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STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

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Press Release

ALASKA STATE ARCHIVES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 1, 2011

State Archives to Process State Litigation Documents from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill

JUNEAU – The Alaska State Archives has received federal funds to evaluate and make accessible state litigation documents stemming from the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989. In five years of litigation, the Alaska Department of Law accumulated a case file of millions of pages.

On October 1 the State Archives began to assess the litigation records. The project, funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (National Archives), will allow archivists to determine what to keep for permanent public knowledge and what to dispose of. The two-year project will use two full-time professional archivists. Permanent records will be organized, cataloged and then publicized around the world.

“Project staff will begin locally and work progressively outward to wider audiences,” said Project Director Larry Hibpshman. “Work will emphasize access within Alaska before efforts to reach the world at large. The oil spill happened to Alaska and its people were most significantly impacted. They should be as thoroughly involved as possible.”

A seven-member Oversight Task Force will assure Alaskan participation. The task force will review and comment on project activities and advise staff on issues historians don’t usually deal with – such as legalities and restrictions, science and technology, community and regional affairs, and how to best keep the public informed.

Task Force members are: Andrew Goldstein, Valdez Museum and Historical Archives; Patience Andersen Faulkner, Eyak Tribal Council; Craig Tillery the state’s lead oil spill litigation attorney; Barbara Hendrickson, the state’s lead case paralegal; Jennifer Schorr, Department of Law Environmental Section Assistant Attorney General; Carrie Holba, Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustees Council Librarian; and former Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Kurt Fredriksson. Others closely associated with the spill and litigation will provide advice and information.

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