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OUR RECORDS CENTER

There are about 1,500 records centers in the country today. Every State and modern corporation has at least one. There are about 400 records centers in the Federal Government.

What is a Records Center? It is a place to store inactive files, that is those non-current records and archival materials of an organization. But,--storage is not enough. A center must also provide efficient reference to those records. Also, it must systematically remove and dispose of non-record files as they become obsolete.

All these functions are performed, not for the Center itself, but as a service for the Office putting its inactive files in the Center. Therefore, the Office informs the Center what material it wants stored and for how long. It specifically states just who has permission to make reference to that material. The Center keeps track of references to the material and notifies the office of this activity and advises it when the time for disposal arrives.

Our Organization maintains its own Records Center. For a few years we used an old garage across the river as our Center. Finally, however, our Records Management Program developed enough to warrant constructing a building specifically designed to house all the inactive records and archival materials of our Organization.

Some Offices first found it more convenient to keep their inactive records and provide staffs to service requests for reference to those old files.

Recently such records storage and archives at headquarters were studied and their transfer to the Records Center was recommended. The recommendation was coordinated and approved. Today, the modernized Records Center is used by all areas throughout the Organization, without exception.

As you can see in the illustrations, the Center is a reinforced concrete building. No frills, all utility. Some of the utility makes for ideal working conditions.

It is located beyond the high rents of the city in a pleasant rural countryside. To preserve the records material, the Center has an efficient air conditioner with humidity control. Also the building provides greater physical security than an office safe.

A giant incinerator at the Center consumes obsolete non-record material at a rate of _____ cubic feet per hour. But that's too slow to cope with our production. Our Offices create papers at a rate of _____ sheets per hour. The services of our own special technicians are being used to devise faster disposal and they already have jumped the destruction rate to _____ cubic feet per hour.

There is room in the Center for 100,000 cubic feet of records. Only about half the space is occupied today. But headquarters has over 120,000 cubic feet of papers in its offices and at least half of these are inactive records that should be retired to the Center. That is why the Records Management Staff is asking all Organization Offices to up-date their Records Control Schedules to insure an active Records Disposition Program in each office.

Our Records Center facilities cost about \$600,000. However, without it these last few years we would have had to spend more than \$2,500,000 at Headquarters alone. For example, the thousands of cubic feet of files transferred to the Center emptied office filing equipment valued at over a million dollars.

Office space in town costs about _____ per square foot. At the Center, floor space is _____ per square foot.

A \$75.00 file cabinet or a \$438.00 safe can store 8 feet of records. The Center uses _____ worth of steel shelving and cardboard boxes to store those records.

Our findings are not unusual. Such savings as these have been proven by every Government Agency or Private concern that is effectively using records centers.

Comparing the prices of equipment and space, it costs about _____ to store a foot of records in the average Office and only _____ in the Center.

All things considered, there is a savings of _____ for every foot of records transferred from the Headquarters to the Center.

The savings is even greater for every foot of papers reviewed by the Office and destroyed immediately by that Office whenever it finds duplicate or non-record material.

In the early days of microfilming old records we found that the Center could store the original record document for 30 years at less cost than to microfilm them.

Even more important that these cash savings is the fact that the Center provides better control and faster reference for our old records. Many officials have found they can obtain inactive records from the Center quicker than they could find them in old file cabinets maintained in their Offices.

Records Center couriers make two deliveries to Headquarters each day. A request for reference to inactive records is filled within the 8-hour workday of its receipt. Most of the time the requests are sent out the same day.

Last year these couriers processed over _____ requests for reference to _____ inactive documents stored at the Center. That averages about one reference per month for each _____ feet of records in the Center. If looked at in terms of Office files, this means that a 4-drawer safe full of old files is opened about _____ times a month.

Field Stations Use Center

Many Field Stations use the Center. We speak of Headquarters' records because most of the material from the Field is put in or taken out of the Center through Headquarters channels.

However, there have been occasions when Headquarters Offices made special arrangements for the Records Center courier to meet airplanes at the airport for direct pickup of records from the Field.

Trains, ships, and postmen have brought records to our warehouse for redelivery to the Center. As we said, the Center provides service for all areas throughout the Organization without exception.