

## 'Historic' grant helps set records straight

Almost every town hall struggles with records clutter — its symptoms overflowing file cabinets and boxes stacked in corners or under tables.

In Southington, however, a victory over records clutter has been won with the aid

of a \$50,000 historic document preservation grant from the Connecticut State Library. Town Clerk Leslie Cotton, who applied for the grant, is celebrating.

Beginning in August 2006, the grant allowed Cotton to engage consultants who went through every

office in the main town hall building, creating an index of all paper records.

At the same time they identified documents that could be discarded, while state archivist Mark Jones visited to identify which old documents, such as probate records, had

historical value and should be preserved in state archives.

In the process of doing the inventory, weeding old records and creating a new records control system, an overstuffed basement vault was recaptured for use with the help of two retired town workers.

"It's exciting," Cotton said. "You can

go down to the vault and go right to the box you're looking for."

She recognizes administrators must resist the temptation to hang on to every record, and is pleased a Southington section is being created at the state library.

"To keep everything, we'd all be overcome. We'd be buried in paper," Cotton said.

Cotton said good records management is never ending and that she is seeking another grant to tackle clutter in offices housed in the town hall annex.

Information about the state library's historic document preservation grant program is available at [www.cslib.org](http://www.cslib.org), under public administrator. ■

