

## **OWLS Director report**

June 16, 2016 OWLS Board of Trustees Meeting

- The OWLS bank, The Business Bank has merged with another bank. The new name of the bank is Investors Community Bank.
- Although the bylaws stipulate that the offices of the board shall be bonded, this had not been done. We've updated our insurance policy and all three officers are now bonded.
- A few small changes have been made to the OWLS annual report, based on feedback from DPI. These weren't substantive changes and don't require a corrected report to be submitted. (Please let me know if you'd like more information on these changes.)
- May 24, I attended the Kaukauna Library Board meeting to talk about using a collection agency in OWLSnet.
- OWLS has started to review resumes for the Circulation Specialist opening. If all goes well, we hope to have someone start in July. We received over 200 applications, so it's been a lot of work just to read through resumes!
- OWLS continues to have issues with billing of bandwidth with Teach bandwidth bills from the Department of Administration. We're waiting for bills from last year to be resolved and the current batch of invoices has errors as well. The state is struggling with a new accounting system and have asked us to be patient.

## **SRLAAW update**

[May 26, 2016] *Last week the Waushara County Board approved a resolution asking the Governor and Legislature to eliminate Statutory language regarding adjacent county library payments. Earlier this year the Shawano County Board passed a resolution calling on the legislature to add language which would in effect direct libraries to bill patrons rather than the county. At the end of the last session several legislators requested a Legislative Council Study to address the "problems" with cross county library payments. The request was not approved.*

*The WLA Library Development and Legislative Committee has a position paper on cross county library payments (attached) and we are working with individual legislators to understand their concerns and explain how the law works. If you become aware of a county board that is considering passing a similar resolution please let us know. If your Senator or Assembly Representative has concerns about this please let us know. If you have ideas for how to address county concerns please let us know.*

I've attached the WLA position paper on Cross County Library Payments.

## **WLA update**

The Wisconsin Library Association is hosting a summer benefit on August 21 at the East Side Club on Lake Monona, WI. This is a wonderful way to enjoy a beautiful summer afternoon and evening and support the Wisconsin Library Association.

## **OWLS Board appointments**

Cathy Thompson, from the Outagamie County Board of Supervisors will be appointed to the OWLS Board by Outagamie County. Her appointment is scheduled for the meeting of June 28. I will be inviting Cathy to the June meeting as a guest.

# WLA Position on Library Cross County Payments

Since 1872, Wisconsin has been committed to providing tax supported public libraries for all, rather than charging individual borrowers for their use.

Wisconsin residents contribute to the cost of public library operations through local property taxes if they live in a community with a library, or through their county's library tax if they live in a non-library community.

Most citizens choose to use libraries that are convenient to their home, workplace, or school, irrespective of geographic/tax boundaries. Sometimes that library is across a county line.

Wisconsin Statute 43.12 allows libraries to invoice an adjacent county when residents of a non-library community in that county borrow items from libraries across county borders. This provision is often known as "Cross County Payments" and it covers some of the costs of providing these materials. Libraries receive reimbursements based solely on the number of physical items checked out to the non-library community residents; no reimbursement is made based on use by those residents of the libraries' reference service, digital materials, computer technology or library programs.

Some counties have introduced resolutions to "opt out" of paying libraries in adjacent counties, and would instead make it the responsibility of a library to individually invoice each cross county borrower for their use. Other counties want to eliminate cross county-payments language in the Statutes. The Wisconsin Library Association opposes these resolutions. Consider the following points:

- Cross county payments are **fair to taxpayers** because citizens can use the library of their choice and still help fund it with their tax dollars. This is also **fair to taxpayers** in the community that is providing the library services, as they are receiving some reimbursement for serving non-residents.
- Cross county payments are **fair to counties** because libraries invoice the counties only for actual usage; libraries do not receive funding if they are not used.
- Cross county payments are a **cost effective** and **LEAN** way for counties to provide equitable access to library resources. It is less expensive to pay for access to an existing library than to build and fund more libraries within their county borders.
- Cross county payments provide **stability and predictability** in the county budget process because invoices are based on actual use and are submitted to counties well in advance of the budget cycle in which they need to be paid.
- Wisconsin library budgets are built on a patchwork of funding sources **that balance the interests of all**. Eliminating cross county payments for library services or allowing counties to "opt out of payments" would have a chilling effect on library usage by residents of non-library communities, and would result in a significant decrease in the funding of libraries, especially those close to county lines.

05-26-2016