



Council of
State Historical Records Coordinators
COSHRC

***COSHRC activities and accomplishments
July 2004-July 2005***

COSHRC initiatives

State Coordinators Manual and SHRAB Orientation Program. As part of the current grant project funded by NHPRC, the COSHRC Communications Committee, led by Conley Edwards of Virginia, has developed a comprehensive manual for State Coordinators (introduced in 2004) and an orientation program for members of State Historical Records Advisory Boards. The orientation program includes a prototype manual for SHRAB members and a PowerPoint presentation that State Coordinators may customize to fit their own SHRAB's priorities and goals. The Orientation Program will be introduced at the July 2005 annual meeting.

State Archives and Records program survey. As part of our current NHPRC grant, the COSHRC Survey Committee distributed its survey in November 2004. The archival programs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia responded to the survey, along with 9 of the 12 separate records management programs, so we have very comprehensive data. Data collection and compilation is near completion and will provide longitudinal data to support a fuller assessment of the accomplishments, conditions, and challenges for state programs.

State Historical Records Advisory Board member database. In November 2004 the COSHRC Communications Committee requested contact information for SHRAB members from which they hoped to develop a comprehensive address list and representation information on board members nationally. We received information from only 25 states and American Samoa with a total of 251 individual SHRAB members. We will make a second request for basic information and update existing data this fall in order to have the list available for future advocacy efforts as well as to gain a better understanding of the composition of SHRABs nationwide.

Governors' records. The COSHRC Task Force on Governors' Records completed its revision of the 1989 "Executive Chamber Records: A Guide for Governors," originally produced by NAGARA and published by the National Governors Association (NGA). Chris LaPlante of Texas and Chris Ward of New York coordinated the work. We expect the manual to be published and distributed by NGA in 2005.

National Initiative to Develop a State-based Funding Program for Historical Records. This initiative was developed as part of COSHRC's strategic planning process. It calls for a substantial increase in the amount of federal funds to be made available for the care of historical records nationwide. The vision is to establish a program to distribute federal funds to the states using a formula similar to those now in place for funding historic preservation or library services and training. A thorough discussion of the idea was held during an Incubator Session at the COSHRC 2004 annual meeting. Participants agreed that COSHRC should pursue such an effort. An updated discussion document will be reviewed at the 2005 COSHRC annual meeting to further define the

parameters of the program. An action agenda will then be developed to move this initiative forward.

COSHRC board members have discussed the National Initiative and possible options for moving forward with several key stakeholders including Dr. Allen Weinstein, Archivist of the United States, John Constance, Lew Bellardo, Max Evans and Kathleen Williams from the National Archives and NHPRC and with Rand Jimerson, President, and Nancy Beaumont, Executive Director, of the Society of American Archivists.

COSHRC has also participated in meetings of representatives from organizations in the historical records and museum community under the leadership of AASLH to promote federal funding for museums and archives. It appears that the archival community is ready to proceed sooner than the museum community, but the communities have agreed to communicate developments and mutually support the parallel efforts.

Proposed Local Government Archives Project. In April 2005, COSHRC submitted a grant proposal to NHPRC which requests support for a two-year project focusing on local government archives. The proposal will be considered at the Commission's November 2005 meeting. The project is intended to lay the groundwork for stronger local government archives by analyzing their current conditions and needs and determining what services, standards, and funding strategies will work best to ensure the long-term preservation of and access to the records that are closest to home.

Action taken on national issues

NHPRC funding appropriation. The COSHRC Board and membership devoted a significant amount of time and energy to restoration of funding for the NHPRC. The President's budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2006 targeted the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to receive no funding for either the grants program or for program administration. This would have effectively eliminated the NHPRC.

The Council of State Historical Records Coordinators, the Society of American Archivists, and the National Association for Government Archivists and Records Administrators worked collaboratively to address this threat to NHPRC and NARA. Additional partners with whom we coordinated our efforts include: the Association for Documentary Editors, the American Association for State and Local History, the National Coalition for History, regional archival associations, and national and regional genealogical groups. Specific actions taken included:

- **Action alerts** distributed regularly through COSHRC and partner organizations. A website, www.savearchives.org, was created to provide access to advocacy information.
- **Fact sheets** distributed to constituents to support contact with Congress on this issue which included contact information and guidelines for writing to Congress; background information on the issue to help in developing letters; and specific information on the benefits received from NHPRC for individual states.
- **Constituent letters and email** to members of the House and Senate Subcommittees on Transportation, Treasury, HUD, the Judiciary and Related Agencies, and to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. We received information on approximately 1000 letters that went to the House and 400 to the Senate.
- **Constituent visits** to members of the House and Senate. We received information on approximately 100 visits made.

- **Testimony** provided to the House T-THUD Subcommittee prior to its hearing on appropriations in June. Of the 125 pieces of testimony ultimately submitted to the Subcommittee regarding all the areas for which it is responsible, 121 related to NHPRC funding restoration.
- **An electronic petition** that received more than 10,100 signatures by early July. We provided copies of the petition to the chairs of both the T-THUD Subcommittees and the Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate.

