

Letter To Libraries Online

An Electronic Newsletter from the Oregon State Library.....Volume 20, Issue 1,
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Library Board News

BOARD MAKES AWARDS GRANT FOR OPENING DAY E-BOOK COLLECTION

At their meeting on December 4th in Salem, the State Library Board awarded a \$100,000 Library Services and Technology Act grant to the Oregon Digital Library Consortium (ODLC) to purchase an "opening day" collection of e-books for Library2Go. Library2Go is a shared collection of downloadable audiobooks and videos that serves about 3 million Oregonians through public and some community college libraries. The ODLC will match the grant with \$26,000 from their own budget and continue to devote 20% of their collection budget to keep the collection growing. The e-books will be in the EPUB format which can be read using most e-book reading devices. In other business the Board granted the appeal of four public libraries who were late in submitting their Ready to Read Grant applications. They also approved the submission of a proposal from the Government Research Services team to the state Budget and Management Division for their 2011-13 state agency assessment. The proposal would adequately fund electronic resources and also fund a one-time project to preserve deteriorating state documents and other rare items in the Library collection. The next meeting of the State Library Board is scheduled for February 26, 2010, at the State Library in Salem.

PLANNING BEGINS FOR THE 2011-13 BIENNIUM

The State Library Board's planning process for the 2011-13 biennium kicked off with a day-long retreat with Library management on December 3, 2009. The Board heard reports from staff on their work in the current biennium. Then they revisited the Library's mission and long range goals. They brainstormed strategies that might be needed in 2011-13 to accomplish their long range goals. The ideas from the retreat will be handed off to the Board Budget Committee that will be chaired by Board member Beth Pearl-Gent. Two other Board members will serve on the Committee along with library managers and a representative of library teams. The first meeting of the Board Budget Committee will be held at the Oregon Commission for the Blind offices in Portland on February 16, 2010.

BOARD ELECTS NEW ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

At their December 4th Board meeting in Salem, the Oregon State Library Board elected four new representatives to the LSTA Advisory Council. The new Council members will serve a three-year term from January 2010 – December 2012. The new Council members are:

John Russell from Eugene, representing academic libraries.
May Garland from Scio, representing library users.

Perry Stokes from Baker City, representing public libraries.
Pamela Osborne from Portland, representing special libraries.

State Library News

GOVERNOR MOVES OUT, LIBRARY STAFF MOVE BACK TO 2ND FLOOR

In mid-January, Governor Kulongoski and about 20 of his top staff will vacate the 2nd floor of the Library return to their offices in the State Capitol. The Governor and his staff moved to the Library several months after a fire on Labor Day weekend, 2008, did a great deal of smoke and water damage to the Governor's offices in the Capitol. The Governor has been occupying the historic State Librarian's office. The offices in the Capitol have now been renovated after a project that has taken most of 2009 to complete. The State Library staff that were displaced will return to their former offices in late January. At the State Library Board's December 4, 2009, meeting, Chip Terhune, the Governor's Chief of Staff, thanked the Board for allowing the Governor to occupy part of the Library in 2009. The location of the Library, just across the street from the Capitol, and its fine meeting facilities made for an excellent temporary location for the Governor and his top staff.

STATE DATA COORDINATORS AND IMLS TEAM UP TO PRODUCE MORE TIMELY NATIONAL DATA

Every year, more than 9,000 public libraries are surveyed in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands, answering questions on population, library collections, services and programs, staff numbers, revenues and expenditures. The Public Libraries Survey's 97.5 percent response rate makes the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which oversees the survey, the envy of all other federal agencies, commented IMLS Director Anne-Imelda Radice at the annual meeting of the state data coordinators in Washington, D.C., Dec. 2-3. Working together, IMLS and the State Data Coordinator's efforts have made data available more quickly than in previous years. For example, FY 2008 PLS data files will be released in spring 2010, eight months earlier than in previous years. At the conference, 45 State Data Coordinators received the Keppel Award for submitting prompt, complete, and high-quality public library data for FY 2008 data submissions, including Ann Reed, State Data Coordinator for Oregon.

