

FRIDAY BULLETIN

NEWS FROM THE ALASKA DIVISION OF LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES & MUSEUMS

8/21/2009

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FLOOD AND RECOVERY AT STATE ARCHIVES

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This issue of *Friday Bulletin* is devoted to documenting the flood and continuing recovery efforts at the Alaska State Archives.

FLOOD

Rainwater Damages Documents at the State Archives

Approximately 400 to 500 boxes of documents in the Alaska State Archives in Juneau were damaged by rainwater sometime late August 16 or early August 17.

A contractor, CBC Construction of Sitka, has been repairing the roof at the State Archives on Willoughby Street in Juneau. The contractor's inflated plastic bubble that allows workers to repair roofs in the rain blew off its fastenings.

In two areas, rainwater entered a second-story room that contains archives. A lesser amount of rainwater dripped down to the first-story vault, which also contains archives, and onto the nearby loading dock. Approximately 400 to 500 cardboard boxes containing court, legislative and Governor's Office records have been damaged, as were some maps.

Archives staff first noticed the water damage at 7 a.m. and implemented the emergency response plan. The bubble was quickly repaired.

By 10 a.m. nearly all of the standing water on the floors had been removed, principally by vacuums. Dehumidifiers and fans operated in the affected areas. Some of the damaged boxes were removed to the Juneau Arts & Culture Center, which is near the archives. The boxes' contents are being air-dried there. Some of the boxes are being frozen, and the contents will be dried later.

The various types of recovery work are being performed by archives employees, employees from the state museum and state library, maintenance employees of the state facilities office, workers from CBC Contractors, and community volunteers. Professional conservators in Juneau for the Western Association for Art Conservation conference have assisted, as well.

The archives have been closed to the public until further notice. (Reprinted from EED Information Exchange, 8/21/2009)

Below are some photos of flood damage taken by Division staffer Damon Stubner:



Archives Loading Dock, August 17, 2009



Chris Hieb and damaged boxes in Archives stacks



Damaged boxes at Archives. Current estimates suggest as many as 1,600 boxes had some sort of water damage with more than 500 seriously soaked.



Damaged boxes mean damaged documents. These are from Alaska's Court System.

RECOVERY

Damaged materials from the Archives stacks were assessed and dried in a number of places including:



The State Archives itself (Laura Wood and Abby Focht at table)



Juneau Arts and Humanities Council



Both sides of the Alaska State Library and the 8th floor Atrium of the Juneau State Office Building.

Not pictured is Linda Thibodeau's office, where every table and chair was covered with more documents.

To assist with the recovery efforts, the Alaska State Library was closed from Wednesday through Friday so library staff were free to work at JAHC and the State Archives and to process incoming damaged materials. Work is ongoing and the Division management team will meet later on Friday to determine next steps.

All of us at the Alaska Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums are extremely grateful for the volunteers and other support we received from local cultural institutions, the general Juneau community and from attendees of the Western Association of Art Conservators (WAAC), which just happened to be having their annual conference in Juneau this week!

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