

Disaster Planning for Libraries

If we've learned anything in the past few years it's that small towns are not necessarily a 'safe haven' and that either natural or man-made disasters can strike anyplace and anytime. Library staff should think through how to handle possible emergencies before they happen.

Among the issues to be considered are:

- **Who has decision-making authority in the absence of the director** Always remember Murphy's Law and expect that an emergency may happen when the most junior staff person is in the building and the director is out of town and unreachable.
- **Building evacuation procedures for staff and patrons** Plans should include where staff and patrons are to gather after evacuation. Larger libraries may want to consider holding regular fire drills.
- **Emergency building repair** If a window has been broken, the basement flooded, or the roof has been storm damaged do you know who to call for emergency repairs?
- **Emergency notification** Do you know how to reach staff if the building is damaged and library records are unavailable? If a staff person has been injured and sent to the hospital do you know how to reach their family?
- **Staff skills inventory** What staff have skills or training that may be useful in an emergency situation?
- **Building access for emergency personnel** Do the local police and fire departments have keys to the library building and are they familiar with the building? Consider inviting the police and fire departments to use the library for training during non-open hours.
- **Insurance coverage** Is the library's insurance adequate to replace damaged or destroyed collections, equipment, or building? Is it regularly reviewed and updated?

The director and board should discuss these and other concerns and develop policies and procedures to guide staff. Don't forget to include your municipality's emergency management personnel in your planning.



Library Legislative Day:

Tuesday, January 23, 2007

It's not too soon to plan for the annual pilgrimage to Madison to talk with legislators about library issues. Since 2007 marks the start of another biennium, with tough budget decisions ahead, it's especially important that attendance be strong. The more library advocates we can bring to the State Capitol, the more likely library issues are to get a fair hearing. Encourage library trustees, staff, and Friends to attend.

Especially if you consider yourself a political novice, LLD is a great way to get acquainted with library issues and your state legislators. For those of you with more experience, you know it's a time to solidify relationships and underscore the messages you've communicated year-round. It's also a time to thank legislators for their service.

For more information, plus picture highlights from the 2006 LLD, go to <http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/legis/day/>

Plan to attend now!



New Records Retention Schedule for Wisconsin Libraries

Under Chapter 19 of Wisconsin Statutes, before any public agency—including libraries—is authorized to destroy or dispose of records the agency must adopt a records retention schedule which lists the different type of records the agency creates and how long each type of record is to be kept. This schedule must be approved by the State Records Board and, for certain records, by the State Historical Society. Until recently, there were no guidelines to help libraries deal with this issue; they either had to use a records retention schedule adopted by their municipality or write their own. In actuality, many libraries were unaware of this statutory requirement and simply ignored the law.

Throughout 2004 and 2005 a group of librarians from around the state met to draft a records retention schedule for Wisconsin libraries; this schedule was approved by the State Records Board in early 2006. If your library has not already adopted your own records retention schedule or is not covered by a municipal schedule should consider adopting this one.

The schedule can be downloaded from this DLCL page <http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/retensch.html>, which also has other information on the Wisconsin public records law.



New Legislation Affecting Libraries

This spring two bills were enacted into law which change many aspects of library governance and funding. These bills were based on recommendations that came out of the State Superintendent's Task Force on Public Library Legislation and Funding which met several years ago.

This article briefly outlines changes made by these laws. Your library director and system office can give you more information.

Act 226 (formerly SB-273)

- A municipality may exempt itself from the county library tax if it levies a tax for library services at a rate that is equal to or greater than the county library tax rate. Formerly this included all monies raised by the county for library purposes, including funding for library capital outlays. The amount levied by a county for library capital expenditures is now excluded when determining whether a municipality is exempt from the county library levy.
- The library board must approve expenditures before they are paid. Common practice, however, is for a municipality to pay some bills without prior board approval. An example would be payroll, which is typically paid bi-weekly or semi-monthly. The law now allows the municipality to pay regular salary and other recurring payments (such as utilities) without prior board approval. The library board would have to audit and approve those payments at its next regular meeting.
- Former law allows a public library board to invest a gift or endowment as provided under the Uniform Management of Institutional Funds Act. The revised law also allows a public board to invest such funds in the manner provided for surplus funds of a county, city, village, town, school district, or technical college district.

- Libraries must provide service to any system resident at the same level as they do their local residents. Online resources are often priced according to population; if the vendor considers the entire system to be the library's service population the price may be higher than a library could afford. The revised law allows a library to provide remote access to a library's online databases only to its residents.
- To be a member of a library system municipalities & counties must support libraries at a level no less than the average of the past three years. Any amount spent for capital projects is now specifically excluded from the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement.
- Formerly, a county board was entitled to appoint one or two additional members to a municipal library board, depending upon the proportion of county funding to municipal funding the library receives. Counties may now appoint up to five members to municipal library boards depending upon the proportion of county funding to municipal funding the library receives.

Act 420 (formerly SB-272)

- This act adds several new system membership requirements.
 - A library director must be present in the library for at least ten hours each week that the library is open, less leave time.
 - Beginning in 2008 a library would have to spend at least \$2,500 annually on library materials. \$2,500 is one quarter of the minimum amount which the DPI recommends libraries spend annually on materials.
 - Beginning in 2008, a library would have to be open to the public an average of 20 hours each week *or* at least the number of hours a week the library was open in 2005, whichever is fewer.

20 hours per week is less than the 25 per week recommended by the DPI.

- A county may adopt a plan requiring member municipality to compensate other municipalities for crossover borrowing. Crossover borrowing occurs when residents of one community use a library in another community. Municipalities who fail to make such compensation would not be eligible to exempt from the county library levy.
- If a municipality located in a county that maintains a consolidated county library wishes to establish a new library or participate in a joint library, it must, in addition to the existing requirements, obtain the approval of the county library board and the county board of supervisors.
- New joint library agreements and any joint library agreement reviewed or modified after the bill becomes law must:
 - Include a procedure for adjusting the membership of the board to ensure that it remains representative of the populations of the participating municipalities.
 - Name one of the participants as the library's fiscal agent.
 - Include a procedure for the distribution of the library's assets and liabilities if the library is dissolved.
- Under current law a county must pay to each library in the county an amount equal to at least 70% of the cost of library use by rural residents. Beginning in 2008 libraries would be entitled to at least 70% of the cost of serving residents of adjacent counties.

This Act also contains several provisions affecting library system organization.

Trustee Workshop Announcement



Nationally-known speaker Pat Wagner will be presenting a program for Winnefox & OWLS on Monday 18 September at the Neenah Public Library.

Her topic, *“How and why to speak up on library issues in the community and to funding bodies”* is of particular importance in these days of tightening budgets. More information on this program will be sent out later this summer.

TRUSTEE SOAPBOX

Do you have a question, comment or topic to suggest for a future TrusteeTale? Send an Email to Mark at:
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