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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Glenn Cook is named Alaska State Archivist

JUNEAU -- Glenn Cook, formerly of Colorado, is the new Alaska State Archivist. He began his duties last month at the Alaska State Archives in Juneau.

The Alaska State Archivist is the official custodian of the archival resources of Alaska state government. As such, he oversees all records that document the State of Alaska's policies, decisions, and actions, and ensures the services that make them available to Alaska's citizens, researchers, and state agencies in the future. This position also heads the Alaska Historical Records Advisory Board, which is appointed by the Governor.

"I am very excited to have the opportunity to work with the preservation of, and provide access to, the records of the State of Alaska," Cook said. "Following several extended vacations in Alaska, my wife and I were looking for an opportunity to relocate to this wonderful Last Frontier."

Cook holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and a master's degree in library and information science with an archives emphasis from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He worked as an underground miner for 10 years before attending college. His work as a student in the college library led to his interest in libraries and archives.

Most recently, Cook was a contracted field records archivist and librarian for the U.S. Geological Survey in Denver and a corporate librarian and archivist for the Molson Coors Brewing Co. He also has worked in university archives and for the George C. Marshall Research Library located at the Virginia Military Institute.

"We are very pleased that Glenn Cook has joined the LAM management group," said Kathryn Shelton, director of the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums at the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. "The Archives and Records Management service quietly guards and cares for state agency records until they are needed for lawsuits, policy-history and decision-making. Then events, such as the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill and the Amerada Hess lawsuits make headlines which publicly show the value of these records. Government officials, genealogists and other researchers call on this service daily, and it must be responsive. Glenn, with his breadth of experience with

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many types of archives and his understanding of information technology and facility issues, is already proving to be a positive force in moving the program forward.”

A primary issue facing the Alaska State Archives is the need for a facility to safely house and service Alaska’s historically valuable records. As early as 1980, a building condition survey noted structural movement and cracking within the present building. In addition, to the structural failures, poor environmental controls, and a poorly planned inefficient space in general, the 14-foot tall archives stacks are not braced to resist seismic loads. Besides building concerns, addressing “born digital” electronic records issues is the most important challenge for the new state archivist, who must find ways to deal with the structural, durability and access issues this format poses.

The State Archives is the permanent repository of Alaska’s state and territory records. It holds the records of the Territorial Governors since 1884 and of the Constitutional Convention of 1955. Its records management program oversees the creation, retirement, temporary storage, disposal, or transfer to the State Archives of all state agency records.

The State Archives serves the general public, as well. Among the records’ subjects are birth and death, incorporation, and court and probate. If Alaskans want to learn about a long-lost relative, research a business owned in Alaska, discover the history behind a legislative bill, or expand their understanding of a moment in Alaska’s history, the Alaska State Archives is a great place to start. See: <http://www.archives.state.ak.us/>.

For more information, contact Glenn Cook at 907-465-2275.

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