

## **PUBLIC RECORDS COMMISSION PROPOSES NEW ARCHIVES BUILDING**

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**PUTNAM COUNTY** — The Putnam County Public Records Commission has big dreams in mind for the future location of the Putnam County Archives building. The archives was established in 2008 and originally resided in the Agricultural Building at the Putnam County Fairgrounds before being moved to its current location in the basement of the Putnam County Clerk's office.

Though the archives holds a great deal of records, there are still thousands of record books that cannot fit in the current building.

“We have county records still in the attic of the courthouse, in the justice center basement, and they're in the old jail,” Glenn Jones, Putnam County archivist, said. “These are county records. This is the most important things that the county has. That means your divorce (records), court cases, criminal (records), deeds, everything's in here. All of that old, old stuff.”

Archives staff wants to digitize the old records and give those computer records to their respective offices. The physical books would then be brought into the archives to be cared for and preserved. This would allow local government to free up space in their offices while also preserving a chunk of history.

The Putnam County Public Records Commission is the legal body that oversees the activity of the Putnam County Archives. Members include Kim Blaylock, Putnam County executive; Harold Burris, Putnam County registrar of deeds; Wayne Nabors, Putnam County clerk; Earl Jacques, Putnam County genealogist; Dale Welch, Putnam County historian; Eris Bryant, County Commission and Judge David Paterson, as well as Jones. During their May 1, 2012, meeting, a motion passed “to peruse and negotiate with the City of Cookeville for the property and building design by the Stewart Cemetery as outlined by Glenn Jones.”

The proposed land lies on a hill between I-40 and the Stewart Cemetery, in the new Highland Business Park that is co-owned by the City of Cookeville and Putnam County. According to Jones, for the proposal to move forward, the City of Cookeville would need to give full ownership of the seven acres of land to Putnam County. This proposed new building would serve as a welcome center, veteran's hall and county archives.

“Most of the people at the county, as far as the commissioners go, that Glenn's talked to, have been pretty positive about it, and some of the city people have (also been positive about it), but then there's some that are not seeing the vision yet,” Blaylock said.

If an agreement cannot be reached about building the new facility, a possible Plan B might be to construct a new building on the Fairground property near the agricultural

building. However, the Putnam County Public Records Commission members believe that the proposed site at the business park would bring in the most guests.

“I’ve always loved history and most archives and museums that you go and see, you really can’t hardly find them,” Jones said. “You have to ask directions and it’s usually behind something or in a basement. ... So, if we put this on our main street and it’s visible on a hill on a brand new exit in a beautiful building with other historic things around it that we would place there, your actual history-minded people would stop there. Then when they stop there ... they might stop and get something to eat and we can tell them about other things they can see in the area. It could be a welcome center ... This visitor’s center would actually stop people in our county and could generate thousands if not millions of dollars.”

Though the definite location of the new Putnam County Archives building is still uncertain as of now, the archives is selling memorial granite bricks that can be inscribed with the donor’s personal message, which will be placed at a new building when it is built.

Bricks that measure 16”x8” cost \$1,000 each and can be purchased in payments. The bricks are made as soon as the money is received. They are being placed inside the current archives building until construction of a new building can begin. Smaller bricks are also available for purchase. Funds from the sale of bricks are put into a special account set up by the County Commission to be used specifically for a new archives building.

“If we could get the spot nailed down for sure, I feel like people would give even more,” Blaylock said.

For more information about the Putnam County Archives or to order a memorial brick, call 520-0042.

\*Read more about Cookeville’s Veterans Hall and Archives at:  
<http://www.ajlambert.com>