

Letter To Libraries Online

An Electronic Newsletter from the Oregon State Library.....Volume 17, Issue 1, January 2007

Library Board News

STATE LIBRARY BOARD TOURS NEW LIBRARIES IN FOREST GROVE

At their December 1st meeting, the State Library Board got to see two new libraries in Forest Grove. The Board met at the new Pacific University Library and got to tour the beautiful new facility. They also toured the Forest Grove City Library that is nearing the completion of a major expansion and renovation. In their business meeting, the Board reversed a decision of the staff to deny a Ready to Read Grant to the Cornelius Public Library. They also let stand a prioritization of State Library services that the Legislature had requested two years ago. They approved a new affirmative action plan for the Library and adopted a new performance goal for the State Librarian. They also made appointments to Board advisory councils. The next meeting of the State Library Board will be on February 7 in Salem, in conjunction with the Oregon Library Association Legislative Day.

State Library News

OREGON DOCUMENTS REPOSITORY CONTINUES TO GROW

OSL's Government Research and Electronic Services Team (GRES) continues to expand the Oregon Documents Repository, an online archive of state government publications. In December 2006, GRES created its 500th new catalog record for Repository publications. Oregon libraries may download the [MARC](#) catalog records for Repository publications from the OSL web site. [OrNet](#), a continuously updated list of new publications added to the Repository is also available from the OSL web site. GRES staff will also do a presentation about the development of the Oregon Documents Repository at the upcoming Online Northwest conference in February.

TBABS BEGINS 2007 A LITTLE LIGHTER

They'll be no post-holiday diet for Talking Book and Braille Services this year! That's because TBABS is beginning 2007 a little lighter, having donated our entire Braille collection of 23,000 volumes to libraries in other states and overseas. Through an agreement with the Utah State Library, TBABS now offers our patrons access to Utah's Braille collection, the largest in the world. The move freed up 4,458 square feet of shelving space at an annual cost of \$25,000, and our fulfillment contract with Utah is just \$9,000 a year for a net savings of \$16,000. With just one or two extra days to arrive from Salt Lake City, the response from borrowers has been positive.

NEW LSTA ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS ELECTED

We congratulate the new members of the LSTA Advisory Council.

Special Library Representative: Carol Jones, Salem.

Carol Jones has been the librarian at Salem Hospital for the last 20 years and serves on a national advisory board for EBSCO Publishing Company and has reviewed grants for the National Institutes of Health.

Library User Representative: Cathy Lindsley, Eugene.

Cathy Lindsley currently serves as Division Co-Chair of the Center for Learning Advancement at Lane Community College. She serves on the Advisory Board of the Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy at Penn State University.

Public Library Representative: Javier Gutierrez, Portland.

Prior to being branch manager of the Fairview Columbia Branch of Multnomah County Libraries in 2006, Javier Gutierrez worked with the Houston Public Library for nine years. During that time, he worked in several positions including one in charge of system-wide family and adult literacy programming.

Academic Library Representative: Camila Gabaldon, Monmouth.

Camila Gabaldon has worked for the last four years as a librarian at Western Oregon University. She currently serves on Oregon Library Association and American Library Association committees, as well as the Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library Services Advisory Board.

INCREASES SEEN IN OSLIS EBSCO USE

The daily searches of the [OSLIS-EBSCO](#) online resources for the first quarter of the 2006-07 school year increased from 2,293 daily searches in 05-06's first quarter to 2,975 in 06-07's first quarter. This was an increase of 1,782 daily searches. AND the number of sessions in the OSLIS-EBSCO electronic resources for the first quarter of 2005-06 were 29,835 compared to 76,482 for the first quarter of this school year, 2006-07. That is an increase of about 256%! For more information contact Patty Sorensen, 503-378-5011.

NEW TBABS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

We congratulate the new members of the TBABS Advisory Council:

Elizabeth Rouseau-Rooney - National Federation of the Blind of Oregon

Morgen Brodie - Department of Human Services - Seniors and People with Disabilities

Kitt Jordan - Senior Citizen Patron at Large

Leone Holden - Parent of Minor as Parent at Large

Other Library News

NOVEMBER ELECTIONS PUT THREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES AT RISK

Election defeats in Jackson, Malheur and Josephine Counties in November threaten the future of public library services in the three counties. Jackson and Josephine Counties, which both operate public libraries, are facing what the Medford *Mail-Tribune* called “doomsday cuts” due to the failure of Congress to renew a decades-old program of federal payments to the counties that once were funded by timber sales. The Jackson County administrator has notified library employees and other employees of possible layoffs. He is quoted as saying that the Jackson County Library may shut down at all locations in March. Then in May the county may try once again to pass the local option levy that was defeated in November. In neighboring Josephine County, plans are still being formulated, but it appeared at press time that the county library may not close. However, hours and services that are already severely reduced would see further reductions beginning in July, 2007. In Malheur County, the County and the City of Ontario have come together to try to keep the library open through the end of the fiscal year. The Ontario library was set to exhaust its budget at the end of 2006. The future of the Ontario library may depend on passage of a local option levy in May of next year.

P.S. (From the State Librarian)

What does it take to win a public library funding election? The 13 elections throughout the state that took place last November 7th provide us with a new body of evidence to help us try to understand the answer to this question that is key to the continued viability of public library service in Oregon.

As we reported last month, seven elections were successful and six were not. Is there anything that the seven winners have in common? I think it's fair to say that all the winners had carefully planned their strategies far in advance, and all ran strong campaigns involving lots of volunteers, and in some cases, lots of fundraising. Four of the seven winners were renewing a pre-existing local option levy. It appears to be much easier to renew an existing funding measure than to pass a new funding measure. All six of the losing measures were seeking to impose new taxes.

But three of the seven measures that were successful also sought to impose new taxes. How do you explain their success? The successful county library district measure in Wasco County probably overcame the longest odds. The measure will create a new permanent tax rate of \$0.68 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. I think this measure passed mainly for two reasons. Voters saw plainly that library service in the county was genuinely in a crisis. County funding had been cut and library services, especially in The Dalles, had been very visibly and painfully reduced. A second reason is that nearly all of the elected officials in the county had lined up to strongly support the measure as the solution to the crisis. They didn't leave it up to the library board or the Friends. Their leadership was crucial to sway the voters to see that a new tax was the only answer.

I think the ingredients for victory in Washington County, where voters passed a new library levy, were similar. The crisis there was not as dramatic as in Wasco County, but it was very apparent to library users that library hours and services had been curtailed. And they too received strong support from elected officials.

The successful bond measure in Lebanon was the result, again, of a very apparent need. Lebanon has needed a new library for a long time and everyone in town knew that. It was also successful due to the brilliant strategy of coupling the library bond with a bond for a new police station.

So what we might conclude from this election is that if you are trying to raise taxes for libraries in Oregon, it may be necessary to be in some degree of crisis (no pain, no gain). It might also be necessary to work hard to get county and city leaders not to just agree to put the measure on the ballot, but to give the measure their strong and visible support. – Jim Scheppeke

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