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TMLDA COMMUNIQUE

Winter 2003

Texas Municipal Library Directors Association is an Affiliate of the Texas Municipal League

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Steve Brown

With the New Year comes a time for reflection and for reexamining who we are and what we do as public librarians. The Texas State Library is conducting a study of its library development program that has the potential to shape our direction for years to come. Library systems in Texas have been pretty much unchanged for over 25 years, while the world we operate in has changed dramatically. It is long past time that we begin to imagine anew what we want library development to be.

The nature of public library work is that most of our energies are locally focused. You know the stereotype: librarians are all shy and retiring. They don't get out much. My New Year's hope is that we all participate actively in helping to shape library development for the future. By applying our collective experience, and more important, our creative energies to the process, we can help mold a vision of what the future for libraries should be.

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This is a legislative year, and public librarians in Texas have much at stake. According to the Comptroller, the state budget for the next two years is starting out 9.9 billion dollars in the hole. That's a pretty big hole, and the session promises to be rough and tumble. It's not a good year to go to Austin with your hand out, and yet everything we hope for has a price tag.

There's a quote from Hal Borland that I think applies to librarians in the legislative arena: "Knowing trees, I understand the meaning of patience. Knowing grass, I can appreciate persistence."

The fate of the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund will be decided in Austin this Spring, and with it the source of funding for many things that have become critical tools for public libraries. TIF has been the decisive catalyst in providing the connections and the equipment which link our customers to the information they need. TIF funds have been used to leverage and supplement local sources to create wired possibilities that before TIF were out of reach.

The TexShare database program is also in need of a permanent source of funding. The dedicated TIF funds that will carry the program through this year are at risk to the same extent that TIF's reauthorization is at risk.

And finally we will be seeking improved funding for the Loan Star Libraries program of direct grants-in-aid to Texas Public Libraries. With its limited funding, Loan Star Libraries grants have not yet lived up to their full promise; additional monies

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will be needed to make real improvements in the funding of public library services.

TML's legislative program includes support for all three of these issues. Other issues may return to challenge us as well. Likely candidates include UCITA legislation and proposals to mandate content filtering on the Internet. Stay informed. Plan to participate in Library Legislative Day, February 12 and 13. Talk to city officials and your state representatives. Let them know your concerns. If ya don't ask, ya don't get. No library ever improved its situation without asking for help.

TMLDA AWARDS

The following awards were presented at the TMLDA meeting at the TML Conference in October 2002:

Administrator of the Year

Joe Paniagua
Assistant City Manager
City of Fort Worth

Outstanding Supporter of Libraries

Bunny Gardner
President
Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library

Library Director of the Year

Sheila Ross Henderson
City of Pasadena

Sheila Ross Henderson and Charles Suessmuth



TML 2003 Legislative Program Library Issues

TML has Five Categories of Effort. Library issues are listed under the category as approved by the TML Board in December.

Seek Introduction and Passage – the League will attempt to find a sponsor, will provide testimony, and will otherwise actively pursue passage. Bills in this category are known as “TML bills.” – *no library issues*

Support – the League will actively attempt to obtain passage of the initiative if it is introduced by some other entity. The League will provide and/or arrange for testimony.

- Support legislation that would continue the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) and TIF grants to libraries.

Endorse – the League will make its support known but will not actively pursue passage.

- Endorse legislation that would provide state funding to increase access to full-text online information services.
- Endorse legislation that would support public libraries by funding the Loan Star Libraries program of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Oppose – the League will actively and vigorously attempt to defeat the initiative because it is detrimental to member cities.

- Oppose legislation that would eliminate the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund.

No Position – *no library issues*

For more information on the TML Legislative Program visit the TML website at www.tml.org.



TMLDA Booth
at TML

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2002-2003**

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Talking to elected officials at TMLDA booth at TML.

Webbing Along

Sheila Ross Henderson

I am delighted to report a successful relationship with TML and the association's website. The response has been great. Errors reported to the TML web contact are usually corrected within a very reasonable amount of time. Included on our website are links to other websites, along with TLA 2003 Conference information, the most current TMLDA newsletter, pictorial highlights from the recent conference, and relevant TMLDA information. If you have not visited it lately, please do and provide feedback. We are open to suggestions for improving the site and adding new pages that may attract and retain members.

Below are the stats for number of visits to our web site by month since last July 1, 2002.

July—88	October—441
August—149	November—403
September—195	December—239

The increase in October was due to the conference, and the newsletter was added in early November. From 88 to 441 in three months is quite an increase. We must be doing something right!

**TML Board of Directors Meeting
TML Annual Conference, Ft. Worth, Texas
October 16, 2002**

The following items were presented at the October 16th Board of Directors Meeting:

- Outline of process for developing TML legislative program.
- Federal issues of importance to cities:
 - Homeland security, funding available and unfunded mandates.
 - Collective bargaining for police & fire.
 - Cable modems and franchising authority.
- Changes to TML Bylaws:
 - Allow each TML affiliate group to elect its TML Board Representative at a time other than the TML annual conference.
 - Authorize the TML Executive Director to approve certain changes to an affiliate group's constitution or bylaws.
 - Allow each TML region to elect its officers to two-year terms.
- Approved funding for a statewide telephone survey to gather public opinions related to a variety of likely legislative issues.