

## **New York Archivists and Records Managers Meeting on Responding to the World Trade Center Disaster**

**September 24, 10 a.m.- 12 noon  
New York University**

**Introductions:** Those attending introduced themselves; a list is provided at the end of this document.

**Purpose of the meeting:** This meeting was coordinated by the State Archives and the Archivists Roundtable of New York City in order to initiate discussions about what archival/records management needs exist as a result of the World Trade Center disaster. The primary focus is on how the New York archives and records management community can collaborate to address two major issues: 1) disaster recovery and response for archives and records-keepers in the affected area (below 14<sup>th</sup> street) and 2) how to document those who are participating in the response effort (government agencies, the profit and non-profit organizations, individuals) as well as the efforts to recover and rebuild in the coming months and years.

Specific discussion on those issues resulted in the following action decisions:

- I. Disaster recovery for affected archival programs:
  - A. We need to know what programs have been affected, and what has been the damage and impact on archives and records holding organizations. The State Archives and the National Archives Regional Archives (NYC) will serve as overall coordinators of this effort. Using various existing resources and directories, and drawing on existing efforts where possible the subgroup working on this will compile lists of the following types of organizations and contact them to identify their status and needs. The types of organizations to be contacted and the persons heading the effort for that type are:
    1. Historical records repositories: Archivists Roundtable of NY (Rich Wandel, Steve Novak, Peter Wosh)
    2. Museums: AAM is already in progress with this; coordinate with/contact them
    3. Libraries: METRO 3Rs Library Agency (Dottie Hiebing)
    4. Local Government agencies: State Archives NYC Regional Office (Brenda Parnes)
    5. State Government agencies: State Archives Government Records Services
    6. Federal government agencies: National Archives NYC Regional office (Karen Lucas)
    7. Businesses: ARMA NYC Chapter (Lorraine Anderson)

B. We need to get information out as soon as possible to various communities from the above list to let them know the following:

1. Help is available for those in the affected areas with the following types of materials:

- archives, manuscripts, special collections
- paper records, electronic records, and other business and operational records
- photographs, maps, and plans
- objects and artifacts
- library materials

2. The types of help available: Experts are available to help organizations with:

- Deciding what to do first; what to do and not do
- Damage and conditions assessment
- Recovery planning and techniques
- Resources to assist with recovery effort (both financial and individuals with special expertise)

C. We will disseminate this information via the following:

1. The State Archives will develop a central website to house information on affected organizations and to serve as the central information dissemination point. Other organizations will have information on their websites pointing to this site, and the central site will link to related resources as well.
2. News media including: approaching local newspapers as well as the New York Times to run advertisements (we will ask for free space) alerting organizations to the services available.
3. Professional listservs such as ARMA's list, NYLINE, Archives and Archivists listserv, (others as suggested by committee members)
4. Newsletters for professional groups that may have members in affected organizations (County Bar Association, City Bar Association, NY Land Title Association, others suggested by committee members)
5. Printed brochure (for members to distribute at meetings, conferences, etc)

D. National coordination: We are aware of efforts at the national level such as the National Task Force for Emergency Response, the American Association of Museums, and others. Chris Ward from the NY State Archives and Robert Morris from the National Archives Northeast Regional Archives will coordinate with those national organizations.

## II. Documenting the World Trade Center disaster

Discussion turned to the very complex issue of how to document the disaster. Some organizations have already begun initiatives such as oral history projects, web documentation, and photographic projects. We agreed that it is important to coordinate information on this so there is neither a duplication of effort, or important areas that go undocumented. To begin laying out a process for planning this documentation effort, a Documentation Task Force will be formed and a meeting held in the near future to begin discussions of how to proceed. The following organizations either agreed to participate, or will be contacted as they were perceived to have a key role in such an endeavor.

| <u>Institution:</u>                           | <u>Contact person:</u>             |
|---|------------------------------------|
| (commitment to participate already made)      |                                    |
| NY State Archives                             | Kathleen Roe                       |
| Archivists Roundtable of NY                   | Steve Novak, Rich Wandel           |
| Columbia University                           | Jean Ashton                        |
| New York University                           | Peter Wosh                         |
| New-York Historical Society                   | Margaret Heilbrun                  |
| NYC Dept. of Information and Records Services | Leonora Gidlund                    |
| METRO Library Agency                          | Dottie Hiebing                     |
| (contact re participating)                    |                                    |
| Gotham Center                                 | Mike Wallace                       |
| New York Public Library                       | Mimi Bowling                       |
| Center for Jewish History                     | Bob Sink                           |
| Council of Borough Historians                 | Cal Jones                          |
| Museum of the City of New York                | Sara Henry                         |
| Encyclopedia of NY                            | Peter Eisenstadt                   |
| Smithsonian Institution                       | (museum contact) and John Fleckner |

Agreement was that information on the existence of the task force needs to be disseminated and on its general aim to document the tragedy from the perspective of state and local government, non-profit and for profit organizations, and from the experience of individuals. Information will be made available through a simple flyer which outlines the Task Force, its members, its aim, contact information and website address. Jean Ashton has made arrangements to provide information on this at a Gotham Center conference October 4-6, and Kathleen Roe has made arrangements to provide information on this to the Association of Public Historians meeting September 29-31. Jean and Kathleen also informed attendees at a regional meeting of the Research Libraries Group members at the Metropolitan Museum on September 24.

Some of the attending members remained to discuss issues of providing informational support from records to the disaster recovery efforts particularly relating to the physical and technical infrastructure of the City. (Brenda Parnes led this effort to coordinate with the Office of the Mayor).

Attendees:

Anderson, Brian NYC Dept. of Records and Information Services  
Anderson, Lorraine, ARMA, NYC  
Ashton, Jean Columbia University  
Celardo, John National Archives and Records Administration  
Chowdhury, Mostaque, NYC Dept. of Records and Information Services  
Gidlund, Leonora NYC Dept. of Records and Information Services  
Grevin, Fred NYC Register's office  
Hiebing, Dottie METRO Library Agency  
Huth, Geoffrey NY State Archives  
Komor, Valerie NY Historical Society  
Lucas, Karen National Archives and Records Administration  
McKay, Christine Bank of New York  
Morris, Robert National Archives and Records Administration  
Novak, Stephen Columbia  
Parnes, Brenda NY State Archives  
Pryor, Geronica DoITT  
Roe, Kathleen NY State Archives  
Wandel, Rich NY Philharmonic (attending as the ART rep)  
Ward, Christine NY State Archives  
Wosh, Peter, NYU