

# trustee tale

Newsletter for Public Library Trustees

## Online Resources for Library Trustees

*By Mark Arend, Assistant Director  
Winnefox Library System*

There is a lot of good information on the internet for library trustees.  
Here's a few useful sites:

### **Trustee Resources from the Outagamie Waupaca Library System**

This is a collection of links compiled by OWLS staff.  
<http://www.owlsweb.info/L4L/trustees.asp>

### **WebJunction**

WebJunction bills itself as “An online community for library staff”. Funded by the Gates Foundation, it's a place where library staff and trustees can share and use online resources. Resources for Trustees are at  
<http://blog.webjunctionworks.org/index.php/category/trustees/>

### **Wisconsin Library Trustee Resource Page**

Maintained by the Wisconsin Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning (DLTCL), this page gathers together information on Wisconsin library law, policies, and more.  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/trustee.html>

**LibraryLaw** focuses on legal issues of interest to libraries, such as copyright, privacy and the First Amendment. It is maintained by librarian & attorney Mary Minow. <http://www.librarylaw.com/>

**Open meetings & public records** guides from the Wisconsin Department of Justice. <http://www.doj.state.wi.us/site/ompr.asp>

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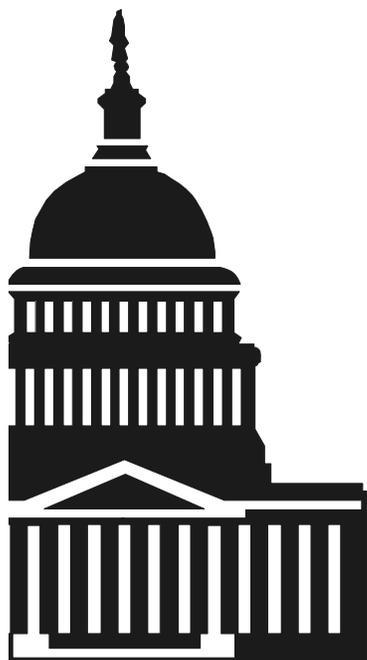
## The State Budget and Your Library

By Mark Arend, Assistant Director  
Winnefox Library System

As you know, Wisconsin has budgetary problems and libraries are not isolated entities, immune from the problems of other governmental agencies. In addition to potential cuts in municipal and county support due to loss of shared revenue, levy limits, and economic conditions, libraries will see less state support in 2010 and 2011. In its budget proposal, the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee has recommended cuts in funding to public library systems. Funding for Badgerlink, Interlibrary loan contracts with the UW System libraries and the Milwaukee Public Library, the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), and the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library (formerly the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped) will see slight increases. The Newsline for the Blind, which supports newspapers accessible by telephone for blind and physically handicapped people, was also cut slightly.

Library system funding is being cut 3.7% in 2010. There will be a slight increase—3.2%—in 2011 but funding will still be lower than 2009 funding. Each library system will consult with member library directors and plan necessary service cuts or fee increases.

As of this writing, the budget is still in the legislative process but changes are seen as unlikely.



## Library Trustee Training Videos

The Wyoming State Library has posted a series of trustee training videos online. Each is about 6-10 minutes long and includes a set of discussion questions.

<http://www.wyominglibraries.org/trusteetrouble.html>



## FAQ

### *What types of questions can't we ask when interviewing candidates for the library director position?*

Federal law and/or Wisconsin statutes provide that it is unlawful to discriminate against employees and job applicants because of any of the following:

- Age
- Marital status
- Pregnancy, birth control, or child care
- Health, medical history, disability, genetic testing, or physical condition
- Birthplace, nationality, citizenship.
- Ancestry, race, or color
- Religion
- Gender or sexual orientation
- Military service
- Arrest or conviction record
- Use or nonuse of lawful products off the employer's premises during nonworking hours.
- Leisure activities in non-working hours

You should avoid asking questions of this type because doing so might be regarded as intent to discriminate and could give unsuccessful candidates grounds for legal action. Generally you may not ask this type of question about the candidate's immediate family either.

