

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN RECORD



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Volume 15, Issue 4

Summer 2009

## National Archives and Records Administration Celebrates 75 Years



The National Archives Building in Washington DC at night: This view from Pennsylvania Avenue shows two statues titled "The Past" and "The Future."

*"To bring together the records of the past and to house them in a building where they will be preserved for the use of men and women in the future, a Nation must believe in three things. It must believe in the past. It must believe in the future. It must, above all, believe in the capacity of its own people so to learn from the past that they can gain judgment in creating their own future."*

*Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1941*

Before the National Archives was created in 1934, individual government agencies were in charge of maintaining their own records. Some took great care of the materials, but many did not.

Congress established the National Archives in 1934 to centralize federal record keeping, with the Archivist of the United States as its chief administrator.

When Archives staff members first began searching for old government files to catalog and store in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C., they found many disorganized records that had been put away carelessly. In many cases, fire, insects, heat,

water, and sunlight caused quite a bit of damage.

After an extensive survey, the Archivist of the United States reported in 1937 that nearly 1,360,000 cubic feet of records should be transferred to the National Archives. The volume of records continued to grow, as New Deal and then World War II records poured in.

From one building on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC, the National Archives has grown to 37 facilities nationwide, from Atlanta to Anchorage.

Now called the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the agency administers

regional archives, Federal records centers, Presidential libraries, the Federal Register, and the National Historical and Publications Commission.

On June 19, 2009, the National Archives celebrated its 75th anniversary. We plan to commemorate this anniversary throughout 2009 with a variety of special events and activities designed to appeal to many audiences, both internal and external.

To find out about defining moments in the agency's history through the decades with photo galleries, personal stories, and notices of special events throughout the nation, visit NARA's website at <http://www.archives.gov>.

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**NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES**

**1934-2009**

# Lessons Learned from Federal RMA Implementations

On February 1, 2008, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) published the results of a 2007 study of nine Federal agencies who are implementing Records Management Application (RMA) software products to manage their electronic records. A follow up study was completed this year for three additional agencies and was published on March 30th. An RMA is a software system that performs electronic records management according to an accepted Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) standard, such as the U.S. Department of Defense, DoD 5015.2, Electronic Records Management Application Design Criteria Standard. Each report contains certain kernels of wisdom imparted by records managers who helped implement the RMA software in their agencies. Here are some selected lessons learned from these major IT projects:

“You must have buy-in and support from upper management.”  
 “Have management take a harder line as far as implementing the system. Don’t make it an option.”  
 “Get your Records Management house in order before embarking on an ERMS. Approved file series and retention schedules are a must.”  
 “Take baby steps. Pilots are a great way to start, then build from there.”  
 “Involve those who will be using the system from the onset.”  
 “Be prepared to train IT staff in Records Management processes (and vice-versa).”  
 “Plan ahead for dissenters; take them aside, work with them to find out their issues and concerns. In the long run, it will be time well spent. Include more ‘reluctant’ users in the pilot projects.”  
 “Clarify records management policies when guidance is established for RMA users in order to ensure the completeness of the official record in the RMA repository.”  
 “Survey the variety of recordkeeping practices being used in program offices; they may be different in each office.”  
 “Determine the level of competency of potential RMA users. Some users were not competent in using either the existing document management system or even standard office applications.”  
 “Institute ‘change management’ to mitigate potential user resistance to change, especially if the organizational culture has been heavily reliant on traditional paper processes.”  
 “Avoid customization (of the RMA product) if at all possible.”  
 “Have a plan and get support for periodically upgrading the RMA software. Carefully plan migration of legacy data.”

“Monitor user compliance with new policies and procedures that are put into place for the RMA.”

“Granular paper-based file plans are not appropriate for use in an RMA. Big bucket retention categories work best because they present fewer choices for users to select from.”

“Manage user expectations as much as possible ahead of the implementation. There were some unmet expectations from certain users who weren’t prepared for the amount of time it takes to file records into the repository.”

“Business process analysis/business process reengineering should be performed ahead of the implementation; this helps enable offices to use rule-based filing for the reengineered processes, reducing the need for individual users to select records on their own.

“Have the Chief Information Officer (CIO) office test and use software so they have an appreciation of how it works and can make more informed decisions on providing future support.”

“RMAs must be compatible with the current desktop baseline, including and especially the existing e-mail system.”

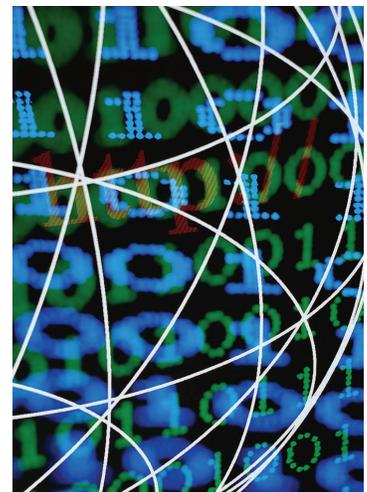
“Technical and functional requirements should be specific, testable, and measurable.”

