

## State Records Disposition Panel MnGRIN November 2009 Meeting

The program was a panel discussion on the roles of the individual agency representatives who comprise the State Records Disposition Panel.

Following are informal highlights from the discussion. If you have specific questions please contact the following individuals for their respective expertise - David Kenney, Office of State Auditor at [David.Kenney@state.mn.us](mailto:David.Kenney@state.mn.us); Cecile Ferkul, Office of Legislative Auditor at [Cecile.Ferkul@state.mn.us](mailto:Cecile.Ferkul@state.mn.us); Charles Rodgers, Minnesota Historical Society/State Archives at [charles.rodgers@mnhs.org](mailto:charles.rodgers@mnhs.org); or, Patty Nolte, Office of Attorney General at [Patricia.Nolte@state.mn.us](mailto:Patricia.Nolte@state.mn.us).

The discussion pertained to retention schedules and applications for authority to dispose of records, both of which are reviewed and approved by the Panel.

### Minnesota Historical Society/State Archives Role –

- Serves as secretary for the Panel.
- Assigns the Schedule number, which is the review year and a sequential number.
- Review items for historical significance. Usually less than five percent of an agency's records have historical value.
  - o For a state agency they would be most interested in top management level (commissioner level) correspondence, subject files or minutes of meetings.
  - o Other interests would be in defunct functions such as justice of the peace records or old county school records.
- To date there have been 153 schedules approved in 2009. Last year there were 192.
- Since the State Archives was created in 1943 all approved schedules have been permanently retained.
- Of the three copies sent to the State Archives, one is kept on file. Two copies are circulated to Panel members via State of Minnesota interoffice mail.
- A copy of the approved and signed schedule/disposal application is returned to the agency. Turnaround time is between one and four months depending on the number of schedules and Panel participants' review time.

### State Auditor Role –

- The State Auditor reviews for local units such as counties, first class cities, watershed districts, etc.
- Reviews are made by the following divisions – Audit, Attorney (investigations/compliance/fraud/theft), Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Pension.
- They refer to General Schedules as a baseline. Suggestion to those developing the schedules – put down as much information as possible in the item description.

### Legislative Auditor Role –

- Review for state government agencies.
- Financial audit review is done by the agency audit manager
- Reviews are looking for audit purposes.
- When asked if there was a standard minimum retention time the response was that absent a statute, other guideline/standard or historical value, they would consider three years plus the current year to be the standard.
  - o It is difficult to go back further due to processes and employees changing. Memories fade. Issues are difficult to resolve after that length of time as well.
  - o Items dealing with federal grant monies are retained a minimum of three years.

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- There are 40 auditors for approximately 150 entities.
- State financial audits are done each year.
- Review for compliance with major federal programs, internal controls, state standards and industry standards.
- Review the purchase process.
- Review the process. There must be supporting documentation. If the documentation does not support the transaction it will cause an investigation.
  - o Review process controls. Would they stand up to audit scrutiny?
  - o Provide clear documentation of the authorizations for the transactions.
- Records of disposal of physical equipment is often lacking. Who authorized the disposal? Was it done? On what day?

### **Attorney General Role –**

- Initial involvement on the Panel was reviewing for antitrust issues. Now there is considerable review of contracts, especially purchasing.
- Helpful suggestion – pay very close attention to records that are placed on hold. They must not be destroyed or altered while on hold.
- Technology issues are at the forefront now.