage conditions shelving and physical space (environmental conditions, fire suppression, etc.). Also RSA 41-59 ("Care & Preservation") needs to be brought up to date.
 - A) Does Local Government Center have a role?
- 3) RSA 33-A:3 states that "The municipal officers . . . together with the clerk, treasurer, an assessor, and tax collector of each city or town shall constitute a committee to govern the disposition of municipal records" Yet <u>very few</u> municipalities have done so! Some vital records such as burial permits and marriage intentions are not permanent. In some states, existence of such a committee is a prerequisite for grant applications and at least one NH town thought it had to have such a committee before applying for funds. Going forward, can VRIF together with State Municipal Records Board encourage such committees?
 - A) Neither vital records or municipal records retention schedules include cemetery records. One or the other schedule should list these related records.
- 4) Many clerks need extra hands to do retrospective work. Can VRIF fund a circuit rider to do the work through a grant? Perhaps a "circuit-rider grant" could be competitive or, at the very least, require matching funds from the municipality. A matching fund requirement would, at least, "wake up" the BOS, etc. to these needs.

- 5) Continue a discount program with vendors under a state contract? In addition to University Products and Gaylord, would recommend that Hollinger and / or Conservation Resources be included.
- 6) Use assessments from this project to indicate municipalities' need for help with preserving and managing their records in attempt to gain funding for Local Records Improvement Fund. Possible to piggyback on LCHIP funding scheme? OR get funding for disaster recovery grants as they relate to records might be easier to sell.
- 7) Maintain and update website info relating to vital records preservation, grant programs, vendors, *etc*.

Cynthia Swank & Peter Parker 31 December 2007