

Limestone County Archives awarded grant for \$4,400 renovation project

A glance behind the Limestone County Commission members and out of the windows of their second-floor meeting room on Tuesday morning allowed a view across the train tracks of crews continuing to work on renovations to the historic L&N passenger depot that houses the Limestone County Archives. Meanwhile, the Commission officially approved accepting a grant from the State Historical Records Advisory Board of Alabama for an additional project to improve the preservation environment for the Archives, which houses Limestone County government records dating to 1818, private collection records older than that, and an extensive collection of photographs, ferrotypes, and daguerreotypes dating to the 1850s.

The SHRAB grant will help fund the \$4,407.25 project, which includes installation of 64 panels of ultraviolet-radiation-blocking film on the 7-foot windows of the Archives and the addition of two temperature and relative humidity data loggers in the records storage areas of the building. The grant funds of \$1,894.25 from SHRAB are matched by a \$1,500 appropriation from the Friends of the Archives and \$1,3013 in funds and in-kind resources from the Limestone County Commission.

The goal of this project is to improve the preservation environment for the records housed at the Limestone County Archives so that deterioration can be halted or slowed and the integrity of original historic records can be maintained for use and reference in years to come.

“This project will help ensure a more stable environment in the Archives, so that the priceless records that detail our community history are not damaged by fluctuations in light, heat, and humidity, which can cause problems such as fading of ink on documents, destructive vinegar syndrome in film, and mold growth in and on books,” said Archivist Rebekah Davis. “We are already having to combat some of these problems due to years of storage in less-than-ideal conditions prior to the records coming to the Archives.”

The work will be done concurrently with the renovations already under way, which have been funded by a Transportation Alternatives Program grant from the Alabama Department of Transportation. ALDOT funds 80% of that project cost, with the remaining 20% coming from the Limestone County Commission. That project, which will refurbish and provide fire protection to the Archives building, is scheduled to be completed in early 2017. Archives operations have been moved to the basement of the Limestone County Commission Washington Street Annex at 310 W. Washington St., for the duration of the work, and are accessible on a limited basis by appointment only. Researchers may make an appointment 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.

Built in 1905, the Limestone County Archives 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.

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