

TRUSTEE TALK

August, 2001

Thank You!

The Oklahoma Legislature adjourned in May, after a session very favorable to Oklahoma's libraries. Not only was ODL's budget left intact, but the legislature funded several new programs:

\$200,000 was allocated to purchase a statewide license for a standard reference tool that lists all books currently published, "in print" and available for purchase. All libraries will find this useful when purchasing materials for their collections. ODL is reviewing proposals from vendors and should have the new service available early in the fall.

For the second year, \$150,000 was allocated for public library construction. This year ODL awarded six construction grants to libraries in Allen, Warner, Geary, Buffalo, Pawnee and Stratford. Libraries will once again have the opportunity to apply for this new construction money after ODL sets up criteria to ensure fairness and meet the greatest needs.

ODL's Literacy Office received funds to hire an additional full-time staff person. Many of you may be familiar with our literacy program through its work in your local libraries. The high quality of work done by ODL's Literacy Office has often been recognized by national literacy organizations.

All of you who visited, wrote or called your legislators should feel a great sense of satisfaction. You very clearly communicated your message and explained the needs of your

libraries. Susan McVey, ODL's director, said that during state budget meetings she often had legislators say to her, "OK, tell me about these databases. That's all I hear about." Thank you very much for your support of Oklahoma's libraries.

Please remember to call or send a note to your legislators thanking them for their support. They certainly deserve our thanks and appreciation!

On a non-funding issue, the Legislature also passed a law requiring any public body with a website, including libraries, to post information about their board meetings on the organization's website. Compliance is required by January 1, 2002. Posted information would include the dates, times, place and agenda for all regularly scheduled meetings and, as much as reasonably possible, any special or emergency meetings. Also, the names of board members should be listed on the library website along with "such other information about the members as the public body may choose to include." If you have questions, please ask your ODL consultant about House Bill 1276.

Again, thank you very much for your help and support. Those of you who have been involved with libraries for a number of years are certainly aware of all the changes that have taken place. It's exciting to have the necessary resources to keep improving the quality of library service given to the people of Oklahoma.



Check Out a New Resource for Oklahoma's Libraries

On July 1st a new information database service was added to the resources available to Oklahoma's libraries. EBSCO received a three year contract from ODL and will offer access to its databases at no extra charge to all public, school, academic and special libraries as well as individually to the citizens of Oklahoma.

The EBSCO databases provide the full text to articles in almost 1,860 magazines as well as 174 U.S. newspapers, the Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia and other specialized resources.

Children can use a special database just on animals, as well as one database designed specifically for elementary school students and another for middle and junior high school students.

Adults can search 1,040 journals covering business, management,

economics, finance, banking and accounting. Health resources are featured with databases for both the general public and for medical professionals as well as a database just on prescription drugs, giving brand names, proper use of the medicine, side effects and precautions.

Take a look at this wonderful new resource. Your library director may give you directions specific to your library on how to get into the databases. Otherwise, you can go to <http://search.epnet.com/> on the Internet, type in *oklahoma* for the user id and *password* for the password, and you will be able to access the EBSCO databases.

A database selection committee of public, school, academic and special librarians researched all of the national databases, and selected EBSCO for Oklahoma. InfoTrac

had previously provided statewide access to general periodicals, but this contract expired on June 30, 2001.

Especially if you have small children, you may want to use the other two databases provided by ODL with state and federal funds. Electric Library and InfoTrac Kid's Edition both provide statewide access to materials for children, and are under contracts set to expire on June 30, 2002. You will need to get directions from your library on how to access these databases from your home computer.

This year, the database selection committee will again be busy as they research the choices available for children's databases. New contracts will be awarded by ODL for fiscal year 2003 to continue these valuable services for Oklahoma's libraries and their young patrons.

EBSCO databases offer full-text articles from more than 1800 magazines and journals. The product also provides special searching capabilities to help patrons find information. Kids can find resources using a fun *Searchasaurus* interface, and a special *Topic Search* helps users zero in on information.



Children's Internet Protection Act. What is it? What does it do?



Last December the United States Congress passed two laws affecting libraries — the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act (N-CIPA). Public libraries that receive Universal Service discounts (e-rate) or use Library Services and Technology Act funds to purchase computers for Internet access must comply with these laws. Since virtually all public libraries in Oklahoma receive e-rate funds, these laws certainly affect them.

