

Director's Report

Although it has been a short time since our last Board meeting, it's been a busy time. The legislature has now passed several deadlines for action on bills and there are now many fewer bills being considered, down from 3,000 to 600. Unfortunately one of the bills that are no longer considered an active bill was HB 3202 which would fund state aid to public libraries at \$2.50 per capita. Fortunately the appropriations bills for ODL are still active and could include funding for an increase to state aid. It will likely be late May before we know more about funding for any of ODL's requests for new money.

The major item for consideration by the Board will be the projects funded by federal funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The guidance from IMLS on allowable expenses continues to change our previous practices. One of the most recent communications affects the use of federal funds to pay salaries of ODL staff. As a result we are asking the Oklahoma legislature to give us additional state dollars to replace federal salary dollars. We are holding off requesting your approval on the use of federal funds for salaries until we know what the legislature will fund. Some of the projects we are submitting for your approval at this Board meeting may be expanded to include salary expenses at our June Board meeting.

As you can imagine the impact of the changes in the interpretations of the use of LSTA funds has been challenging and difficult. It has affected all state libraries many of whom are also seeing declines in their state funding at the same time. I want to publicly recognize the work of Vicki Mohr, head of the Office of Library Development, and Judy Tirey, LSTA Coordinator, for their tireless efforts to improve and ensure our agency's compliance with and understanding of both the LSTA law as well as the new guidelines. It is a thankless job to be the bearer of the news that change outside our control is mandating painful alterations in the way we do business. As Nietzsche said, what does not kill us makes us stronger. Thanks to Vicki and Judy.