

Limestone County Archives closed through early 2017 for renovations

The Limestone County Archives is now closed to the public for a six-month renovation project. The work, which will refurbish and provide fire protection to the Archives office in the historic former Athens L&N Passenger Depot, is scheduled to be completed in early 2017.

Through Aug. 22, the Archives is not able to provide assistance to researchers as Archivist Rebekah Davis and Assistant Archivist April Davis focus on the process of moving historic records out of the way of the renovation work and moving their offices out of the Archives building.

“We are excited to get this project on the move,” Rebekah Davis said. The work has been planned since October 2013, when the Alabama Department of Transportation approved a Transportation Alternatives Program grant for renovation of a historic transportation facility. Built in 1905, the building served as Athens’ only passenger depot for the Louisville and Nashville Railroad until it was decommissioned in the 1960s. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

“These renovations will provide protection to our historic building and its priceless contents, and will help ensure that the building remains strong and viable for at least another century and beyond,” Davis added.

Morrell Engineering and Premier Structures will oversee project activities, which will include installation of a fire suppression and alarm system, lead paint abatement, repair and replacement of exterior boards, scraping and painting the building’s exterior and interior, and adding interior lighting. The work will be completed in two phases, which will require moving all records and furniture from the back half of the building to the front, and then reversing the process to complete work in the front section. The work is scheduled to be completed in 180 calendar days.

During the renovation process, limited operations of the Limestone County Archives will be housed in the basement of the Limestone County Commission Washington Street Annex. Archivists will be able to provide limited assistance to researchers by appointment only, by calling 256-233-6404 or e-mailing archives@limestonecounty-al.gov.

Many of the vital permanent records housed at the Limestone County Archives, including deeds, wills, marriage records, court records and more, are now accessible for free on the Archives’ website, www.limestonearchives.com. The master index to the Archives’ records is also available on the Archives website.

While working from their temporary Archives office, Archives staff will focus on processing special collections and cataloging historic photos to make those items more easily searchable and accessible. In addition to housing Limestone County government records dating to the county’s beginnings in 1818, the Limestone County Archives holds tens of thousands of historic photos and non-government records that document the county’s history.

“Improving the access to these records is particularly important now, as the people throughout the county and city prepare to research and use these documents in celebrating our bicentennial in 2018,” Rebekah Davis said.

Premier Structures Inc., of Athens, was the low bidder for the project with a bid of \$311,987. ALDOT funds 80% of the project cost, with the remaining 20% coming from the Limestone County Commission. The Limestone County Commission established the Limestone County Archives in 1980. It was located in the Washington Street Annex basement, where the temporary Archives office will be located, until 2003, when the Archives moved to the former L&N Passenger Depot.

About the Archives:

Limestone County Department of History and Archives

Established: 1980

Staff: Archivist Rebekah Davis and Assistant Archivist April Davis

Location: 102 W. Washington St., in the 1905 L&N Passenger Depot

Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday

Phone: 256-233-6404

E-mail: archives@limestonecounty-al.gov

Web: www.limestonearchives.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/limestonecountyarchives