

Letter To Libraries Online

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STATE LIBRARY BOARD APPROVES 2002 LSTA PROGRAM

At their meeting on October 19th at the State Library in Salem, the State Library Board of Trustees approved the LSTA program for 2002 that was recommended by the LSTA Advisory Council. The \$1.9 million program will include just over one million dollars to fund 14 competitive grant projects. In addition, interlibrary loan net lender reimbursement will be budgeted at \$400,000 and Oregon Reference LINK centers at approximately \$190,000. The remaining LSTA funds will be budgeted for consulting services, state data collection and administration.

At this meeting the Board also conducted the annual performance evaluation of the State Librarian and discussed plans for a Board planning retreat on December 6th. The next regular meeting of the State Library Board will be held on December 7th at the Hamersly Library at Western Oregon University in Monmouth. A special teleconference meeting of the State Library Board will be held on November 14th at the State Library in Salem (see next article).

STATE LIBRARY PREPARES BUDGET REDUCTION PLANS

Governor Kitzhaber has ordered all state agencies to prepare General Fund budget reduction plans by mid-November. The plans will help the Governor prepare to make a recommendation to the Legislative Assembly that is expected to meet in a special session sometime after the December state revenue forecast is released. The December forecast is expected to show a widening gap between the state budget that was adopted for the 2001-03 biennium and the state revenues to fund it. A gap in excess of \$200 million was forecast in September, prior to the tragic events of September 11th.

The State Library will need to prepare two plans, one to cut administrative costs that are funded by General Funds by up to 10% and another to cut all costs funded by the General Fund by up to 10%. The General Fund is made up of state income tax revenues and funds about 26% (\$3.2 million) of the State Library budget for 2001-03. The two biggest items in the State Library's General Fund budget for 2001-03 are the Ready to Ready Grant Program for public

libraries, funded at about \$1.4 million, and Talking Book and Braille Services, funded at about \$1.1 million.

The State Library Board has directed the State Librarian to develop and submit the first of the two required plans (administrative cost reductions) and this was done on October 25th. The State Library Board will hold a special teleconference meeting on November 14th at 1 p. m. to develop a plan to cut 10% of all General Fund costs in the 2001-03 budget that is due on November 16th. Anyone may come to the State Library, 2nd Floor Conference Room, to attend this meeting. An Open Forum will be held at 1 p. m. for anyone to address the State Library Board

LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT NEWS

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OSL SPECIAL SURVEY ON INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

In August 2001 the Oregon State Library surveyed 119 public library administrative units about Internet connectivity and their interest in a telecommunications partnership with the Oregon Employment Department. Each library administrative unit reported the data for its branches; a total of 193 library buildings were included in the survey.

As of October 24, 2001 every library had responded - a 100% response rate! (Thank you all!) Of the responding libraries 30% (58 libraries) currently have dial-up access to the Internet -- an improvement over the nearly 40% reported in fall 2000. Forty-six percent (27 libraries) of those with dial-up access anticipate a change in connectivity in the near future (DSL, T-1, Frame Relay and wireless were mentioned as the planned dedicated modes). A few libraries currently offer both dedicated and dial-up access, and one library and three other library branches currently have no connection to the Internet. Most of the libraries with dial-up access serve small communities (under 5,000 population).

Over 69% (134 libraries) of those responding to the survey have dedicated access to the Internet; frame relay was the most common connection (73 libraries). T-1 (23 libraries), DSL (16 libraries), and cable (15 libraries) were the next most common forms.

Excluded from the survey were Multnomah County Library and its branches, and library cooperative or system offices that provide support services but no direct library services. Contact Pam Horan for more information.

LSTA EVALUATION PROGRESS

A final draft of the evaluation report on the Library Services and Technology Act as implemented in Oregon has been delivered by Himmel and Wilson, Library Consultants that have been working on the project. The full report will be available via the new Oregon State Library website in mid-November, and paper copies of the executive summary will be sent to libraries. Over 150 individuals participated in giving some form of input. The report was accepted by the LSTA Advisory Council, and has been forwarded to the State Library Board of Trustees. In reviewing the report, the overall sense of the LSTA Advisory Council was one of high satisfaction with the current LSTA program.

