

**Recorder's Office Equipment Upgrades and Records Preservation**

**FY2006 Request: \$300,000**  
**Reference No: 33980**

**AP/AL:** Appropriation

**Project Type:** Renewal and Replacement

**Category:** General Government

**Location:** Statewide

**Contact:** Vicky Backus

**House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)

**Contact Phone:** (907)269-8882

**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2005 - 06/30/2007

**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

A portion of this project (\$250.0) covers replacement and upgrade of approximately 30% of the state's land records system infrastructure in thirteen recording locations statewide, UCC Central File, and the Archive unit. Aging and failing equipment affects the component's ability to meet its statutory mandate to provide access to recorded and filed documents. The remainder of the request is for the completion of an ongoing project to scan and film approximately 6,000 historic original books that have sustained severe damage and deterioration due to aging, acidic papers and inks, and external conditions.

<b>Funding:</b>	<u>FY2006</u>	<u>FY2007</u>	<u>FY2008</u>	<u>FY2009</u>	<u>FY2010</u>	<u>FY2011</u>	<u>Total</u>
Rcpt Svcs	\$300,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$800,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

**Operating & Maintenance Costs:**

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Additional Information / Prior Funding History:**

Earlier projects in FY01 (\$125.0) and FY02 (\$150.0) enabled the component to replace old and outdated reader/printers in each recording office location, acquire scanning equipment, purchase a microfilmer/scanner unit and scanning station for the central archives unit, upgrade a portion of the public access equipment, acquire new plat machines for Juneau and Sitka, and acquire bar-coding equipment and software that replaced outdated time stamp machines in our offices.

**Project Description/Justification:**

**Additional historical project information:**

The book preservation project involves the scanning of the historic book records and creating roll film from the scanned images. When this project began, books were being filmed only and the film was to be converted to digital images at a later time. The poor quality and condition of the books resulted in poor quality film that would not produce acceptable digital images upon conversion. Acquired new technology enables us to scan the book pages and save the digital images to an Archive Writer which then transfers the digital images to roll film.

**Detailed Project Justification:**

This project is necessary to enable the component to meet its statutory mandates under AS 40.17 to receive and record documents in a timely manner, and to provide reasonable public access to such records.

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The Recorders/UCC component has the statutory responsibility to record and index documents and to provide public access to recorded documents, indices, and facilities. Beginning in July 2001, Alaska's recording system became the first in the nation to image all incoming recorded and filed documents statewide (approximately 750,000 images annually). Images are produced from the original paper documents on a go-forward basis only. To supplement these newly created images for research purposes, customers are requesting a broader image base for research. We are currently involved in separate capital projects that include: 1) the conversion of microfiche and roll-film dating from June 2001 back to approximately 1991; and 2) the scanning of original historic book records dating from the late 1800's to approximately 1970. A separate capital project has been submitted for the conversion of aperture cards to digital images for the time period covering approximately 1970 to 1981. Upon completion of these conversion projects the component will no longer require the costly, high maintenance film reader/printers at all recording offices.

**Equipment:** Some of the equipment purchased from earlier projects need to be replaced, in addition upgrades of various types of equipment must be made to meet and ensure basic operational needs are met at thirteen recording locations throughout the state, UCC Central File, and the central archives unit. This project will provide a backup scanning device for the central archives unit in the event the primary microfilmer/scanner sustains down time for an extended period. This will enable the component to continue scanning operations without interruption and without sustaining unmanageable processing backlogs. In addition, recording office public libraries have inherited older computers and printers that do not have the necessary capability to rapidly display digital images as the component continues to add these to the records base. The failure rate for much of the older micrographics equipment continues to be very high, as are the associated service and maintenance costs. Some equipment is obsolete and parts are no longer available. Funding for major equipment upgrades and replacement has been unavailable under status quo operating budgets, thereby necessitating this capital request. Although digital imaging of newly recorded documents began in July 2001 and projects are underway to convert film, book records, and possibly aperture card records to digital, the bulk of the state's historical records base must be manually accessed through the older mediums. Functional micrographics and library research equipment continues to be critical to this aspect of the component's operations.