“Set up the RMA as a web-based, web-functional solution.”

“Find ways to resolve the ‘human acceptance’ factor; show value of records management to the mission of the agency to get people on board with the RMA.”

“Ongoing vendor support is critical. They have to remain a component of your implementation strategy to be successful. You can also tap into their help desk support and user forums.”

The 2007 Study, [A Survey Of Federal Agency Records Management Applications \(RMAs\)](http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/resources/rma-study-07.pdf), Tool ID: 239, can be found at <http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/resources/rma-study-07.pdf>. The 2008 Study, [Continuing Study of Federal Agency Recordkeeping Technologies](http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/resources/recordkeeping-tech-2008.pdf), Tool ID: 314, can be found at <http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/resources/recordkeeping-tech-2008.pdf>.



# Hello, Goodbye...



*[Pat Marek is the new Director of the Federal Records Center Program for the Rocky Mountain Region. Here is a little information about Pat in her own words.]*

Pat Marek

“I started with NARA on August 3rd. I was a contractor with various companies for over 20 years. I obtained my Certified Records Manager credential in July 2001 and have worked specifically in the records management field for about 13 years. I have had a variety of careers including teaching and court reporting. Over the past 7 years, I was Manager of the Denver Environmental Protection Agency’s Regional Records Center. As a contractor managing EPA’s central records center, I had the privilege of participating in the design of a new records center in their new building and coordinating the inventory and move of records from 42 independent records centers for consolidation into a centralized records center. I am honored to be a part of NARA, have been so warmly welcomed, and look forward to working with many of you.”

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Genola Smith

Genola Smith retired as Director of the Federal Records Center Program, on July 4, 2009, with 35 years of public service — 20 of which were spent at the National Archives.

Her professionalism and commitment to the work at hand was critical to the Rocky Mountain Region smoothly transitioning its Federal Records Center

Program to a fee-for-service — revolving fund program during FY 2000. Her ability to develop and maintain excellent working relationships with Rocky Mountain Region customers and partners such as the TRICARE Management Activity and Department of Commerce, particularly in regards to the Temporary Records Information Portal prototype, has had an impact that goes beyond the borders of this region.

Her contributions to the broader Federal Community included:

- Blacks in Government
- Supporting the annual DFEB-sponsored training seminar
- Federal Executive Women’s Program

The excellent reputation that the Rocky Mountain Region’s Federal Records Center Program enjoys with our customers and headquarters is a lasting testimony to her leadership. We have no doubt that Genola and her family will be very active in her post-NARA years. Farewell, Genola, and thanks!

**FY-2010 Workshops—Register for workshops and briefings through:**<http://nara.learn.com/records management-training>or request a registration form by e-mailing us at: [workshop.denver@nara.gov](mailto:workshop.denver@nara.gov)

Call: (303) 407-5720 or Fax: (303) 407-5731

<b>Date</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Location</b>
October 28-29, 2009	Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information (KA-2)	Santa Fe, NM
November 3-4, 2009	Records Scheduling (KA-3)	Santa Fe, NM
November 5-6, 2009	Records Schedule Implementation (KA-4)	Santa Fe, NM
November 17-18, 2009	Asset and Risk Management (KA-5)	Santa Fe, NM
November 19, 2009	Records Management Program Development (KA-6)	Santa Fe, NM
January 27, 2010	Basic Records Operations (BRO)	Denver, CO
February 23, 2010	Basic Records Operations (BRO)	Albuquerque, NM
February 24-25, 2010	Electronic Records Management (ERM)	Albuquerque, NM
March 24-25, 2010	Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information (KA-2)	Albuquerque, NM
March 30-31, 2010	Records Scheduling (KA-3)	Albuquerque, NM
April 1-2, 2010	Records Schedule Implementation (KA-4)	Albuquerque, NM
April 6-7, 2010	Asset and Risk Management (KA-5)	Albuquerque, NM
April 8, 2010	Records Management Program Development (KA-6)	Albuquerque, NM
April 20-21, 2010	Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information (KA-2)	Denver, CO
April 22-23, 2010	Records Scheduling (KA-3)	Denver, CO
May 3-4, 2010	Records Schedule Implementation (KA-4)	Denver, CO
May 5-6, 2010	Asset and Risk Management (KA-5)	Denver, CO
May 7, 2010	Records Management Program Development (KA-6)	Denver, CO
June 23, 2010	Electronic Records Management (ERM)	Denver, CO
July 13, 2010	Basic Records Operations (BRO)	Billings, MT
July 15, 2010	Basic Records Operations (BRO)	Bismarck, ND
August 4-5, 2010	Emergency Planning and Response for Vital Records and Essential Information (EVE)	Albuquerque, NM
August 11, 2010	Electronic Records Forum	Denver, CO