

- 1. ADVOCACY AND THE STATE BUDGET** - As you have probably heard, Governor Cuomo's proposed budget for the coming year of 2013-2014 provides the same funding for library services and libraries as this year. This is another example of just how important the legislature is in continuing the fair and equitable funding of library services and libraries in the state.

For the second year in a row, the Governor followed the lead of the legislature by incorporating in his proposed budget the funding the legislature restored to libraries in the previous year. The Governor proposed \$76 million for libraries 2011-2012; the legislature increased this to \$79 million. He proposed \$79 million in 2012-2013; the legislature agreed on \$81.615 million. So for the coming year, the Governor has proposed \$81.615 million, as well as \$14 million for public library construction; and he also followed the legislature's lead and included relief for libraries obligated to pay the MTA tax by including a \$1.3 million off-set for a second year. (Now, if only the state could finalize how these off-sets will be distributed!)

This would be a great time to contact your representatives and recognize their leadership in restoring support for library services and libraries. I sent letters with this message to all our state representatives and spoke with Assemblymember Sandy Galef at the swearing-in ceremony of Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney on Sunday, January 27, at the Mahopac Public Library. She acknowledged that we were at a much better starting point in our advocacy for the coming year with the Governor incorporating this year's funding in his proposed 2013-14 budget.

So it will be very important to especially have trustees travel to Albany on march 5 for Library Advocacy Day!

The NYLA Legislative Committee meets again on Valentine's Day, February 14, and I expect (hope) that it will reconsider it's advocacy for a 20% increase in funding and instead ask for something along the lines of 4.4%, an increase which the Governor is proposing for education.

- 2. LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE DIGITAL AGE** - On January 22, the *Pew Internet & American Life Project* released the results of a study on the use of public libraries by Americans 16 years of age or older, their feelings about libraries and the priorities and expectations they have for public libraries.

Without question, borrowing books, access to computers and the Internet, and getting help finding information remain at the top of the list for the American public. Nearly 60% of American adults had either visited a library, a library's website, or used a cell phone, tablet or e-reader to access a library resource in the previous twelve months.

Fifty-three (53) percent of respondents had visited a library. Most were there to borrow and/or browse for a book or other item. About half either sat, read, studied, or watched or listened to media, or used a research database.

Twenty-five (25) percent of respondents had visited a library's website. Most either searched the library's catalog, checked library hours, location and contact information, or placed holds

or renewed loans. Distressingly only 22% of the respondents who visited a library's website said they downloaded an ebook, which would amount to about 6 percent of the American public.

About half who visited a library also sought help from a librarian. Interestingly, those who owned e-book readers or smartphones are reported to be "more likely than others to say they hardly ever or never get help from librarians." And of the 22% who said that their use of libraries had declined in the last five years, they were more likely to have access to the Internet at home or own a tablet or smartphone.

What caught my attention was 85% of the respondents said coordination with local schools should be a priority and should include children's programs to support school readiness. Also, more than half responded that space for reading and study was a priority.

The report provides a lot of food for thought! This is a definite "must-read" in the library community, including directors, staff, trustees and friends. The study was conducted late in 2012 with a margin of error of +/- 2.5% and included a survey as well as focus group sessions. The report can be found at libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/01/22/library-services.

3. ADVOCACY AND THE FEDERAL BUDGET - ALA sponsored the webinar *113th Congress and the Library Community* with Stephanie Vance on January 17. It's posted on District Dispatch at www.districtdispatch.org/tag/impl/.

Concerns focused on:

- Cuts that will be forced by Sequestration. These will impact funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Library Service & Technology Act. These cuts have been delayed until March 1. But cuts in the current year, 2012-2013, are of particular concern because there are just six months left to the fiscal year.
- Tax exemptions for individuals with income over \$200,000 and couples over \$250,000 have been reduced and may impact charitable deductions. There is also potential for additional changes in tax law that would also negatively impact charitable deductions.
- Unemployment benefits were extended through December 31, 2013 and libraries can expect job seekers to continue to use libraries to find jobs.

There was also mention of a useful site--www.nationalpriorities.org--that allows you, under its interactive features, to break down how your personal federal income taxes are spent by the federal government. For example, \$500 went to fund educational programs on \$20,000 paid in federal income taxes.

There are a number of way to stay current with advocacy efforts at the national level. If you're interested, join the Mobile Commons by texting "library" to 877877 and check www.ala.org/wo. National Library Legislative Day is May 7 and 8.

- 4. HAVING THE “WILL”** - On a more positive note at the federal level, Congressman Rush Holt of New Jersey has reintroduced Workforce Investment through Local Libraries (WILL). This legislation would amend the Workforce Investment Act and ensure that libraries were integrated into federally funded state and local workforce investment programs. It would enable public libraries to fully partner with “One Stops” and would ensure that libraries had a voice on state and local workforce investment boards.

All public libraries provide support to job seekers even if they’re only providing access to computers, the Internet and/or WiFi. NYLA sponsored a Sienna poll of New York State adults in January 2012 and found that 1 out of 4 adults either used a library or knew someone who used a library to find a job, advance a career, or improve work related skills in the previous twelve months. The percentage was higher among African Americans, 30%, and higher still among Latinos, 39%.

Those libraries with strong workforce development programs should definitely contact their Congressional representative, either Congressman Chris Gibson or Sean Patrick Maloney, and encourage them to support and co-sponsor this legislation and I plan to do this as well.

- 5. SUGGESTIONS FOR ANNUAL MEETING SPEAKER** - The MHLS Trustees Services Committee meets on February 19 and will begin discussion on the System’s annual meeting, which is scheduled for October 18. We would welcome your suggestions. We begin with a short list that includes R. David Lankes from Syracuse University and Duncan Smith, co-founder of NoveList. Eric McCarthy has negotiated a visit by Mr. Smith to Mid-Hudson sometime this year, which would be paid for in-part by EBSCO.

- 6. FINAL REMINDER** - Jerry Nichols of the Palmer Institute brings the Public Library Administrators Certificate Program to Hudson Valley this spring in partnership with the Westchester Library System. The program is a five-course, graduate level management program; each course is equivalent to a three-credit hour graduate course at the Palmer Institute. Costs average \$1,150 per course.

Classes meet at the Westchester Library System headquarters at 540 White Plains Road, Suite 200, Tarrytown, NY 10591. The first course, Principles of Public Library Organization and Management, meets Wednesdays, 9:00am to 1:00pm, on March 13, 20, 27, and April 3, 10, 17, 24, and May 1. The announcement, application and contact information can be downloaded at midhudson.org/ce/admin_cert.pdf.