

## **STATE ADVOCACY AND STATE FUNDING**

By the time we meet, we'll know how the turnout this year at Advocacy Day in Albany compares to last year's turnout. We expect 35-40 people to attend from the Mid-Hudson library community and I'm hoping that those who do not travel to Albany on March 6 will call their representatives.

Our calls and visits should deliver the following messages:

- We appreciate the \$14 million Public Library Construction Grant Program in the budget; this is very important to our local libraries as they respond to the changing needs of their communities.
- We appreciate the \$79 million in library aid now in the budget, which includes the \$3 million the Senate worked successfully to restore to the Governor's proposed funding last year of \$76 million.
- But library aid continues to be 22.5% below what the state provided in 2008 and additional restoration of library funding is needed; a 4% increase, which schools are slated to receive, would be fair.
- Continued restoration in state funding is needed to relieve the pressure on our local libraries because member libraries have increased their support of Mid-Hudson by 30% even though the system eliminated 6 full-time jobs and reduced services. With the tax cap, this is making it very tough on our libraries.

There's hope that the Senate will support continued restoration of aid to libraries. Hopefully they will call for a 4% increase. Since the beginning of February, I met with Senators Saland, Larkin and Seward. Robert Hubsher, Director of Ramapo Catskill Library System, joined me in the visit with Senator Larkin. Wanda Bruchis, Director of the Mid-York Library System, joined me in the visit with Senator Seward. The Senators are members of the Senate Select Committee on Libraries and strong library supporters.

## **UPDATE ON RECONVENING THE SYSTEM FUNDING TASK FORCE**

The System Funding Task Force, which is composed of member library directors and chaired by Tom Lawrence, meets on Wednesday, March 7, at 10:00 a.m. at Mid-Hudson. It's objectives include:

- Identifying opportunities to reduce member assessment fees, such as the reduction in the holds and delivery fee by using \$40,000 in Central Library Development Aid for delivery.
- Determining how and when we update the averages for circulation and holds used to calculate the members fee.
- Clarifying when to update populations-served by member library charter actions and the 2010 Census.
- Determining how to handle populations of unserved areas when services to these areas by member libraries are provided under contract. This issue was raised at our Board meeting in January.

## **REVISION OF THE 2012 BUDGET AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS**

We'll need to review our 2012 budget and reconsider our projections for 2013 and 2014 with an eye to possible revisions for the budget and these projections in July. There are a number of issues that will drive this review.

- We have an agreement with the Directors Association that our year-end unrestricted balance will not exceed \$150,000. We exceeded this in 2011 and are on course to exceed this in 2012.

- Gas prices are projected to substantially increase in the next several months, which will impact delivery costs.
- We'll know by May what impact, if any, our new delivery contract will have on expenditures.
- We will be filling a twelve-hour a week position in April for cleaning that has been budgeted but left vacant since our layoffs a year ago; and I am shifting our organizational structure and upgrading our lead information technologies manager to a supervisory position in March. Both of these actions are budgetary neutral in 2012, but the latter will have some impact in 2013; but the latter will also allow our incoming Automation Coordinator to focus on the upcoming Sierra migration and begin maximizing its promise, not to mention handling the backlog of work to address needed changes in managing member library Millennium accounts and loan rules. (Eric McCarthy begins work as Automation Coordinator on March 12.)

## **ANNUAL REPORTS**

We have completed and submitted our annual report on time, which the Mid-Hudson Board is required to review and accept. A copy of what we submitted is in your packet. It includes a 2007-2011 Plan of Service Progress Report, which I have included as a separate document in your packet. This document includes the same information that we submitted to the state, (it is somewhat differently formatted), but it is easier to read.

I will make a short presentation on our 2007-2011 Plan of Service Progress Report at the Board meeting.

Member library annual reports were also submitted to the state on time. Merribeth Advocate, Linda Vittone, and I checked the reports before submitting them. But without the Automation Coordinator, preparation of the data provided member libraries for their reports meant new and additional work for a number of system staff. Under Merribeth Advocate's leadership, these tasks went smoothly. Merribeth, Tara Stohr, Kerstin Cruger, Karen O'Brien, and Robert Drake, along with Linda Vittone and Joan Kay in the business office, deserve special recognition. They did in fact receive a spontaneous ovation at the February Directors Association meeting.

## **DLD ASKS FOR A REVISION OF THE MHLS DIRECT ACCESS PLAN**

The Division of Library Development has asked that we revise the Direct Access Plan, which the Mid-Hudson Trustees approved last July and the Directors Association approved in May. DLD will not sanction the word "refusal" in the final section of the plan that spells out possible action taken when libraries prove serious inequities and hardships. DLD suggests that we either use the word "restrict," which is the word used in the Commissioner's Regulations, or just insert the pertinent language from the Regulations. The Ad Hoc Direct Access Plan Committee of directors will be reconvened to revise the plan. It will need to be re-approved by the Directors Association and the Mid-Hudson Board.

## **UPDATE ON DELIVERY SERVICE PLANNING**

The contract with Hudson River Transport ends on June 30, 2012. It is renewable for another five years. We are in the process of doing the "due diligence" in preparation for discussions to renew the contract. We are especially concerned about the current fuel surcharge agreement; its rates are higher than the industry standard.

