Digitizing, Defining, and Organizing the Texas Film Commission Archives

Jo Lammert, MSIS Student
Faculty Supervisor: Unmil Karadkar
Field Supervisor: Alicia Downard, Production Coordinator, Texas Film Commission

Background:
The Texas Film Commission, a division of the Office of the Governor, supports the media industries of Texas, and helps increase Texas’s competitive position worldwide as a production destination. For 40 years, the Commission has collected a variety of documents related to movie-making in the state of Texas. These archives serve as a resource for staff, constituents, and production companies considering filming in Texas. The Film Commission keeps record of current projects digitally using the application TexScout, but there is still a wealth of disorganized paper materials from old projects that has yet to be digitized.

Objectives:
• Evaluate the current digitization plan in the archives, update as needed.
• Determine the staff priorities and needs for the digitized archives
• Design and implement a controlled vocabulary to define and organize the archive artifacts
• Digitize paper archives, and bridge the gap between paper materials and born digital archives for easy access.

Methodology:
• Determined through discussion with TFC staff which archived projects would take top priority.
• Conducted interviews and surveys with staff regarding the archive. This research helped me identify recurring terminology used by staff, as well as helped me find recurring themes regarding how staff use various artifacts.
• Slight modifications to the digitization plan, continued to scan artifacts, upload to project folders with accompanying metadata, update project records

Outcomes and Conclusions:
• Designed and implemented a keyword system in TexScout based from the interviews to ensure digital archive documents are quickly retrieved.
• Based on how employees use the archive, and how they would like to use the archive in a digital space, created a proposal for TexScout creators Reel-Scout for implementing additions to the TexScout interface to better accommodate archived materials.
• With my knowledge of the archive, I’m now assisting the Marketing Director to create a historic collection to be displayed for the Texas Film Commission 40th Anniversary screenings at the Paramount in late May.