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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Archives Will Reopen to the Public on Tuesday

JUNEAU -- The Alaska State Archives in Juneau will reopen on Tuesday, September 8. The State Archives has been closed to the public since August 17, when rainwater entered the building through the roof during repairs.

Approximately 1,000 boxes of documents, as well as some audiotapes, maps and blueprints, were subjected to water in varying degrees. No permanent damage to the materials, which range from territorial days to the present, has been detected to date.

As of September 4, approximately 900 boxes' worth of materials have been dried and re-boxed. Of the remaining 100 boxes' worth of materials, 85 are nearly dry and 15 are being kept in a frozen condition until they can be worked on. Freezing the documents prevents mold from forming on them.

"I haven't seen anything yet that would not be usable for research in the future," State Archivist Glenn Cook said. "I haven't seen anything that was lost in the process."

After all the wetted materials have been dried, the archives will monitor the condition of the materials over the next six months.

The materials have been dried by fans in de-humidified rooms. The work was performed by approximately 45 staff at the State Archives, Alaska State Museums and the Alaska State Library, assisted by about 25 volunteers and by several professional conservators who were in Juneau for a meeting.

Dean Dawson, a records analyst at the State Archives, first noticed the water damage when he arrived early for work on August 17. He led the initial efforts to implement the State Archives' emergency response plan and continued to oversee the recovery work. "He saved the day, really," said Linda Thibodeau, Director of the Alaska Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums.



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The State Archives preserves the government records of Alaska's history and makes them accessible to patrons. Its public hours are 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. See <http://www.archives.state.ak.us/>.

The State Archives offers insights into the history of Alaska through the myriad records located on its shelves. If you would like to learn about a long lost relative, research a business owned and operated in Alaska, discover the history behind a bill, or expand your understanding of a moment in Alaska's history, then the State Archives is a great place to start.

Government records with permanent historical value include legislative bills and histories, audio recordings, meeting minutes, annual reports, birth and death records, naturalization records, incorporation records, court and probate, correspondence, publications and other agency-related material. The Records Management Unit consults with state agencies to create streamlined record retention schedules for both permanent and non-permanent records.

For more information and photographs: State Archivist Glenn Cook, 907-465-2275; glenn.cook@alaska.gov.

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