We have received two proposals from companies already providing delivery services for libraries, one in the state of Connecticut and the other in Upper Hudson, Southern Adirondack and Mohawk Valley Library Systems. Careful consideration will be given to these proposals before sitting down with our present contractor to discuss moving forward in July.

Tom Finnigan has also been looking into tax-free gasoline, which Erica Freudenberger from Red Hook suggested at our last Board meeting. Because delivery is provided under contract with a private company, and most of the drivers are individual contractors who drive their own vehicles, there's no clear path to eliminating taxes on the gasoline used for delivery. The state's Office of Governmental Services advised Tom that the state contract would apply if we operated our own pumps. He has also asked the Dutchess County Office of Planning if there's some way we could use fuel from the county.

## **PUBLIC LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION GRANT PROGRAM**

The Incentives Committee met on February 22, chaired by Caroline Profera. Rebekkah Smith Aldrich led us through a review of the evaluation criteria and process that has worked so well in the management of the Public Library Construction Grant Program. The criteria continues to require that 1) projects be part of a facility or long-range plan and 2) provide for an increase in services, 3) an increase in access, and/or 4) an increase in energy conservation. Each criteria was slightly revised to provide better guidance to potential applicants and the committee will continue to employ a blind review of the projects when rating them.

Considerable discussion focused on how to determine what constituted an "economically disadvantaged community." The statute governing the Public Library Construction Grant Program was amended to allow the awarding of up to 75% of the cost of eligible projects, instead of the 50% that the law previously allowed, if a library was in an economically disadvantaged community. (The amended law also allows the awarding of a grant of up to 50% for the purchase of vacant land.)

There's no requirement for us to award more than 50%, but if we choose to, we need to be ready to justify and rate claims of economic need by applicants. Additionally, a community's economic need provides an additional criteria by which to rank applications.

The original legislation based economic considerations on poverty rates and percentages of student eligibility in the National School Lunch Program. The final legislation left it open for library systems to decide. At the Incentives Committee, we decided to apply the original considerations and set these considerations at levels that would potentially cover 25% of our member libraries.

We didn't have the data for Mid-Hudson communities and school districts to determine these levels when we met. But we have most of the data now and I've included the tables summarizing the data in your board packet. To potentially cover 25% of our members in communities, these thresholds would be

- A political subdivision (town or city) that has fifteen percent or more of its population living in poverty as shown in the latest federal census.
- The percentage of student enrollment in a public school district eligible for free and reduced lunch under the National School Lunch Program that is forty percent or more for at least one month during the twelve months prior to the date of filing of the grant application.

- A political subdivision (town or city) with ten percent or more of its population living in poverty and a percentage of student enrollment in a public school district eligible for free and reduced lunch of thirty percent or more.

## **2012-2013 LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY (LSTA) GRANT**

We have submitted an LSTA grant to the Division of Library Development (DLD) for the professional development of member library directors and an abstract of the grant is in your packet. If supported, the grant would underwrite the development of training and would join the System's popular and effective "Advocacy Boot Camps," that we provide to frontline staff, trustees and library friends. The training would focus on the skills needed by directors to build their libraries from the inside out and to become effective leaders within their libraries.

The Mid-Hudson Board is required to approve and authenticate the application.

The training would include two full-day sessions. There would be an online component. Directors would develop a project for their libraries employing specific leadership skills. Evaluation would be both quantitative and outcome-based.

Sandra Nelson, a widely renown library consultant, would be hired to collaborate with our staff in the development of the curriculum and she would also serve as the program's initial lead trainer.

The deadline of the grant is Wednesday, March 7, 2012. It is a one-year grant running from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013. We are requesting \$17,400 and, with staffing, providing an in-kind contribution of \$5,000. Rebekkah Smith Aldrich and Merribeth Advocate developed the proposal and Rebekkah has written the grant. Kerstin Cruger will also be contributing her support of the program.

## **2012 LSTA SUMMER READING MINI-GRANT**

Also in your packet is an abstract of the LSTA grant application that we're submitting to DLD later in the month for \$12,000. DLD is providing this grant opportunity to Dutchess BOCES as well as Mid-Hudson in an effort to pull schools and public libraries together for summer reading. Summer reading programs provided by public libraries provide a bridge from the end to the beginning of the school year that help children maintain their reading skills. If there is one service that most public libraries provide schools and their students, it's summer reading. The purpose of the grant includes:

- Providing member libraries mini-grants in the amounts of \$300 to \$500 in 2012.
- Increasing participation in the state's "Summer Reading at New York Libraries" program.
- Fostering greater library and school collaboration in support of summer reading.
- Collaborating with schools in the development of electronic booklists and purchasing downloadable audiobooks and eBooks on these lists.

The deadline of the grant is Wednesday, March 21, 2012. We are requesting \$12,000 and, with staffing, providing an in-kind contribution of \$5,7500. Merribeth Advocate has developed and written the proposal. She will be supported on the program by Kerstin Cruger.