

**Archivist Achievement Awards in Records Management  
General Lunchtime Remarks**

**Adrienne C. Thomas, Acting Archivist of the United States  
RACO 2009 – International Trade Center/Ronald Reagan Building**

**Thursday, May 28, 2009**

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[Tom Mills introduces Adrienne. Adrienne thanks Tom for the introduction.]

This year, the National Archives and Records Administration celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Throughout its history, the National Archives has been focused on continuing access and preservation of Federal records.

Since 1934, we've taken a leadership role in the Federal government in this activity, and in the wider professional archival and records management communities.

Most importantly, we've actively partnered with you – the Federal agencies who create our Nation's record – to carry out our access and preservation responsibilities for the American people.

As we say in our mission: We – the National Archives - ensure continuing access to the essential documentation of the rights of American citizens and the actions of their government.

One of the central ways we carry out this mission is through records management.

Through our policy and guidance, and through our records management services, including the reimbursable Federal Records Center Program, we ensure that:

- Federal agencies can economically and effectively create and manage records necessary to meet business needs; that

- Records are kept long enough to protect rights and assure accountability; and that
- Records of archival value are preserved and made available for future generations.

In 75 years, the Federal records and information landscape has changed remarkably.

When we opened our doors, our focus was on the identification and preservation of historically valuable records, most of which were in paper.

While we addressed the issue of inadequate storage and access to existing records, we also took the lead in managing the incredible growth in Federal records as our government's responsibilities grew through the New Deal, World War Two, and the Cold War.

It was during this period that the National Archives – in partnership with military and civilian Federal agencies – essentially developed the records management profession.

Since the 1960s, we've dealt with electronic records in increasing volumes and increasingly complex formats. In recent years our electronic records holdings have grown exponentially – in both volume and complexity - as almost all of the Federal government's business is conducted electronically.

And today, as you've heard in this morning's sessions, the Federal government is in a constantly evolving information environment. The issues of collaboration, openness, transparency, and technology all intersect with records and information management policy and practice.

These are exciting and challenging times.

Because of the dedicated and talented records management staff at the National Archives - and in the agencies across the Federal government - we are ready for the challenges.

We are poised to work together – NARA and the Federal agencies - to identify and execute the most effective approaches and strategies to address the electronic records management challenges facing us today.

I thank you for your service in this important work – work that is key to the success of our agency and our Federal government.

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Now, it is my honor to recognize several agencies and their major accomplishments through our annual Archivist Achievement Awards in Records Management.

These five awards – presented to four different agencies - highlight the important contributions Federal agencies and their



records management staffs and contractors make in supporting the business needs of their agencies.

And in turn, their success – again - ensures the continuing access to the essential documentation of the rights of American citizens and the actions of their government – the mission of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Without further ado, our award recipients are:

[\[Adrienne moves to the Awards Remarks in other file.\]](#)

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**[Award #1 Bureau of Reclamation]**

Our first Archivist Achievement Award today goes to the  
Department of the Interiors' Bureau of Reclamation.

The Bureau is receiving this award to recognize their successful  
development and deployment of REDS – the Reclamation  
Electronic Document System.

This system manages millions of electronic engineering drawings and serves as the index to all Bureau of Reclamation program records.

Because Bureau of Reclamation and National Archives staff worked together throughout the design and development of this system - combining NARA's records management expertise and the Bureau's understanding of its business needs – the deployment of REDS was a success. REDS is a model for developing a major records management system.

The successful deployment of REDS has enabled the Bureau of Reclamation to work more effectively with NARA staff to transfer records historically valuable records to the National Archives' Rocky Mountain Regional Archives. REDS has also been the platform from which Reclamation staff have worked with NARA's Electronic Records and Special Media Services Division to conduct test transfers of permanently valuable reclamation records.

Accepting the Archivist Achievement Award for the Bureau of Reclamation is Mr. Robert Wolf, the Director of Program and Budget, Bureau of Reclamation, Washington, DC.

[Allow Bureau of Reclamation representative to make brief remarks.]

[Award #2 Environmental Protection Agency – First Award]

This year we are making two awards to an agency that has been at the forefront of Federal records management for nearly two decades – the Environmental Protection Agency.

The first award is being made for the EPA's efforts to revitalize records management awareness and compliance in the agency.

Just so I am clear, the EPA had a pretty good records management program already. But they wanted to get better so

they could better serve their agency's mission and business needs.

Under the leadership of the EPA's Chief Information Officer, the agency launched an agency-wide document and records management task force.

