

California State Library
Library Services and Technology Act

Final Narrative Report
LSTA Form 9

This report is due thirty (30) days after the completion date of the grant period, on July 31. Note that failure to submit this report within the timelines of the grant program could jeopardize receipt of the final 10% grant payment. Mail a total of **THREE** copies of the report, one with original signature. Send to:

California State Library
Budget Office - LSTA
P.O. Box 942837
Sacramento, CA 94237-0001

Date July 23, 2009

1. Grant Award ID # 40-7001
2. Project Title Local History Digital Resources Project
3. FY FY 2008-2009 (July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009)
4. Total project period One (1) fiscal year
5. Grantee City of Commerce Public Library
6. Address 5655 Jillson Street, Commerce, California 90040
7. Contact Evelyn U. Fullmore,
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9. Needs.

Funds for this project were requested to provide digital access to photographs held in off-site storage. The photographs document events in the City of Commerce's history. Commerce will celebrate its 50th anniversary on January 28, 2010, and community desire for access to the photographs during its formative years is high. The grant funds permitted the library, in conjunction with members of a community focus group, to select 200 images for digitization. In the next fiscal year, photographs and other images will be added to bring more recent events into the collection.

Applicant Jurisdiction: City of Commerce Public Library

Project Title: Local History Digital Resources Project

10. Project abstract.

The City of Commerce Public Library Local History Digital Resources Project opened access to images of the city before and after its incorporation. The resulting collection of 200 photographs were deposited with the Online Archive of California (OAC) through the CONTENTdm application. The 200 digitized images presented a successful model for continuing digitizing work of another 2,200 to 2,400 images stored in offsite archives (and unavailable for use). Users of the city's library as well as other city departments can use the stored images for personal, academic, and business research with the common OAC format now available. When possible, project workers added an additional GPS coordinate tag to permit geolocation of the image through Google Maps with street view and other visual mapping applications.

An unquantifiable benefit to this project was an increase in pride in the city's history, especially when new "born digital" images of the city's three 2008 Beijing Olympians in competition were proposed to be brought into the collection. More informal products like Flickr might be able to retrieve the same image, but the benefit of having a single point of cataloging which was coordinated with the Online Archive of California and the controlled vocabulary CONTENTdm was most important.

As across all of southeast Los Angeles County, the City of Commerce and the communities it serves experienced significant demographic shifts. Municipalities lost their manufacturing base through governmental regulations designed to improve air and ground water quality. Unlike most cities in Los Angeles County, Commerce was the financial beneficiary of laws permitting "casinos" (which in California are games of skill, not chance), with the "jewel" in the crown of all casinos in Los Angeles County, the Commerce Casino, located within city limits. The casino, "the largest card club in the world", was founded in 1982, providing the city with a significant portion of its revenue and replacing much of the lost income generated through tax rolls. Revenue from the casino provided one of the highest levels of city services available to any California resident.

The population base in 1960 was primarily Caucasian and English-speaking. Today, the population is 95 percent Hispanic-Latino in origin, with about 40 percent of its residents using Spanish as a first language. The project team was able to use the scanned images to show the demographic shift over the almost 50 years since its incorporation.

The project used tools, training and seed money from a Library Services and Technology Act grant as administered by the California State Library. The City of Commerce Public Library reported its progress through required written forms, participation in conference calls and face-to-face meetings, as well as many informal telephone calls with Online Archive of California lead personnel.

A planned book to accompany the photograph collection was not created due to budgetary constraints. Instead, the city's public information office and library staff will be selecting and including images from other significant city events to continue to build the collection and contribute to the knowledge base of the history of Los Angeles County.

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11. Project accomplishments.

This project was the first opportunity the city had to review the local history photographs in its collection since their cataloging in 1994. The grant, in conjunction with the impending celebration of the city's 50th birthday, provided the impetus for the library to retrieve the photographs and select, as stated in the initial premise of the grant images showing the demographic and economic changes in the city from incorporation through the early 2000s.

City departments have been made aware of the soon-available image library via high-level management meetings. They are looking forward to having access to it to promote their own programs.