MORE STUDENTS LOGGING-IN TO TALKING BOOKS

In the month of December, more print disabled students signed up for Talking Books than ever before. The increase in enrollments is due mostly to the advent of downloadable digital talking books. In addition to the new, downloadable, digital talking books school-aged TBABS patrons can play their RFB&D (Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic) materials on the brand new digital talking book players. If you have patrons who are school aged (K-12) who qualify for Talking Book and Braille Services, help them get signed up today. When they sign up, TBABS will help them get logged on to BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download), direct them toward RFB&D, and send them a shiny new

advanced digital audio player. Visit us [online](#) for an application. Remember: any librarian can serve as the certifying signature on TBABS' applications.

Other Library News

WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES EXCEED 10 MILLION CIRCULATION IN 2009

On Friday, December 11th, Washington County readers achieved a milestone in the Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS) thirty-three year history – they reached their 10 millionth check-out in a single calendar year. Judy Stuebe, a patron of the Hillsboro Main Library, was the lucky WCCLS customer to put the count over the top to reach the record for the Cooperative's fourteen member libraries. Stuebe is a life-long resident of Hillsboro and frequent library user. She even remembers attending summer reading programs as a child at the old Hillsboro (Carnegie) Library on Lincoln Street in downtown Hillsboro. After raising four children to be library users, she is now instilling a love of reading in her four young granddaughters. Eva Calcagno, Cooperative Library Services Director, notes, "10,000,000 checkouts is an incredible milestone, but it's just one of many indicators of increased community use of libraries. Circulation, visitors, program attendance have all increased at double-digit rates over the last five years." The fourteen WCCLS member libraries have experienced a whopping 43% increase in circulation over the past five years, increasing over 16% in the last year alone. The passage of a WCCLS local option levy in 2006 allowed libraries to restore previously-reduced open hours, rebuilt book budgets and added library programs for children and adults, contributing to the surge in library use.

PRELIMINARY NUMBERS SHOW PUBLIC LIBRARY CIRCULATION WAY UP

In late December the State Library posted the first [Oregon public library statistics compilation](#) for the 2008-09 fiscal year. While public libraries are still checking their data for accuracy, preliminary totals show that public library circulation was up 8% statewide. That compares to an average annual growth of 2.7% in the past five years, and confirms that the recession has led to a large increase in public library use in Oregon. Oregon public libraries circulated 55.9 million books and other library materials in 2008-09, about 153,000 per day. That's about twice the circulation total of only 15 years ago. Fifty-two Oregon libraries had double-digit circulation increases in the preliminary 2008-09 data.

P.S. (From the State Librarian)

As we begin 2010 it is worth noting that this will be a big year for elections. There is an important election coming up on January 26th, and then in the May primary and November General Election we will be choosing a new Governor for the first time in eight years. There will no doubt be some important public library elections this year, including a library district election in May in Hood River County. If voters in Hood River County decide to create a new library district it will be the 25th library district in the state.

The State Library has been closely tracking public library funding elections since 1997, and it's interesting to see what the results have been over the past 13 years. There have been a total of 122 public library elections to create library districts, pass local option levies, or pass general obligation bonds. The average number of library elections per year is nine, but the number varies quite a bit from year to year. In 1998 there were 23 library elections, but in 2005 there were none. Over the 13 year period 52% of the library measures passed. Because of the "double majority" law that passed in the mid-90's (now modified by a measure passed in 2008) there have been 18 elections that drew a majority vote in favor but lost due to low turnout. If you add those 18 to the total that passed, the number of elections in which a majority voted in favor of the measure increases to 68%.

In recent years the number of library elections has decreased. Last year there were only two; in 2008 there were seven, and in 2007, only six. I think this probably signals a trend for the future. One reason we are seeing fewer elections may have to do with the fact that we have already passed a lot of bond measures to build new public libraries all over the state. The need for new public library construction has diminished. Also, with 24 library districts, some funding a number of libraries in Clackamas, Umatilla and Coos counties, the need for libraries to pass local option levies is not as great as it once was. In 1998, when we had 23 elections, fifteen of those were for local option levies.

I wonder what other local government services in Oregon have as good a track record as libraries for winning elections? In recent years, when it comes to passing library districts and local option levies, the keys to success appear to be having a solid case about the need for funding and having your elected officials as vocal proponents of the measure. The last three library districts to be formed in Oregon, in Wasco County, Clackamas County and in the Ontario area bear this out. The Clackamas County district measure that passed in November, 2008, with a 61% 'yes' vote, provides a model for how to win a library district election. Anyone considering a library district election on the future would do well to talk to librarians in Clackamas County about their approach. As far as I can tell, they and their supporters did everything right. – Jim Scheppke

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