Among the 12 findings of the evaluation report:

1. Direct benefits to various types of libraries have varied significantly in each of the four years examined.
2. Oregon's libraries have made notable progress in improving access to library collections and services through LSTA-funding for technology-related initiatives.
3. Oregon is a leader in the attention it has given to addressing the library and information needs of the underserved and of individuals with special needs.

Among the 14 recommendations made are:

1. The Oregon State Library and the Oregon LSTA Advisory Council should retain the flexibility afforded by their relatively unstructured approach to the competitive subgrant process.
2. The Oregon State Library should work with all segments of the library community to identify "robust strategies" that direct LSTA dollars to initiatives that address multiple priorities.

The evaluation process is federally mandated as the Library Services and Technology Act comes up for reauthorization in 2002. The results of this evaluation will contribute to the writing of the next five-year plan, which will guide how LSTA money will be awarded in Oregon from 2003-2008. For those wishing to see the

current Oregon Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year State Plan 1998-2002, it can be found on the Web at:

<http://www.osl.state.or.us/home/libdev/LSTA/9802fiveyear.htm> .

Thanks go to volunteer readers of the draft for generously giving their time: Anne Billeter, Janet Webster, Sylvia Lee, and Carol Reich. Special thanks also go to members of the LSTA Advisory Council Evaluation Steering Committee: Cindy Cunningham, Cindy Romaine, Gretchen Goekjian and Jim Maxwell.

LOOKING AHEAD - THE NEXT FIVE-YEAR LSTA PLAN

The challenge for the Oregon library community this winter is to use the LSTA evaluation to help draft the next five-year state plan, which will guide how LSTA funds will be awarded from 2003-2008. Developing the new plan tentatively starts in mid-November, with the distribution of the LSTA evaluation report on the Web, and the mailing of the executive summary to libraries. Also distributed in November will be a summary of ideas for changes, and a solicitation for objectives and strategies for the new plan. The LSTA Council and the Board of Trustees have approved funding for the development of the new plan. A retreat is envisioned for February 2002 at which invited participants from the library community will revise the existing five-year state plan based on the consultants' recommendations, and input from the library community. The revised draft plan will be distributed for general comment. In May, the LSTA Advisory Council will consider the revised draft plan, and forward it to the Board of Trustees for approval in June. The new five-year plan would then be submitted to the Institute for Museum and Library Services in July 2002.

GATES FOUNDATION PRESENTATION

Jon McConnel, Project Coordinator for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, presented an overview of the Gates State Partnership Program for libraries as part of the Central Oregon Regional Library Conference on Friday October 19th. Twenty-five attended the presentation from all areas of Oregon. The Gates program's mission is to partner with public libraries to bring public access to computers, the Internet and digital information for patrons in low-income communities throughout the United States, and those caught in the "Digital Divide".

The Gates Foundation will be active in Oregon beginning in 2002. Grant applications are currently scheduled to be distributed (and are also due) in March. Award announcements will be made in June and implementation will begin in September 2002, and go through January 2003. A minimum poverty rate of 10% is the primary criteria for eligibility and is determined for each building; there are also minimum Internet connectivity requirements. The Foundation's cash grants enable the purchase of computer equipment, and the number of computers granted is based on population served by each library, as determined by the Foundation. The program also provides direct training and support to the staff in each library building receiving technology. Information about the Gates Foundation State Partnership Program in Oregon is available and will be updated regularly on the OSL Web page <http://www.osl.state.or.us/home/libdev/gates.htm> .

