



Trustee Update

Library News You Can Use

Proposed budget bill impacts libraries

Public libraries serve a vital role, but there are several provisions in the 2011-13 State Biennial Budget that will have a negative impact on public libraries. The best hope for minimizing the impact of these budget cuts is to have library users—people like you—contact their state legislators and governor to voice support for libraries. As library trustees, you may want to encourage others to do so as well.

The proposed budget includes a 10 percent reduction in aid to public library systems, such as SCLS. It also calls for the

elimination of library Maintenance of Effort (MOE), which has helped ensure a steady level of municipal and county funding for public librar-

ies. The League of Municipalities is on record supporting the MOE elimination, which would free local elected officials to cut libraries funding to a bare minimum (see related article on MOE.)



The budget also cuts State Shared Revenues paid to local communities, which has the potential to impact all local programs and services, including libraries.

Finally, the proposal includes local levy limits of 0 percent increase, or the percentage of net new construction, whichever is higher.

The message you need to convey, and encourage others to convey, is very simple—tell your elected officials how important the public library is to you and your community, and explain that you hope they can find a

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Local library budget cuts may impact Delivery services

The uncertainty over future library funding is cause for concern, but hidden in that uncertainty are program and resource casualties that many people may not envision. For example, consider Delivery.

Elimination of MOE may result in some library budgets being reduced dramatically, which in turn may result in proposals to eliminate days of delivery. While that may seem to affect only those libraries, it could have significant consequences for the entire Delivery system.



Volume would increase on the remaining days, which would be unmanageable since our trucks already operate at capacity.

The only alternative may be to impose limits on the number of items those libraries—or their customers—can borrow. ♦

MOE threatened in budget bill

In February we talked about “Maintenance of Effort,” the requirement that a governing body’s library appropriation meet at least the average of the previous three years. Maintenance of effort, or “MOE,” is the cornerstone of our regional library system agreements and allows for resource sharing across library jurisdictional lines.

MOE prevents a municipality from joining a public library system only to make drastic budget cuts to its own library while continuing to take advantage of the collections and services of other member libraries and the state-funded services provided by the system.

The proposed 2011-13 State Biennial Budget removes this requirement for system membership. If adopted, systems will no longer enforce MOE by imposing penalties upon non-complying libraries. Eliminating MOE will not impact the state budget at all, but eliminating it will do great harm to a model system of sharing and collaboration, a system that fosters resource sharing and the ability of citizens to use the libraries that are most convenient for their lives.



Absent a legislative vote to retain MOE, the WLA supports removing it from the budget discussion and dealing with it as a separate policy issue. Read more about this at <http://wlaweb.blogspot.com/2011/04/wla-issues-legislative-alert-on.html>. ♦

SCLS public library usage: 2000-09

Since 2000, the population of the SCLS service area—Adams, Columbia, Dane, Green, Portage, Sauk and Wood Counties—has increased 9.7 percent. But during that same time, resident use of SCLS member libraries increased more than 65 percent.

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way to provide adequate funding to maintain the current level of library services and resources. Share a story or two about your library and how it serves the community.

Constituents still hold the power to shape legislative action, but elected officials can't act if they don't hear from you. Please contact your state legislators and governor now and voice your support for public libraries. If you don't know your legislators visit <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/w3asp/waml/waml.aspx>.

It is also not too early to tell your local and county elected officials how much you value your public library. They will have difficult decisions to make in the coming months, and it's important that they hear from library supporters like you.

For up-to-date library budget information, visit the WLA Blog at <http://wlaweb.blogspot.com>. ❖

Despite the explosion in Internet use, libraries remain as vital as ever. In fact, residents across Wisconsin (and the nation) are using libraries more than ever before. In addition to getting books, CDs and DVDs, residents also:

- ✓ use the library's public internet computers
- ✓ attend library programs like story times, computer classes, and book discussions
- ✓ improve job skills, work on resumes, and apply for jobs

Every day libraries touch the lives of millions of residents in meaningful ways, but this is a critical time for the future of Wisconsin libraries. If you value interlibrary loan, the ability to use more than just your home-town library and saving tax dollars, now is the time to speak up in support of libraries! ❖

SCLS staff contacts:

For information about library budgets and state statutes, contact Cheryl Becker at (608) 246-7973 or cbecker@scls.lib.wi.us.

If you have questions about library advocacy, or working with state legislators, contact Mark Ibach at (608) 246-5612 or mibach@scls.lib.wi.us. ❖

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