

**Historical surveys
preserved through
technology, partnerships**
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A project to preserve information from Oklahoma's first major survey was completed Tuesday. The project will give future generations the opportunity to see the state's original plats along with providing greater public access to the historic documents.

In 2005, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation partnered with the U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management to scan the state's original land surveys dating from the 1870s to a digital format in order to preserve the information. As of Tuesday, plats and field notes are now available to the general public on the BLM's Web site at www.glorerecords.blm.gov.

Larry Reser, chief of ODOT's Survey Division, said surveys are used in planning highway construction projects and purchasing right of way. Because ODOT deals extensively in property issues, it is the only state agency that has a position of licensed surveyor. In addition, the department sometimes conducts surveys on behalf other agencies. So, the agency had a significant interest in the preservation of state's original plats.

With the paper rapidly deteriorating, officials with the BLM in Virginia contacted Reser to help fund a preservation project. Ultimately, Reser and BLM officials decided reversing the deterioration of the paper was impossible and began to look for ways to preserve the information.

Using technology designed to mechanically place the fragile sheets on a scanner, officials significantly reduced the amount of labor needed to complete the project. Reser said the project actually came in under budget because of the labor savings. It cost the state \$105,000, compared with the original estimate of \$165,000 for ODOT's share.

"The days were numbers before the information would have been lost forever," Reser said, referring to the brittle condition of the paper. "This is something that needed to be done – for both the private and public sector. I would really like to compliment the BLM for a job well done."

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(Editors and News Directors: For more information call the ODOT Media and Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)