YEAR FOUR OREGON E-RATE FUNDING COMMITMENTS AT \$487,000

As of October 28, 2001, E-Rate program funding commitments of over \$487,000 have been made to 47 Oregon libraries, a slight increase over the 43 libraries that successfully won discounts in Year 3. Of the total amount, \$277,000 in discounts has been committed for library telecommunication services and \$210,400 for Internet access. For a complete listing of libraries receiving E-Rate discounts and more information about the E-Rate program, see <http://www.osl.state.or.us/home/libdev/grants.html> on the Oregon State Library Web page. For additional information, contact Pam Horan.

COMMENTS WELCOME ON STATISTICS FORMS

Thank you to academic and public libraries for participating in this year's statistics reporting. Improvement of the state statistics forms is an ongoing process, so we welcome your ideas and comments on either the forms or instructions. Please e-mail your input to Ann Reed. We look forward to hearing from you.

LSTA ADVISORY COUNCIL SEEKS NEW MEMBERS!

Know someone experienced with school or institutional libraries? Someone who loves libraries? Someone serving or advocating for people with special needs? This is your chance to nominate them

for an exciting volunteer opportunity. The LSTA Advisory Council is looking for two representatives for library users, one representative for people with special needs, one representative for school libraries, and one representative for institutional libraries. Please notify Mary Ginnane of nominations by email at: mary.j.ginnane@state.or.us or by phone at 503-378-2112 Ext. 225 by Wednesday, November 21, 2001. This is a thought-provoking, dedicated and interesting group to work with, so send in your nominations soon!

OTHER LIBRARY NEWS

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NEW GED TEST BEING RELEASED JANUARY 2002

Sharlene Walker, Oregon State GED Test Administrator wants Oregon public libraries to know that there are important changes coming to the GED test and is asking for our assistance in publicizing the changes:

Beginning in January 2002, a whole new GED test will be released internationally. Briefly, GED candidates who have started taking the current battery of tests have until Dec. 31, 2001 to complete all five tests with passing scores. Subset scores from the current test battery will not carry over as part of passing the new test. Partial completers will need to start all subsets over and pay new test fees.

We know libraries have helped many GED test-takers by assuring that adequate numbers of GED practice books are in their circulating and reference collection. Because of the substantial changes in the test, all the current practice books will be out of date as of January 2001. The Spanish language version of the test will not change until January 2002.

Here's how your library can help us make the transition to GED 2002:

- 1) Begin planning now to replace your GED practice book collection. For the most part, the publishers of your old books are beginning now to produce books that reflect the new test

standards and requirements. If you would like suggestions for publishers, please contact your local adult basic skills programs at the community college in your area and/or volunteer tutoring programs.

2) Attach a note about the upcoming changes on the inside of your GED books. Suggested text: "The GED is changing! A new test begins Jan. 1, 2002. If you have already started to take the five GED subset tests, please contact your GED testing site to find out about testing dates available. Call (insert your local testing site telephone number) or see http://www.acenet.edu/calec/pdfs/ged_whatsNewFacts.pdf or call Oregon Literacy at 800-322-8715."

3) Remove English versions of your GED preparation books as of Jan.1, 2002.

4) Display posters about the upcoming changes in the GED. Call us or contact your local GED testing site or community college instructional program for posters.

By providing information and access to the GED materials, you are helping Oregonians open doors to education and work opportunities.

2001 OREGON BOOK AWARDS

The winners of the 2001 Oregon Book Awards will be announced on Thursday November 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Center, 709 SW 15th Avenue, in Portland. Hosting the ceremony is Peter Ho Davies, author of the short story collections THE UGLIEST HOUSE IN THE WORLD and EQUAL LOVE. A reception and book-signing follows the ceremony. Tickets are \$15 and are available at participating Portland bookstores or by calling the Literary Arts office at 503-227-2583. A number of libraries in Oregon participate in the Oregon Book Awards promotion project through the Oregon Center for the Book in the State Library and Literary Arts, Inc. Those libraries receive bookmarks listing the Book Award finalists, posters, and some of the nominated books that have been donated by publishers. Oregon Local Advisory Boards of First Book will be the recipients of the Walt Morey Award. First Book is a national organization that provides books over a period of time to low income children who are involved in a literacy, mentoring, or tutoring program. Local Advisory Boards do most of the fund raising and distribute to books to programs in their community. Oregon librarians are very well represented on Local Advisory Boards around the state and are to be congratulated for their work

in helping children build their home libraries.

