



# Trustee Update

## Library News You Can Use

### Help your municipality understand library's value

Public libraries face financial challenges as the country continues to struggle with the current economic crisis.

One way to achieve adequate library funding may be to help your municipality understand the important role public libraries play in achieving local sustainability, and in the economic, environmental, and equitable development of the community. *Partners for the Future: Public Libraries and Local Governments Creating Sustainable Communities*, a report from the Urban Libraries Council, is a tool that can help you partner with your municipality to work toward common priorities.

*Partners for the Future* contains many examples of how public libraries are helping their communities achieve “the triple bottom line” of sustainable de-

velopment: economic vitality, environmental quality, and social equity. Identify the ways your library contributes to each of these, then make sure your municipality is aware. The report includes strategies to partner with your local government.

“Without effective partnerships with local government, libraries can become invisible and stranded community assets,” said Gerry Meek, Chief Executive Officer of Calgary Public Library. Don’t let that happen to your library—find ways to document your successes, and show



how the library can help the local government achieve its priorities. The report is available at <http://tinyurl.com/4qad4c3>.

Similarly, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently changed its policy to allow libraries to be eligible for temporary reloca-

tion support during major disasters and emergencies.

“It’s the first time FEMA acknowledges that libraries are essential community organizations,” said Emily Sheketoff, executive director of the American Library Association’s (ALA) Washington Office. The change will help libraries relocate so they can keep serving the public in the wake of an emergency. If FEMA can recognize that the library is essential, your local governing body should be able to as well.

The full story of your library’s value to the community, however, is not told through statistics. It is equally wise to share the stories of your users—*why* do they come to the library?

The public library provides free public access to computers (sometimes the only such place in the community), assists the unemployed in their job searches, helps those in need apply for social services, teaches grandparents how to stay in touch with their families online, and helps immigrants find English language materials. All for the benefit of the individuals, and the community. ❖

#### *And why you should care*

### What is library ‘maintenance of effort’?

Wisconsin Statutes 43.15(4)(c) establishes certain requirements that a municipal, county, or joint public library must meet in order to participate in a public library system like the South Central Library System (SCLS). One of these is that the appropriation received from the library’s governing body (or governing bodies in the case of a joint library) is not less than the average of such funding received for the previous three years.

Commonly called “maintenance of effort,” or MoE, it is found in 43.15(4)(c)5. Funding for MoE must come from the library’s local operating levy. It may not come from funds such as grants, donations or unspent funds, or capital.

The intent of the provision is to ensure the continuation of local support for public library services for those communities benefiting from the state aid to public library systems. MoE prevents a municipality from joining a library system only to make drastic budget cuts to its own library while continuing to take advantage of the collections and services of the other member libraries and the state-funded services provided by the system.



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# MoE—*from page 1*

Should a municipality within SCLS not meet its MoE requirement, the system would issue a plan and time frame for coming back into compliance. If not resolved within that time frame, failure to comply could lead to penalties and eventual expulsion from the system. Such steps would have to be approved by the Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning (DLTCL).

If a library is expelled from SCLS, it would mean an end to shared SCLS services like:

- ✓ participation in LINKcat (our shared catalog)
- ✓ the ability to borrow material from LINKcat libraries, and other libraries in the state and the country through interlibrary loan
- ✓ delivery service at the member library rate

## SCLS staff contacts:

For information about library management and role responsibility, contact Cheryl Becker at (608) 246-7973 or [cbecker@scls.lib.wi.us](mailto:cbecker@scls.lib.wi.us).

If you have questions about library advocacy, or marketing library programs and services, contact Mark Ibach at (608) 246-5612 or [mibach@scls.lib.wi.us](mailto:mibach@scls.lib.wi.us). ❖

- ✓ continuing education opportunities
- ✓ funds for summer library program performers
- ✓ consultation from SCLS staff as needed

It's possible that legislation will be introduced this year to eliminate MoE, so we encourage all library trustees to watch the legislative process and contact your state legislators. ❖

## BadgerLink available to all residents

Are you aware that the state contracts with a number of vendors to provide online access to quality information for all Wisconsin residents?

This project, which is called BadgerLink, makes it possible to search



# BadgerLink

the full text of magazines, newspapers, reference resources, automobile repair manuals, company information, genealogical resources, and much more. Your library may have links to the BadgerLink resources, or you can access them from [www.scls.info/resources/name.html](http://www.scls.info/resources/name.html) or from the BadgerLink page at [www.badgerlink.net](http://www.badgerlink.net).

Learn more about BadgerLink through the “BadgerLunch” webinar series—<http://tinyurl.com/4nrtk5s>.

For more information about BadgerLink, ask a librarian. ❖

*South Central Library System Trustee Update—Library News You Can Use*

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U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MADISON, WI  
PERMIT NO. 2588

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