

Director's Report

The Oklahoma legislature has adjourned for the year. The majority of legislation affecting the Oklahoma Department of Libraries and other libraries did not pass. I am including a bill list following this report showing the current status of bills we were monitoring. Since this was the first session of a two year legislature, all bills that are listed as "dormant" could be considered in 2012 without being re-introduced.

The state agency consolidation bill, House Bill 2140, did pass but the final version of it did not include either our agency as a whole or the Archives and Records division. I believe that agency consolidation will continue to be a priority for the governor and the legislature so it may not be the last time that we see this type of bill.

The appropriations bill for next year will have the most impact on our services. In it ODL will be reduced 7% from our funding levels in the current fiscal year. This means that since July 1, 2010 our agency funding has been reduced 20%. I have included a chart showing the history of ODL's appropriations over the last several years. We will have to reduce staff positions and grants to public libraries and literacy councils to meet the budget reduction. I will have more information to present at our June Board meeting.

I attended National Library Legislative Day in Washington on May 9-10th along with six other Oklahoma librarians. We visited all seven of our Oklahoma Congressional offices to provide information about the use of federal funds in libraries, provide feedback on proposed federal legislation or policies affecting libraries, and build relationships. We met with Congressman Lankford who was new to all of us and had a very cordial conversation. We were delighted to learn that his mother was a school librarian. Congressman Cole was our last visit of the day and was very gracious in the amount of time he gave us. I have included a photo of all of us at the end of this report. I want to express my appreciation to Nicole Sump Crether, Oklahoma State University library, Anne Master and Lisa Wells of the Pioneer Library System, Donna Morris from the Metropolitan Library System, Mary Moroney of the Eastern District Library System, and Gary Shaffer from the Tulsa City-County Library System who made up the Oklahoma delegation to National Library Legislative Day.

One of my favorite parts of my job is to join in the celebration of the opening of a new or renovated library building. I had that opportunity on May 25th when the Durant Public Library had their official grand opening of the Donald W. Reynolds Library and Community Center. The weather was perfect, the building was gorgeous, and the event was outstanding. This building was funded by an eight million gift from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation. The new building is three times the size of the former building and located on a prime location in the city. If any of you are in the area, I encourage you to make it a destination. You will be glad that you did.

I served as the keynote speaker for the event which was covered by two local television stations. I had two on camera interviews following the event. The director of the library in her remarks said that she had gotten so much coverage in print and on television that some people thought

she was running for office. Congratulations to Durant, the Friends of the Library in Durant, the city staff, the architect and construction company, the library staff and Dr. Dottie Davis, director of the library.

I want to express my appreciation to our retiring ODL employees Karen Currie, Marilyn Jacobs Barragree, Marilyn Miller, and Bill Petrie. All of them have been terrific colleagues and great people with whom to work. They deserve much happiness as they begin the next chapter in their life's journey and I know they will find it. I will miss you one and all!

Oklahoma library delegation visits Congressman Tom Cole on May 10, 2011 for National Library Legislative Day.

