

Director's Report

Since our last ODL Board meeting in December, it has been a somewhat quiet period with few meetings due to the holidays. I took annual leave during this period. The most satisfying part of this down time was getting my desk in good shape to start the New Year. Things have begun to pile up again but I still believe I'm better organized than before. I hope your holidays were blessed with family and friends.

In response to Representative Barbara Staggs' suggestions at our last Board meeting, ODL staff have been working to organize statistics on our service by county. This is a different approach than we have used before and it is interesting to get a new perspective. We plan to have these statistics ready for distribution to the legislature at our upcoming budget hearings. There have been no meetings with legislative staff since our last Board meeting.

The Public Library Directors' Council met in Guthrie in December. The group continues to be interested in exploring enhanced revenue sources for public libraries. A subcommittee of the group has been formed to focus on this. I will be serving on the subcommittee. Our first conference call is set for this week.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced their most recent grants to several states in January. Oklahoma is one of the recipients and we were included in the public relations planning. You may have seen articles in your newspaper about these grants. ODL received \$140,000 which we matched with \$70,000 in federal funds to pay for installation and hardware required to raise most public libraries to a T-1 level connection to the Internet. This will be a significant improvement in these communities' access to information.

The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness met on January 15th. This group focuses on how to improve services to children under school age and their families. I am chairing one of the subcommittees for this group on community mobilization. Since the legislation that created the group did not include funding, we are struggling with how to fund the fourteen communities who have Success by Six grants. All of these grants are ending and new funding is not yet in place. The group is a mix of state agency representatives and private citizens.

I made a presentation to the Metropolitan Library System Commission on Models of Library Service. The system's Executive Director, Donna Morris, invited me to give her Board an overview of the document. The Commission was interested and engaged in the discussion of the benchmarks for library service and how MLS services stacked up to the guidelines in the Models document. I believe these outreach efforts are helping to encourage the use of the Models document as we had hoped in providing local decision makers with feedback on what services should be offered and at what level.