**Records Preservation:** Under the initial project over 1,900 original historic books (out of an estimated 6,000) filled with historical recorded and filed documents dating back to the mid 1800's, were filmed and accessioned to State Archives. The original plan called for the film to be converted to digital images under a future capital project which would have created digital images from second generation film. New and advancing technology has enabled us to now scan the pages from the books, complete enhancements to clean up the images before they are saved to the Archive Writer where the images are then transferred to archival roll film. Due to the fragile nature of these historic documents and the poor conditions under which some are now being stored, scanning is being urgently pursued to completion. Once scanned, and film is created, these books will be accessioned to State Archives for permanent storage under climate-controlled conditions. Acidic inks and papers cause severe and ongoing deterioration of these fragile records which are critical to the establishment of record ownership and title history of properties located throughout the state. This project will also enable the component to borrow the initial 1,900 books already accessioned to State Archives so they may be scanned and better quality film created. The books will then be returned to State Archives for permanent storage.

Cost estimates for equipment are based on current prices for similar equipment. The cost for the records preservation is based on a continuation of costs incurred in the initial phase of this project, including contractual service for scanning the historic books, CD's, film and processing, packaging, handling, and transportation expense.

**Why is this Project Needed Now:**

It is the intention of the component to provide the public with easy-to-access information while keeping up with current technological trends. The ability to access an image of a document while simultaneously researching the index records is a major improvement of service to customers researching recording office records. Since the inception of statewide imaging in July 2001, users have come to rely heavily on the new imaging system for ease of use, accessibility, and functionality, as well as quality of product and most notable, speed of delivery.

If the equipment is not replaced, the component will not be able to fulfill its statutory mandate to create, preserve and provide access to the public record of the state of Alaska. Maintenance and operating costs for existing equipment are already included in the component's operating budget. Since this project essentially provides replacement of existing equipment, the maintenance and operating costs would then tie to the new equipment items. No new funding would be required. The book scanning project will eventually result in lease cost savings as the state would require less floor space for recording offices once all the books are scanned with film created, and then accessioned to State Archives.

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Scanning and public access equipment will enable the public to have faster access to document images. By having more reliable equipment, staff will be able to assist customers in obtaining information quicker. There is no direct creation of new jobs in the private sector associated with these purchases. However, as a result of the equipment replacements covered by this CIP, employees of private industry who utilize the recorder's office on a frequent basis will be able to find the information they need in a faster and more efficient manner, and this equates to significant monetary savings for these private sector companies.

**Specific Spending Detail:**

This equipment replacement project will enable the component to upgrade or replace the older and outdated computers, operating systems, and printers in recording offices and their libraries across the state, representing about 30% of our total computers in use (\$100.0); replace six of the 24 reader/printers in use across the state (\$49.0); replace, upgrade and standardize bar code printers statewide to eliminate down-time and recording backlogs due to malfunctioning equipment (\$61.0); purchase much needed copiers for Anchorage and Palmer (\$29.5); obtain replacement scanner for Archives (\$1.5); and replace outdated postal equipment (\$9.0). Maintenance and operating costs for existing equipment are already included in the component's operating budget so no new maintenance funding would be required. All items identified have reached or exceeded maximum life expectancy.

The remainder of the request will be used to complete the book scanning project to include books already accessioned to State Archives, as well as purchase the necessary CD's, infrared film, and pay for film processing for the remaining historical books to be scanned and filmed.

Line Item Expenditures:

- Services \$30.0 (outsourcing scanning of historic books)
- Commodities \$20.0 (CD's and infrared film for archival purposes)
- Capital Outlay \$250.0 (Equipment project)

**Project Support:**

Major users of the recording system (Alaska Land Title Association, banking and financial institutions, mining and real estate industries, and government agencies) support the component's efforts to improve equipment and upgrade technology in recording offices. The new equipment will provide not only faster retrieval of information, but will enable quality copies of documents and plats to be printed by customers which will reduce the amount of staff time in the completion of these copy requests.

**Project Opposition:**

The Recorder's Office is not aware of any public opposition to this project.