CIPA requires that libraries adopt an Internet safety policy. The policy should state that all computers with Internet access operate with blocking or filtering technology that prevents access for both adults and minors to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, and, when used by a minor, to visual depictions that are considered harmful to minors.

N-CIPA requires that libraries hold a public hearing and adopt and implement an Internet safety policy that addresses access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and web; the safety and security of minors when using e-mail, chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communication; unauthorized access, such as "hacking," and other unlawful activities by minors online; unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal ID information regarding minors; and measures designed to restrict minors' access to materials harmful to minors.

This is a complicated issue, and your director has already started to investigate ways to comply with these laws. ODL, the American Library Association, OneNet and other organizations are researching filtering software programs available, gathering information, and develop-

ing guidelines to help libraries. Your ODL consultant will keep your director informed of what actions need to be taken to ensure compliance.

As board members, you can expect to do two things this fall in connection with CIPA and N-CIPA. The first is to hold a public hearing to facilitate public comments about the library's Internet safety policy. Your library probably already has an Internet safety policy, but a hearing is necessary to give community members a chance to voice their concerns and ideas about such a policy. The hearing can be part of your regular board meeting, or a separate meeting can be held.

After the hearing, your board then needs to review your Internet safety policy to be sure that it incorporates all of the CIPA and N-CIPA requirements. Again, your ODL consultant can help you determine whether your policy will comply with these laws.

Your library must comply with the laws by July 1, 2002, in order to continue to receive e-rate funds. Therefore, if your library does not already have filtering software installed on all of the library's computers, you can expect to purchase the software sometime this year. However, you do not have to purchase the software immediately. Currently, ODL is researching various filtering software programs, and OneNet is investigating the feasibility of offering a filtering program to its subscribers. More information will become available in the next few months.

So, in summary, expect to hold a public hearing this fall and to review your library's Internet safety policy. And, expect more information from your director as more details become available. Oklahoma's public libraries, their librarians and boards, have worked hard and will continue to work to enable their customers to access the vast amount of information available on the Internet, equitably and responsibly.

Ideas for Good Reads

The Internet offers many sites with information about books and ideas for future reads. Here are some of them:

- ✘ **BookBrowser**
www.bookbrowser.com
- ✘ **Booklist**
www.ala.org/booklist
- ✘ **Webrary**
www.webrary.org/RS/Rsmenu.html

For sites on specific genres or types of fiction, try some of these:

Mysteries

- ✘ **Mysterious Home Page**
www.webfic.com/mysthome/mysthome.htm
- ✘ **The Mystery Reader**
www.themysteryreader.com
- ✘ **Stop, You're Killing Me!**
www.stopyourekilllingme.com/

Romance

- ✘ **The Romance Reader**
www.theromancereader.com/
- ✘ **Romance Novels Database**
www.rwanational.com/titlesdatabasesearchmenu.stm

Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror

- ✘ **Dark Echo**
www.darkecho.com/
- ✘ **Fantasy Finder**
www.hoh.se/fantasyfinder/
- ✘ **Locus Online**
www.locusmag.com/

Westerns

- ✘ **American Western Magazine**
www.readthewest.com/
- ✘ **Roundup Magazine**
www.westernwriters.org/roundup.html

Did you know?

☒ Public libraries are the number one point of online access for people without Internet connections at home, school or work.

☒ Americans check out an average of seven books a year. They spend \$23 a year in taxes for public libraries — much less than the average cost of one hardcover book.

☒ There are more public libraries than McDonald's restaurants — a total of 16,090, including branch libraries.

☒ Federal spending on libraries annually is only 54 cents per person.

☒ Americans go to school, public and academic libraries more than twice as often as they go to the movies.

☒ Reference librarians in the nation's public and academic libraries answer more than seven million questions weekly. Standing single file, the line of questioners would stretch from Boston to San Francisco.

Trustee Workshops This Fall

Last year ODL received a grant from Libraries for the Future to offer library advocacy training. It's part of a grant from the Viburnum Foundation to establish the Community-Library Advocacy Project designed to increase the diversity, number and skills of library advocates.

Friends of Libraries U.S.A. (FOLUSA) is cooperating in this project. Oklahoma was one of nine states to receive this national grant.

At each of the workshops, a presenter from Libraries for the Future will

talk about lobbying and advocacy techniques.

