

Director's Report for September 19, 2003 ODL Board Meeting

Library openings. Another library, another opening could have been the theme song for the last few months. New or remodeled libraries were opened in Chickasha, the Rudisill branch in Tulsa, the Westville branch of the Eastern Oklahoma District Library System, and the Piedmont library. I attended all of these events along with other ODL staff. The opportunity to participate in such an important occasion for a community is a real treat for me. I truly believe that communities that will prosper economically as well as intellectually and socially invest in community libraries. It's a pleasure to be present to congratulate volunteers, donors, library staff and patrons as well as members of the city government on their achievements. The Chickasha library and the Westville library were recipients of grants from ODL to help in their construction. The number of libraries being renovated or built demonstrates the need for the construction funds that the Oklahoma legislature has provided. The need outstrips the amounts available for the projects but I am delighted when we are able to give a seed grant that helps a community kick off the fundraising necessary to improve their library facility.

Special events. The period since our last meeting has also been a time for special events. Our first international event was held on August 5th in the Blue Room of the State Capitol when the General Consul for the People's Republic of China based in Houston presented ODL with a collection of materials on Chinese culture and history. Oklahoma is one of three states in the eight state region to receive this collection. The arrangements for hosting an international reception were handled superbly by ODL's Public Information Office. The program was standing room only and featured Secretary of State Susan Savage accepting the gift on behalf of Governor Brad Henry and the state. Senator Jay Paul Gumm whose constituents were instrumental in seizing the opportunity to acquire the gift also spoke at the event. The local Chinese community was an enormous help in the event and hosted a reception following the ceremony. We had wonderful performances by students from local Chinese schools. Thanks to Bill Young and the whole PIO crew for making our maiden voyage into international waters such a success!

Another special opportunity came on August 12th when I made a presentation to the Tulsa City-County Library System Commission at a special meeting. The focus of the presentation was on the *Models for Library Service* document approved by the ODL Board at its last meeting. ODL staff is seeking to increase awareness of these guidelines for excellence in library service by visiting with library boards and trustees. The Tulsa library system has long been a leader in exemplarily library service so the conversation was with a group of well informed and committed group.

The Oklahoma Historical Records Advisory Board held another capacity building Forum on August 15th. This event was hosted by the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History at the University of Oklahoma. The theme of the program was Strategic Methods to Develop Your Public Image and Expand Local Support. We were very gratified to have

two ODL Board members attend the session, Duchess Bartmess and Glenda Kilmer. The event was co-sponsored by the Oklahoma Museums Association and the Oklahoma Historical Society. The evaluations were glowing and a big hit of the event was Sherri Coale, Head Coach of the Women's Basketball team at the University of Oklahoma. Coach Coale tied her story of how she built support for her basketball program to the struggle that libraries and museums face in getting support from their communities and press coverage. Susan Feller and Jan Davis of the ODL staff deserve special recognition for their work at these events.

The last special event that I want to highlight is a radio interview on KRXXO about the Oklahoma Reads Oklahoma project. Anita May, executive director of the Oklahoma Humanities Council, and I were interviewed by Steve Bennett for his program *Focus on Oklahoma*. The interview is the first of the media campaign to let the public know about the program. The interviewer was excited about the program so it was a very pleasant experience.

Archives and Records Commission. In addition to the ODL Board, another important governing board at ODL is the Archives and Records Commission. This Board has rule making authority and is responsible for reviewing the creation, retention and destruction of the temporary records of state government. The Archives and Records Commission meets quarterly and I serve on it along with designees from the state Auditor and Inspector's Office, the state Treasurer's office, the Lieutenant Governor's office, and a citizen chair appointed by the governor. The Commission met in July and the Archives and Records division report gives more detail on the activities of this important entity.

Filtering in public libraries. There have been two important developments in this area since the last ODL Board meeting. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled on the Children's Internet Protection Act that required public libraries that receive funding from specific federal sources to install technology protection measures on all computers in a library. The Court found that the law was constitutional. As a result of this decision, the public libraries in Oklahoma have until July 1, 2004 to put in place a technology protection measure if they plan to apply for e-rate funding.

On the state level, an interim study was proposed by Rep. Thad Balkman to examine the need for state legislation to require installation of filters on computers in public libraries that receive state appropriated dollars. The hearing for the need for this interim study is September 4th. I have been asked to make comments and have agreed to do so. The other speakers at the meeting were Andy Peters from the Pioneer Library System, David Burke from the filtering company N2H2, and me. The discussion lasted about 1 ½ hours. I reported that approximately 30% of public libraries currently filter. Our survey of libraries indicates that all but a handful intend to install filters by July 1, 2004. Libraries have concerns about balancing the needs of children and adults as well as the costs of filters and increased technological demands filters may place on library staff. Everyone present had an opportunity to express their point of view. Rep. Balkman stated that he had not decided whether he was going to introduce legislation on this issue but he wanted to explore the situation and learn more about the views of stakeholders in Oklahoma.