

Consolidation of Victoria Facilities

Records Management and Access

The LTSA will be consolidating its corporate office, the Surveyor General Division, and the Victoria Land Title Office at a new building at 1321 Blanshard Street in Victoria in the late summer of 2010. The new premises will provide:

- A new state-of-the-art, climate-controlled records vault to house BC's historic hardcopy land title and survey records;
- Enhanced document storage; and
- A document conservation laboratory for ongoing preservation and protection of the collection of historic records.

The move to the new facility has been planned by the LTSA for a number of years, and is being undertaken with the support of the LTSA's Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC). The build-out of the LTSA's space is consistent with the specifications established for provincial government office buildings, and the development of the vault reflects input from various representative groups, including the BC Historical Federation.

Funding for the development of the new vault facility and conservation lab (approximately \$1.5 million) has been established through operating revenue and prudent management.

Management of Archival Collections is a High Priority for the LTSA

The LTSA has a long-term commitment to its stakeholders and legislative responsibility regarding the preservation and access to the extensive collection of historic land title and survey records:

- Legislation requires continued maintenance and public/user access to these materials, and being mainly in paper or linen form, they are vulnerable to deterioration or damage.
- The publicly available LTSA Business Plan clearly articulates that the LTSA intends to accelerate the preservation and enhance accessibility of historic documents while implementing optimal archival storage, including electronic access for customers where possible.
- Significant progress has been made on the preservation of records since the creation of the LTSA. This includes an inventory of vault records, the field book scanning project, and ongoing work with BC Archives in the preservation of BC Gazette books.

- To support the upcoming moves to the new facility, the historic records have been inventoried and ongoing conservation work is being carried out on the most fragile, critical and often-used materials.
- The LTSA has recently consulted with the following experts with respect to the move:
 - A conservationist to support design of the conservation lab;
 - An archivist to support overall design of the vault space;
 - Consultation with fire suppression experts to design the fire suppression system;
 - Consultation with University of Victoria archives staff and representatives from the Royal BC Museum; and
 - A cabinet and shelving expert to support design of the vault.
- An accredited professional archives and records management consultant is performing ongoing work to ensure that all due diligence is exercised during the relocation of the LTSA's records collection to the new vault facility. The actual movement of boxes will be in accordance with recognized archival standards, which includes indexing and accounting for all materials at their new location through a labelling and barcode tracking process that is being introduced.
- The records relocation plan will be reviewed with the SAC prior to the move with regular reporting to the SAC during the phased move and upon final set-up and operations of the new facility.
- Ongoing efforts to improve online access to scanned archived collections.

In addition to undertaking critical conservation of often-used documents and ensuring that historic records are housed in a secure, modern facility, the LTSA is continuing its multi-year effort to scan its historic records collection.

Enhanced Access to BC's Land Title and Survey Hard Copy Records

The majority of records are available in electronic format online through BC OnLine or Tantalus/GATOR. Where records are not available online, registry agents, land surveyors, government staff, historians and others accredited with direct access to vault records will continue to have access privileges at no cost at the new LTSA facility, and will benefit from working in a dedicated area with direct access to vault records via a private staircase and modern workstations dedicated for temporary use while they are at the facility. Access will also be supported by new scan-on-demand capabilities which may reduce the need for in-person access to these materials.