ATLAS OF OREGON, SECOND EDITION

The University of Oregon Press is pleased to announce the publication of an exciting new book, The Atlas of Oregon (Second Edition), by William G. Loy, Professor Emeritus of Geography at the University of Oregon, and Stuart Allan, Allan Cartography (of Raven Map fame) in Medford OR.

This authoritative and beautiful volume offers a detailed look at the history, geography, and people of Oregon. More than 700 new maps are complemented by informative text exploring everything from the earliest settlers to the rise of Oregon vineyards to Portland's traffic jams. Newly updated by an award-winning team of geographers and map makers, it is both a work of art and a fascinating reference. For more information and to see sample maps, log onto <http://www.uopress.com>

Atlas of Oregon, Second Ed. by William G. Loy and Stuart Allan
University of Oregon Press 320 pages 9 1/2 X 13 inches Cloth, ISBN 0-87114101-9, \$100.00; Paper, ISBN 0-87114102-7, \$60.00

PS. (FROM THE STATE LIBRARIAN)

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Pam Horan and I are a little worried. Why? Well you know by now that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation wants to give Oregon public libraries over \$2 million worth of computer equipment and software to improve public access to the Internet and public access computing next year.

Why is that a problem? Well, the State Library Board has directed the State Library staff that they want to see 100% participation of eligible public libraries. Eligible public libraries are those that serve populations with at least 10% persons in poverty. In Oregon that means all but about 17 libraries by our count.

And the problem is that next March, the eligible libraries will have only two weeks to apply.

Two weeks! Now as most of you know, we at the State Library have had extensive experience with having Oregon libraries meet deadlines. We tend to have pretty long lead times on our deadlines, and it has been our experience that, in general, Oregon libraries don't exactly shine in meeting deadlines, even when money is involved.

That's why Pam and I are nervous.

The application for Gates support will not be difficult, but it will take some time and some thought. Applicants will have to be able to tell the Gates Foundation how their support will enhance their existing services and develop new services, particularly for those in the digital divide. They will need to be able to tell the Gates Foundation how their support will help strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones. They will need to be able to tell the Gates Foundation how their support might serve to leverage additional support for improved services. And they will need to tell the Gates Foundation how they plan to maintain their equipment and sustain the services that it will enable.

Eligible public library buildings (main and branches) will receive from 1-6 new Gates Library Computers, with the number dependent on the population served in the immediate service area of the library, as determined by the Gates Foundation. In addition, every eligible library system (not building) will also be eligible to receive a "content server" computer that could serve as a Web server, a file server, or a print server. To get a content server, a library just has to ask for one and describe their need for one. But if you haven't ever thought about a "content server" and are facing a two week deadline, that could be a problem.

I guess what Pam and I would like to say to you public librarians out there is, get ready! I hope many of you attended the presentation that the Gates Foundation made in Bend a week ago, and the rest of you should plan to attend additional presentations (probably teleconferences) early next year. I hope if you have questions now, that you will contact Pam or myself to discuss them. Mark your calendar for next March, and budget some staff time for the application process. Be talking to your library board and be thinking about leveraging and partnership opportunities. The Gates grant is a cash grant, so don't forget this when you start your budget process for 2002-03 (the grants will come in the

fall and winter of 2002).

Let's show our appreciation to Bill and Melinda Gates for their extraordinary generosity and commitment to public libraries by giving of our time and effort to maximize the benefits from their gift to Oregon. This opportunity will not come around again. Let's make the most of it.

-Jim Scheppke

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