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TMLDA COMMUNIQUE

Winter 2009

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Mary Alford

"I know of no safe repository of the ultimate power of society but people. And if we think them not enlightened enough, the remedy is not to take the power from them, but to inform them by education"
- Thomas Jefferson.

As I begin thinking about writing this column for the newsletter it finally occurred to me that I had a ready-made topic in front of me – TLA Legislative Day. By now your email boxes should be filled with TLA Priorities, talking tips, the findings of the TLA statewide survey of Texas voters and libraries, and more.

Most of this information we already know and share with everyone who will listen, but we have an opportunity "to inform them by education" on February 25. In this instance the "them" is the 81st Legislature.

I have been known to confess that visiting legislators is not one of my favorite activities, but I do it because I know how important it is to the library community. I sign up each time as a Delegate Leader because the message we send is strong, consistent, and true. Will we get what we want or need this year? Probably not (sorry, the cynical side comes out). But we are at the table, talking and gaining a reputation of being prepared and truthful.

The elected officials in Austin and Washington are important to libraries, but so are your community leaders. Share the information with the mayor, council, city manager, Chamber of Commerce, Lion's Club, Rotary, Women's Club, Young Mothers, PTAs and PTOs and such. These are the people that the state and federal people listen to first. These people also have the ear of the local government. So spend a little time and "inform them by education".

If you have never been to Legislative Day, give it a try. Encourage your board members to come along or your neighbors. Walking the halls of the capitol is an opportunity that I am proud to have.

See you in Austin.

**TLA Legislative Day
February 24 & 25, 2009
For more information**

www.txla.org

Nine in ten (Texas voters) agree (90%) that during economic hard times, public libraries provide important resources to families and job seekers.

(From TLA survey results.)

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TLA Statewide Survey of Support for Libraries

Steve Brown

TMLDA Representative to the TML Board

There was exciting news this week when the Texas Library Association released the results of its statewide poll of attitudes toward public and school libraries. Many people will be surprised to learn that huge majorities of Texas voters believe that libraries are important to their community. Even more surprising is the news that 81% of Texas voters, from all across the political spectrum, say they would vote to increase funding for their public library.

Voters also strongly support the role of school libraries, with 93% of poll respondents saying they support legislation to require that schools provide a school library and the services of a librarian that meet state standards. We know from research conducted in Texas schools how strong the linkage is between good school libraries and student scores on standardized tests.

This random poll of 1,201 randomly selected registered Texas voters, conducted by KRC Research during the Fall while the whole world was preoccupied with grim economic news, provides strong evidence to help us make the case for support of libraries. To quote from the Overview published with the survey results: "Strong majorities support increasing public funding for both public (81%) and school (82%) libraries." Help spread the news, both locally and with your state representatives.

For information on the statewide survey please visit the TLA website:

www.txla.org/html/pr/survey.html

"Texas voters agree public libraries are a good value for the tax dollar (94%, including 70% who strongly agree) and deserve more funding (87%, including 62% who strongly agree)."

"Strong majorities support increasing public funding for both public (81%) and school (82%) libraries. In fact, at least seven in ten voters across every demographic, geographic and political segment support increased funding for both public and school libraries."

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