

January 20, 2005

To: State Library Commission

From: Darlene Staffeldt, Your State Librarian

The Legislature has occupied the bulk of my time so I will try to briefly update where we are with our various activities related to our budget and bills. I am sorry for any duplication in these reports with wired updates.

After a week of writing, rewriting and practicing our presentation, our budget hearing in front of the Education Appropriations Subcommittee was at 8:00am on Monday, January 10, 2005. My presentation was a brief description defining and highlighting the State Library services, that ran about 30 minutes and was followed by testimony from Al Randall, Chair of the Commission, Lois Fitzpatrick and Jim Smith for the Montana Library Association. We were asked a few questions and then the hearing was closed. Word from several in the audience was that our presentation went well! We have included in your packets a copy of the powerpoint slides and the federation map used at the hearing. Executive action was taken Thursday morning at 8:00 am. The Governor's recommended budget for the State Library was approved by the subcommittee. This is good news but of course is not a done deal.

Hearing on SB129 - Library district law revisions was held on Tuesday, January 11, 2005 at 3:00 pm in front of Senate local Government Committee. It was a good hearing as well thanks to the efforts of Marilyn Trosper, Polson City Library Director, Bob Cooper, Jim Smith, Bridgett Johnson, Lewistown Public Library Director, etc. Executive action was postponed on Thursday late afternoon due to some further investigation requested by Senator Esp. I followed up with the Directors of the larger public libraries – Missoula, Great Falls, and Billings. Once Senator Esp hear from the larger public library directors that they had no problems with the legislation, he released his concerns. The bill was passed out of the committee on Tuesday, January 18th at 5:10 pm.

Hearing on HB163 - Permanent Public Access to the State Publication Center law was canceled. Members of the Permanent Public Access Task Force, The State Library Staff and Representatives of the University System met on Wednesday January 19, 2005 on concerns that had been brought up related to HB 163 and as a result of that meeting we recommended to Representative Olson that we pull the bill at this time. Representative Olson pulled this bill and expressed his willingness to work with us again in 2007 if he is still in the legislature. All parties agreed that the goal of the legislation – to ensure permanent public access to all State Government information in whatever format (paper or electronic), is a critical goal. The current legislation has some problems such as the definition of publications that need some additional work. The Task Force would like the opportunity to work with the University System and all agencies who produce or manage state information to further clarify roles and processes as well to define fiscal implications before this legislation is brought to a future Legislative Session. I will follow up with the Permanent Public Access Task Force in May to continue the work on this issue.

Hearing for HB184 - Federation law changes was held on Tuesday, January 18, 2005 at 8:00am. Testimony was provided by myself and Jim Smith for the Montana Library Association.

Written testimony was provided by Bette Ammon. There were a number of questions following the testimony. The questions were about monies more than the issues of the statute changes. Kris Schmitz held up well under the drilling. Representative Alan Olson requested an amendment regarding the advisory status of the Federation Board of Trustees. No executive action has been taken at this time.

We (mainly Kris) are watching a number of personnel, payroll, coal severance tax bills that are running through the session.

You will find in your notebook a brochure produced by Legislative Fiscal Division entitled Montana's Coal Severance Tax distribution detail. I thought the chart on the inside was the clearest picture of where Montana libraries fit in the distribution. The written statement does not include our database funding.

Questions? Please ask!