The city's central library will be undergoing a planned renovation in the next 18 months. The architecture firm selected to revise and implement the original plans have proposed using scanned images to provide themes for the individual spaces within the building. With the images being available digitally, the firm can do a quick review, make selections, and then move the selections into their final designs as wall or partition renderings.

One deviation made from the Dublin Core tags which the project implemented was the addition of two additional fields, street address (within the city limits) and corresponding GIS geographical coordinates. With this information available, researchers can position photographs as overlays on current maps and use products such as Google Maps (with Street View) or Bing Maps with "bird's eye" view to see how the image locations look in their current context. While there have been many changes since the photographs were originally taken, many of the locations are relatively unchanged. These are among the most interesting in the collection. Exact locations for all photographs were not available. As time and staffing levels permit, they will be added retrospectively. Future images will have street addresses included as a standard cataloging feature rather than as an exception.

One outcome of the project was that the community and other city departments perceived the library as a more active participant in the preparation for the celebration of the city's incorporation. The library had always been working to support this goal, and with the review and selection of the images and discussion before City Council, the library was seen as being more interested in the "long view" of the city as well as the ways it could meet its residents' and other community members' immediate needs.

Another outcome of the project was the heightened familiarity of library staff with new technologies. Full planing of the integration of the OAC with the library's web presence was complete by the end of the grant year, with the new technical services librarian ready to host the images on the library's integrated library system if the need arose.

Finally, the grant allowed the library to begin the process of encapsulating images in protective sleeves so that further environmental deterioration could be slowed. Handling the images at all causes damage, and the best way to use an image is to work with its digital equivalent, not the original paper copy. Encapsulation sleeves were purchased and scanned images were returned to long-term, off-site storage better protected for the future. This also allows the library to plan on strategies for rescuing acid-based scrapbooks - a task which will need to be done off-site and professionally rather than on site for reasons of space and lack of the highly specialized technology which will need to be used to lift and turn brittle pages.

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12. Subjective evaluation.

Even though passage of the budget and a late release of the grant check posed an initial challenge to the work at hand, the project had no major failures. Staff was able to enter, check, tag, and upload our data within the timeframe allotted by the terms of the grant. In addition, because the images are designed to be overlaid on maps, geographic coordinates were collected whenever possible to permit casual browsing with tools such as Google Maps Street View or Bing Maps "Bird's Eye" View to see the actual physical site as it is in recent aerial or drive-by photography. This proved particularly helpful in resolving a recent reference question (immediately post-grant) where staff was able to provide drive-by information about a building which had been photographed, then subsequently demolished and new construction erected in its place.

The issues staff encountered included some physical server and network shifting within the agency which prevented a smooth move of the scanned objects and associated metadata from CONTENTdm's Acquisition Station to the Califa server. The shifts themselves happened within the context of a large rebuild of the city's network infrastructure and tests during the rebuild did not catch the problems as quickly as would have been preferable.

The content of the participants' manual was clear and complete to the detail level, it might do well with a makeover allowing wide side margins showing major topics and subtopics. This follows the format of many of the current do-it-yourself books, and makes annotating a printed copy of the document easier to track. The document also lends itself to electronic annotation by project participants. It might move easily into a wiki format.

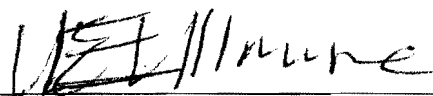
13. Project continuation.

The City of Commerce Public Library has contracted with Califa to continue CONTENTdm hosting through June 30, 2010, and will be scanning, cataloging, and adding new images to its existing Online Library of California collection.

The library's director will also be talking with other city departments about providing funding to add and maintain more than the original 200 images and 50 images for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Because the city's 50th anniversary is on January 28, 2010, there should be many opportunities to capture images through scanning of printed documents, receiving them in PDF format directly from the city's graphics department, or inserting them directly into the system through photographs which are now exclusively "born digital".

Publicity will begin with links to and through the library's main web page at <http://rooms.cocpl.org>. We expect an initial flurry of activity, then a drop-off while the city's public information staff familiarizes themselves with the resource, and then another jump after promotion of the site takes place through the city's monthly newspaper, "Report to the People".

14. Signature/Date



7/21/09

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