

**DISTRICT CLERK – POLK COUNTY, TEXAS**  
**2019/2020 PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION RECORDS PLAN**

**District Clerk's Records Technology Fund Overview**

The District Court Records Technology Fund is authorized in Texas Government Code 51.305. Section 51.305(d) requires the authorized fee to be used for "the preservation and restoration of the district court records archive." Section (f) states, "the district clerk shall prepare an annual written plan for the preservation and restoration of the district clerk's records archive." The Commissioners Court is required to hold a public hearing on this plan and to publish notice of such hearing in a newspaper no later than 15 days prior to the hearing.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this document is to define the restoration and preservation, digital capture, storage, retention and management of archived records belonging to the District Clerk's Office. Records maintained in the District Clerk's Office have been identified to fall under the category of "Preservation and Restoration Plan" that will provide reproduction and archiving of such records for space availability purposes. It is the intent of the District Clerk to follow guidelines set by the Texas State Library and Archives Commissioner.

**GOAL**

The goal is to reproduce and archive all documents, regardless of type, as efficiently as possible. The District Clerk's office also intends to restore records, suspending or reducing deterioration of public records, improving the public access to these documents in a manner that reduces the risk of deterioration, and possible reducing or eliminating paper documents.

**SCOPE**

The scope of this document includes the following:

- \*All District Clerk records filed at the Polk County Courthouse
- \*Plans to restore and preserve records with significant historical value
- \*Future plans are to improve public and governmental access and provide an archive for records that have or will be imaged.

This document addresses the restoration and preservation needs of the District Clerk Records Archive. No other departments are addressed.

## **SECTION ONE: RECORDS CURRENTLY IN REPOSITORY**

### **INVENTORY**

The office of the District Clerk maintains the records of the 258<sup>th</sup> and 411<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts of Law as well as records filed in the County Court at Law. Currently the District Clerk's office holds over 100 books and several thousand paper files that are related to civil and criminal actions which have occurred since the founding of Polk County in 1846.

## **SECTION TWO: RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION**

### **PERMANENT RECORDS**

We are required by statute and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission to permanently retain all court documents prior to January 1, 1951. All records from 2005 to present have been imaged through a third party vendor who maintained a copy of our images offsite. In 2016 we moved all of our images from the third party vendor to our case management system and their imaging system. Beginning with fiscal year 2019 my part time person was dedicated as my records manager and she worked with some of our local high school students to organize our records in storage to get them ready for imaging and preservation. Kofile Technologies, Inc. completed preserving our earliest cases numbered 1-37. We received a grant from the Texas Bar Historical Foundation to assist with the cost in preserving Court Minute Books A and B. These books date back to the earliest days of Polk County. Kofile Technologies is in possession of the books and will begin working on them upon approval of this year's budget (see attached proposal pricing). We will use funds from the District Clerk Technology Fund (GC Sec. 51.305) (an archive fee that can only be used for preservation and restoration of district court archives and has to be approved by the Commissioners in a public hearing) along with our grant monies for this preservation project. As a side note, this \$10.00 fee was only effective until September 1, 2019 at which time it would revert back to \$5.00, but HB 686 has been filed on behalf of the Clerks to make the \$10.00 fee permanent. We are still awaiting the results from the Legislature as of the writing of this Plan.

## **SECTION THREE: FUTURE PLANS**

We intend to continue with the current preservation project to identify all permanent and historical records so they can be restored and preserved and digitized for public use. We have met with the Polk County Historical Society and they have agreed to come on board to assist in identifying our historical and significant documents. We will use our other preservation funds to purchase acid free boxes and folders to suspend any further deterioration of our documents until such time as they can be permanently preserved. The need for this project will continue for many years as we slowly preserve and image our old books and case files as funds permit.