This group explored how to make document and records management a part of each EPA employees' responsibilities in carrying out the agency's mission. The task force made recommendations that served as the foundation for subsequent actions the agency took.

Under the leadership of the EPA records officer, the agency built on their existing program strengths and:

- Identified and articulated for employees their specific records management responsibilities in more practical ways.
  
- Updated procedures for some part of the records management program, especially vital records management.



- Established more internal mandatory training to make employees more aware of their responsibilities; and
- Established mechanisms for soliciting ideas and suggestions for continuously improving records management, and then positively recognizing EPA employees who step forward and contribute to the success of the program.

Our Archivist Achievement Awards in Records Management are not always about bad or mediocre programs improving, or decent programs implementing new technology or launching

flashy initiatives. We also recognize and want to support the good programs that take it to the next level to get even better.

[Pause briefly and then transition into Award #3 Environmental Protection Agency – Second Award]

Our second award to the Environmental Protection Agency is being made for the EPA's successful deployment of their Enterprise Content Management System.

The EPA's ECMS enables every agency employee and contractor to save and manage their email records from their desktop.

Because of the deployment of this system, email records can now be stored in an electronic repository that ensures security, authenticity, and rapid access to records. The ECMS also links these email records to the appropriate NARA-approved retention schedule so appropriate disposition actions can be carried out.

This system has allowed EPA to move from a paper-based, print-and-file email management process to an all-electronic management process.

The EPA's success with their Enterprise Content Management System suggests a model approach that might be followed by other Federal agencies.

Accepting both awards to the Environmental Protection Agency is Ms. Lisa Schlosser, Director, Office of Information Collection.

[Allow EPA representative to make brief remarks.]

## [Award #4 United States Marine Corps]

Our fourth Archivist Achievement Award in Records Management goes to the United States Marine Corps.

For the past year, the Marine Corps has successfully employed a web-based portal that delivers records management policy and services to Marines, civilian employees, and contractors. This one-stop shopping web portal includes:

- All records, reports, and directives policy and guidance;

- Two self-directed training courses related to records management, and the specific processes for transferring records to the National Archives;

and, most importantly

- Online collaboration tools for facilitating records management services between the Marine Corps records management program and units or programs in the field.

The successful deployment and use of a customer-focused records management web portal demonstrates the United States

Marine Corps commitment to a strong records management program.

Accepting the award on behalf of the Marine Corps is Mr. Albert Washington, Director, Administration and Resource Management Division.

[Allow U.S. Marine Corps representative to make brief remarks.]



[Award #5 National Reconnaissance Office]

The final Archivist Achievement Award in Records

Management is awarded to the National Reconnaissance Office.

The success of any program – especially a records and information management program – is to be really honest about its strengths and weaknesses; know what opportunities for success the program has; and understand the threats that program failure can cause for the wider organization.

And then take action to address the results of that honest assessment.

This is exactly what the National Reconnaissance Office did nearly five years ago.

In 2004, after an Office of Inspector General audit, the NRO's records management program established a partnership with their OIG to dramatically improve their records management program.

For nearly five years, the records management program and the IG worked together to establish a strong records and information management foundation that supported the business needs of the organization. And then – together, with other senior leadership support – they drove the strategic direction and the tactical implementation throughout the National Reconnaissance Office.

Some of the key actions taken at NRO include:

- The inclusion of records management compliance criteria in every inspection OIG undertakes at NRO

- The designation and funding of full-time or majority-time records officers for each program area of the organization
  
- The development and implementation of over 230 program or office level file plans
  
- The retirement of over 20,000 cubic feet of inactive records to an agency-built and maintained, NARA-compliant records storage facility; and

- The training of over 200 key information and records management officers, by both internal training offerings, and external training programs provided by NARA, local universities, and other agencies in the Intelligence Community.

Today, the NRO has an outstanding records management program that is understood to be strategic part of the entire organization.

The National Reconnaissance Office demonstrates the importance of partnership in addressing challenges, and the kind

of success an agency can have when collaboration occurs in a trusting, positive, mission-oriented environment.

Accepting the award on behalf of the National Reconnaissance Office are Ms. Julie Laderach, Chief, Administrative Support Group; Mr. Riggs Monfort, Chief, Information Management Team; and Ms. Rebecca Goldberg, Information Management Technical Officer.

[Allow NRO representative to make brief remarks.]

Please join me in offering one more round of applause for this year's recipients of Archivist Achievement Awards in Records Management.

[APPLAUSE]

Let me turn over the podium to Laurence Brewer for some final comments and directions for the afternoon program.

Thank you.