



# Trustee Update

## Library News You Can Use

### Library advocacy needed now more than ever

A quick look at the 2011 annual reports of SCLS member libraries reveals some disturbing news. Nearly 70% of SCLS member libraries reported that 2012 funding from their municipality (the library's portion of local property taxes) will either be reduced or will remain at 2011 levels. The reason for this large number of libraries reporting reduced funding is because library "maintenance of effort" was eliminated in June of 2011 with approval of the state budget.

So now more than ever, library trustees and library supporters must advocate for libraries during this year's budget preparation process. SCLS has

several resources to help:

- ✓ SCLS staff will be happy to come to your library and conduct an advocacy training session for trustees



and Friends. We can also help you create an advocacy plan.

- ✓ "Speak Up for Your Library" cards are a way of communicating with library patrons and mobilizing them on behalf of your local library (and libraries across the system and

state). SCLS will print advocacy materials at no cost for member libraries. As an added value, you can get the names of all those who list your library as their home library. Add the SCLS Library Use Value Calculator ([www.scls.info/pr/calculator/](http://www.scls.info/pr/calculator/)) to your library's website. The calculator allows library users to attach a financial impact to their personal use of the library. SCLS recently changed this resource so annual data updates for the calculator are performed once by SCLS staff, even after you put the calculator on your library's website. ♦

## 2011-12 Wisconsin library legislative overview

It's safe to say that the Wisconsin State Legislature's 2011-12 session will not quickly be forgotten by any of us. Here's an overview of the bills that passed, died, or proposals that are still awaiting sponsorship.

### Bills that passed the Legislature and were signed into law

- ✓ Act 32 items in the State Budget included the repeal of "maintenance of effort" for public libraries, police, and fire spending.
- ✓ AB 224 authorizes school boards and public library boards to transfer a gift or grants of money to 501(c)(3) charitable organizations exempt from federal income tax under the Internal Revenue Code, provided the organization agrees in writing to use the donation to provide financial or material support for the school or public library and to comply with any terms of the donation.
- ✓ SB 348 changed the name of the DPI's "Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning" to the "Division for Libraries and Technology." It also changed the name of the DPI's "Reference and Loan Library" to "Resources for Libraries and Lifelong Learning Service." In addition, this bill reconciled two existing provisions



concerning public library system funding and written agreements with its member libraries.

### Bills that didn't pass the Legislature

- ✓ AB473/SB 375 would have delayed changes to WiscNet (separating WiscNet from the UW System) but it died without being scheduled for a floor vote in either chamber of the Legislature. Therefore, provisions of the original legislation (passed as part of the biennial budget bill) will take effect July 1, 2013.
- ✓ AB 543/SB 531 would have allowed for an alternate method of municipalities exempting from the county library tax. It died in the Senate during the legislative session. WLA expresses concern about this legislation and recommends additional safeguards when introduced again.

### WLA proposals still needing sponsorship

- ✓ **Public Library Districts**—would allow for the establishment of public library districts. For more information, go to [www.wla.lib.wi.us/legis/districts.htm](http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/legis/districts.htm)
- ✓ **Disclosure of Public Library Records**—would allow public libraries to disclose library records when they request the assistance of law enforcement or contract with an outside party to retrieve lost or stolen library property. ♦

# Five essential resources for public library trustees

Okay, pretend I'm on a desert island and can only have five trustee resources along with me. These are the ones that I'd take:

- ✓ **Trustee Essentials** (<http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/handbook.html>)—Lots of states produce handbooks for public library trustees, but Wisconsin's Trustee Essentials is one of the best! Great coverage of each topic, short chapters, and the online format means the information is up to date.
- ✓ **Wisconsin State Statutes** (<http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/43.pdf>) Maybe not your idea of compelling reading, but it governs how



we run our public libraries, so it's in my top five.

- ✓ **Frequently Asked Questions – Public Library Administration & Governance** (<http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/trusteefaq.html>) Created by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Division for Libraries and Technology, this FAQ is a great place to look for guidance regarding the interpretation of library law.
- ✓ **Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations (ALTAFF)** ([www.ala.org/altaff/](http://www.ala.org/altaff/))—The national organization for trustees is part of the American Library Association and contains useful information, including tip sheets. More information is available if you're a member of ALTAFF.
- ✓ **Wisconsin Library Trustees and Friends** ([www.wla.lib.wi.us/wlrf/](http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/wlrf/))—The state organization for trustees is part of the Wisconsin Library Association. ❖

## SCLS staff contacts:

For information about the trustee responsibilities, contact Denise Anton Wright at (608) 246-7973 or [dawright@scls.lib.wi.us](mailto:dawright@scls.lib.wi.us).

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

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