Susan McVey, the Director of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, will outline the state legislative goals for next year, and participants will work on developing an advocacy plan to achieve the goals.

This year's very successful advocacy campaign will be reviewed so that we can build on recent gains. You'll receive a flyer inviting you to attend in a few weeks.

Hope to see you there!

The Trustee Workshop will be offered at five locations across the state.

Library directors, trustees and friends are invited to attend. Stay tuned for more details.

Monday, October 1st
5:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Norman Public Library
225 N. Webster, Norman

Tuesday, October 2nd
5:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Altus Public Library
421 North Hudson, Altus

Wednesday, October 3rd
1:00 to 4:30 p.m.
Woodward Public Library
1500 West Main, Woodward

Monday, October 8th
5:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Atoka County Library
215 East A Street, Atoka

Tuesday, October 9th
5:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Collinsville Public Library
1223 Main, Collinsville



Reviewing Your Library's Policies

In order to receive State Aid and qualify for federal LSTA grants each year, your library complies with ODL's Rules and Regulations for State Aid Grants. One of the rules requires that:

"A public library board approves the policies by which the library operates. The board shall review all policies within a four year cycle and shall report all current policies to ODL in conformance with the performance measures rotation schedule..."

The rotation schedule sets the following timetable for boards to review their policies:

- **FY 2002: Libraries serving more than 25,000 in population, and Library Systems**
- **FY 2003: M-Z named libraries serving fewer than 5,000**
- **FY 2004: A-L named Libraries serving fewer than 5,000**
- **FY 2005: Libraries serving from 5,000 to 25,000**

This State Aid rule simply formalizes something that most boards have already been doing — reviewing and revising their policies. Many changes affect your library — from community, technology and social issues, to new laws. For example, the United States Congress

passed a new law requiring most public libraries to review their Internet safety policy this year. (See page 3.) Technology changes may also affect other policies such as collection development or reference. The needs of your community may change — perhaps changing from a younger population to an increase in retired people, or an influx of Spanish speaking workers or other cultural groups.

The Oklahoma Library Trustee Handbook in Chapter 8, *Policies*, outlines the procedure for creating and revising a policy. Since the collection development policy is fundamental to any public library, we can use it as an example of how to review a policy. Your board may want to consider and discuss the following questions when reviewing your collection development (or materials selection) policy:

Mission and goals with community description.

How should the library serve your community's schools and students? Will the library's collection primarily support the curriculum (for example, buying textbooks) or offer opportunities for enrichment or recreation? Will you support all levels of education equally or emphasize specific areas? (e.g. elementary, middle and high school, college, technical education, adult learning?)

Will you emphasize service to specific groups in the community? A genealogy collection? Literacy and new readers? Ethnic groups, such as Hispanic or Native Americans?

How will the collection meet the needs of individual users? Assuming that you can't purchase everything, will the collection emphasize popular reading? Reference and information needs? Cultural and local

history? Education and personal development? Has the community changed since the policy was written? What new needs and community groups have emerged? Are there parts of the policy's mission that no longer apply?

Selection criteria for format.

Are the criteria for books, magazines, videos and other formats working well? Does your director have suggestions for changes?

Are there new formats that are not included in the policy — such as CDs, computer software, or e-books?

Scope and priorities of the collection.

What parts of the collection are primarily for recreation? What areas need to provide more information? Are there areas that need in-depth information? Do these levels need to be adjusted because of new demands on the collection?

Other issues to consider.

Is the policy for gift books working well? What about the guidelines for weeding the collection? Does the procedure that allows patrons to challenge library materials need to be improved to make it easier or more equitable?

As you can see, reviewing library policies can create good discussions among board members and can be a good tool for constantly improving library services. Many Oklahoma boards regularly review one or two policies at each meeting so that all policies are reviewed within the four year period. Having a regular schedule also enables board members to devote enough time to each policy to be sure that it accurately reflects the views of the board.

Trustee Talk is a publication of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries designed specifically for public library trustees. Because Oklahoma's public libraries serve diverse communities, Oklahoma's library boards can be either a governing or an advisory board and may serve a large system, a metropolitan area, or a rural community. Therefore, some information in Trustee Talk may not be useful to you and your library. However, we hope that everyone will find something useful in each issue.



If you have questions on anything you have read, please contact your regional consultant at the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

If you would like to suggest topics for future issues, please contact :

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Check out ODL's website at

www.odl.state.ok.us

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