In June the House restored \$5.5 million for competitive grants and \$2 million for program administration. Senate consideration of the appropriation is scheduled for the week of July 19. We are optimistic about the potential for at least preserving the amount proposed by the House, and lobbying is currently underway asking the Senate to raise the grant funding figure.

Archivist of the United States nomination: The President nominated Dr. Allen Weinstein for the position of Archivist of the United States in April 2004. That same month, COSHRC joined SAA and NAGARA in issuing a statement expressing concerns about the nomination process. However, after several subsequent informal conversations with Dr. Weinstein regarding issues of concern to COSHRC, the members in attendance at the annual business meeting in Phoenix unanimously accepted the Board's recommendation to support his nomination. The final confirmation by the Senate took place in February 2005, and several members of the COSHRC Board attended Dr. Weinstein's swearing-in ceremony.

Subsequently Dr. Weinstein has held a number of conversations with COSHRC Board members regarding issues of common concern, as noted below under ***Activities with Federal Agencies.***

Collaboration with SAA, NAGARA

The COSHRC, SAA, and NAGARA boards held mid-winter meetings concurrently for the fourth year in February 2005. The boards devoted a half day to a joint meeting of all three boards to discuss collaboration on advocacy, particularly focusing on the need to restore funding for NHPRC. The Boards reached agreement to form a Joint Task Force on Advocacy to address this issue.

Work has begun on the joint 2006 meeting of COSHRC, NAGARA, and SAA in Washington D.C. Robert Horton, Minnesota Historical Society, and Tom Hyry, Yale University, will serve as the Program Committee co-chairs. F. Gerald Handfield, State Archivist of Washington, has agreed to serve as the COSHRC representative on the combined Program Committee. COSHRC will have its regular business meeting and two incubator session slots will be available. In addition, COSHRC will submit proposals for traditional sessions at the meeting. In keeping with our practices for the last decade, we have requested funding from NHPRC to support travel and lodging expenses for one representative from each state to attend the COSHRC meeting (the proposal will be considered at the November 2006 Commission meeting). For the first time, however, COSHRC has committed to covering 20% of these expenses out of its own funds instead of having NHPRC carry 100% of the costs of the meeting.

Activities with Federal Agencies

National Archives. A number of areas for discussion are emerging with the National Archives in keeping with the pledge made by Dr. Weinstein to increase communication with colleagues around the country, and in state archives in particular. These include:

- **ERA:** The National Archives will be reviewing proposals from two vendors for the Electronic Record Archives (ERA) project and will award the contract in August 2005. NARA leadership has indicated an interest in how ERA might be useful to state governments. This discussion will be initiated at the COSHRC annual meeting during the "NARA and the States" session.

The COSHRC Board also proposed, and NARA leadership agreed, that the profession, including state archives, would benefit from a thorough technical review conducted by a group of individuals working outside of NARA to advise on the broader applicability and issues in very practical terms. COSHRC and several other professional organizations will be identifying individuals to undertake this analysis once the final vendor is selected.

- **NARA Strategic Plan:** COSHRC members have been invited to provide comments and suggestions for consideration in preparation for the development of NARA's strategic plan.
- **National Initiative:** Allen Weinstein, Lewis Bellardo (Deputy Archivist) and Max Evans (NHPRC) were briefed on our proposal for state-based funding. They have agreed in concept that this is a very essential program that should be pursued by the National Archives. Following the incubator session at the COSHRC Annual Meeting, we will discuss with them the final recommendations for program parameters and funding, and identify next steps for pursuing this effort.

Library of Congress. The Library of Congress has initiated the National Digital Information Infrastructure Preservation Project (NDIIPP) which focuses on the long-term preservation of state government "born digital" information. LC invited state archives and state libraries to send representatives to three workshops which were coordinated by Bill LeFurgy. LC also asked Kathleen Roe and Vicki Walch to attend as representatives of COSHRC. LC has indicated they would like to work through COSHRC to facilitate communication with the state archives on further planning and work as this initiative moves forward.

COSHRC administration

2004 and 2005 annual meetings. The 2004 COSHRC annual meeting was held in conjunction with NAGARA's annual meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, Thursday, July 15, through Saturday, July 17. A total of 43 states, 1 territory, and the District of Columbia sent representatives to the meeting.

The 2005 annual meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 21, through Saturday, July 23, in Richmond, Virginia, also in conjunction with the NAGARA annual meeting. We are expecting a record number of states to be represented this year, with at least 49 states plus American Samoa in attendance.

Finances. COSHRC finished its 2004 fiscal year with a total of \$51,661 in the bank. As of July 1, 2005, the bank balances totaled \$52,814.89. The advocacy effort and preparation of a NHPRC grant proposal required additional staff time, meaning that expenses were higher than normal in the first two quarters of FY2005, but overall COSHRC's financial status is healthy and growing stronger.

Dues. In FY2004, COSHRC received \$32,400 in dues from 36 states, the District of Columbia, and American Samoa, averaging \$853 per jurisdiction. To date, we have received \$23,600 in dues for FY2005, with 26 states having paid already and another 8 having committed to making payments totaling \$9,300 after July 1.