

Ken Hall
Director



FOND DU LAC PUBLIC LIBRARY

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March 15, 2007

Paul Plueddeman, President
Markesan Public Library Board of Trustees
75 N. Bridge Street
Markesan WI 53946-0160

Dear Mr. Plueddeman:

The Board of Trustees of the Fond du Lac Public Library received and discussed your letter of February 21, 2007 suggesting that Winnefox Library System member libraries refrain from billing other counties within Winnefox for service provided to rural county residents. While we very much appreciate and endorse the concept of libraries working together, unfortunately we do not believe that we can endorse your request.

There are several reasons for this. First and foremost this new law will have a differing impact on each public library in the state. Some libraries will have no circulation from rural residents from other counties. Other libraries, small and large, that are close to a county borders are providing a high percentage of their circulation to residents of other counties. In cases where significant crossover borrowing exists, those who are taxed for library service on behalf of a public library are paying for a large share of free service to others. We do not believe that a library board has the right to arbitrarily decide that one group should shoulder the tax burden for another group. If we have the opportunity to send a bill for service rendered to a unit of government not paying for service, we feel compelled to do so if sending this bill may have a significant impact on our ability to manage the tax burden of our municipal tax payers.

Potential problems with this law relate with the willingness and ability of individual counties to pay for new bills for service without taking the money from libraries within their counties. This is a very real problem. However we do not believe that it is right to ask a library on a county border to forgo significant financial support in order to maintain financial support for libraries in another county. The issue of how these bills get paid is one we will all have to face in our individual counties. For some of us, far more service is provided across county borders within Winnefox than to residents of non-Winnefox Counties. We believe that the issue of payment should not be settled between individual libraries within Winnefox, but between libraries and the individual county governments as this law intended.

Though we respect and commend your intentions to maintain congeniality and the spirit of cooperation within Winnefox, we do not believe that we can honor your request and forgo sending a bill for service to any county to which we are providing a significant level of service.

Sincerely,

Susan Ales-Clow, President
Fond du Lac Public Library Board of Trustees