



Newsletter # 2

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Legislative Update

Senate Bill 32, "Wyoming Public Library Endowment Challenge Program" failed to be heard in the House Appropriations Committee by the February 22 deadline and therefore did not make it to the House floor for discussion and votes. February 22nd was the last day for bills to be reported out of Committee in second house thus "killing" the bill for this session.

The bill passed the Senate on January 24 with a 27-2 vote (1 excused) but with a major amendment decreasing the endowment for the county library foundations from \$25.3 million to \$8.4 million. That amended bill included language that the Governor requested the remaining amount of \$16.9 to complete funding in his 2009-2010 biennial budget request. The Wyoming Library Association and its Legislative Committee will assess strategies to have the bill re-introduced in the 2008 Legislative Session.

Community Analysis and Resulting Actions

Conducting community surveys on a regular interval help a library provide services that trustees, staff and patrons know are important because their community asked for them.

Questions in the survey might be structured around the areas of economy, the environment, jobs, after school and summer activities for children and youth, or health care information. Surveys help everyone involved focus on what the library can do to help the community within the scope of its mission. Ideas may be offered on the library's book club spending time reading about corporate development and its impact on the stock market or programs on learning how to read the stock reports in the daily paper. Perhaps the library could feature speakers on global warming, the success rates of various recycling programs, or backyard composting with family table scraps. The video collection might be enhanced to include interview techniques and résumé writing tips, and the library's website can include links to various job lines." All of these ideas are valuable resources the library can provide to its community because the library is more than a warehouse of books but an interactive center for community discussion and lifelong learning.

This article is adapted from The Successful Library Trustee Handbook, by Mary Y. Moore. Published by ALA Editions, Copyright 2004 The American Library Association.

Here is a link to a survey designed by the Loveland, CO Public Library

http://www.lrs.org/documents/comm_analysis/Lovelandsurv.pdf

BOARD DISCUSSIONS AHEAD?

Does your board plan for the future of the library by...

Annually reviewing and approving the mission statement?

Annually reviewing yearly objectives and the work plan to address the objectives?

Annually reviewing progress toward the long-range plan and modifying the long-range plan?

Operating from opportunity to opportunity rather than crisis to crisis?

Having board committees work and produce results?

Questions: In which of the categories above does your board show real strengths? In which of the categories does your board need improvement? Are these topics included for discussion in your board meeting agenda?

LIBRARYU TRUSTEE MODULE AVAILABLE

LibraryU has been providing free online training to library staff and their patrons made possible by the Illinois Library Systems and the Illinois State Library with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. A trustee track has been added. To take any or all of the courses go to:

<http://learning.libraryu.org/home/> and self-register. Then take a course module, track your progress and

receive a certificate of completion. Among the courses of interest to trustees are:

[From Card Catalog to Computer: A Brief Introduction to Automation for Trustees](#)

Course Code: TRU004. Topics will include: an introduction to technology.

[Laws that Affect Libraries:](#) Course Code: TRU001

Trustees are asked to know and understand the multitude of laws impacting public libraries. Even though the laws quoted relate to Illinois, Connecticut, and Wisconsin the basic premise applies.

[Library Construction Basics:](#) Course Code: TRU003

Designed for public library trustees and administrators, this module presents a chronological overview as well as explains the roles of the players and the steps involved in preparing for a library construction project.

[Long-Range Planning for Public Library Trustees:](#) Course Code: TRU002

Long-Range planning is one of the duties of public library trustees. This module will give them a brief step by step look at the planning process based on the book "The New Planning for Results" by Nelson.

[TrusteeE-Training:](#) Course Code: TRU005

When you were first elected as a public library trustee, you may have thought it would simply mean sitting in a meeting once a month and casting a vote every now and then. This TrusteeE-Tutorial is intended to acquaint you with some of the issues that you might face as a public library trustee. Our hope is that as you complete the material you will be challenged and excited to further explore your role as a public library trustee.

DISPLAY POLICIES NEED TO BE SHARP

The American Civil Liberties Union's Colorado chapter has asked the Mesa County (Colo.) Public Library to clarify its policies on religious displays in response to a local group's exhibit that is critical of homosexuality and divorce, the *Vail Daily* reported February 8.

"What does a reasonable person think when they see this? They think the religious right has taken over the library," said a retired local attorney who contacted the ACLU February 5 after finding no posted disclaimer on the display by Christians for Healthy Families that explains that the library does not endorse exhibitors' viewpoints.

The woman who mounted the Healthy Families display did so because it urges viewers to "Call on God today. Your eternity depends on it." This display counters an earlier photo exhibit of families with same-sex parents sponsored by a gay-rights advocacy group in 2006. "They had a pro-homosexual display which I didn't feel was appropriate because I'm a Christian," she said. "Thank goodness free speech goes both ways."

"Most people understand we're not sponsoring it," the library's public services director told the local newspaper explaining that groups "just want to be heard. That's why we have this place."

The concerned resident, who pointed out that the 2006 display didn't refer to religion or God, said he would take the issue to the library board if a disclaimer wasn't posted by mid-February. "Nobody's threatening litigation, but it's always a possibility," he said.

Questions: At what point do you on the library board rather than staff start serving as the voice of the library in policy issues? Is the Chair prepared to speak authoritatively on your policies? Do you review policies from different perspectives to see what is excluded, restrictive, vague, or convoluted?

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