## Giving the “Elevator Spiel”

By Mark Arend, Assistant Director  
Winnefox Library System

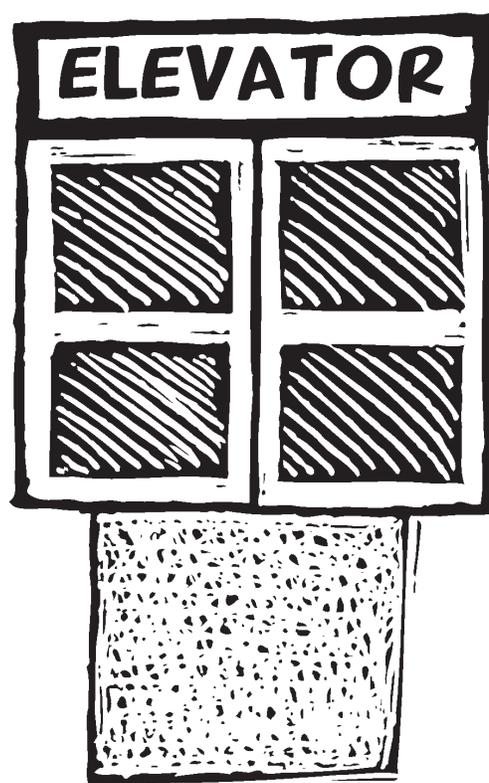
If you had only 30 to 60 seconds to make an impression on an elected official or other community leader, what would you say? What single statistic, report, or talking point would be most effective in communicating the library’s value?

Of course there is no single talking point or statistic that you can count on being the most effective because different things will resonate best with different individuals. You need to be prepared with several points and be ready to use the one that will be most effective for that person. Here are a few ideas that have proven effective in other communities:

- ✓ Is there something in your community that’s generally acknowledged as being well-attended and popular? This could be a municipal recreation center or swimming pool, the high school football games, or the annual civic event that everyone attends. Telling officials that you get more use in a month than the municipal pool gets all summer, or that more people visit the library every week than attend the Friday night game can be effective.
- ✓ Use this as an opportunity to be enthusiastic about something that happened recently at the Library, how the place was packed out with senior citizens learning computer skills or the number of kids that signed up for the summer reading program.
- ✓ Tell them about something you know they’d be interested in. Mention the new online auto repair database or that the library’s got some great new mystery novels. Don’t let him or her out of your sight without an invitation to come by and see what is going on and how many people are benefiting from library services.

- ✓ Many libraries have been promoting the library’s “Return on investment” lately. This is the value that residents get back from their investment in library services. A recent study showed that for every \$1.00 of taxpayer funding public libraries in Wisconsin return \$4.06 to the economy (you can read about it at <http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/econimpact.html>).
- ✓ Do you have any great statistics you can use? Library use has been up 3% every year for the past five years or 75% of residents have a library card.
- ✓ Numbers are good and make an impression but follow up by hitting them with an anecdotal story about how libraries really change people’s lives. This could be someone who got information to help them start a business, manage a health condition, or get a job.

Here’s a final tip: carry a card in your wallet or purse with a few talking points or numbers.



*(“Online Resources for Trustees” continued)*

**Friends of Libraries USA** has lots of information on promoting libraries.

<http://www.folusa.org/>

**Roberts Rules of Order** This official site has official interpretations of rules of parliamentary procedure and a FAQ section.

<http://www.robertsrules.com/>

### **Advocating in a Tough Economy Toolkit**

Get tips, tools and messages that work at

[www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/advocacy/advocacyuniversity/toolkit/index.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/advocacy/advocacyuniversity/toolkit/index.cfm).

## *Have questions?*

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*and we'll try to help.*

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If you have questions, comments or suggestions

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