

Report #21: Report to the KLA Board December 2007

KDLA is in the midst of the transition to the Beshear Administration. Our staff has responded to a list of questions submitted by the Transition Team and I met with the team on November 26. This meeting was very positive and gave me an opportunity to inform the team about our work and our needs. The timing for this meeting was good as we have recently completed our budget requests for the 2008-10 budget.

Our requests focus in several areas. Continuing staff reductions are seriously impacting services. The KDLA staff has been reduced from 220 positions in 1987 to our current level of 128 - which is the lowest level since the Clark-Cooper Building opened with 184 staff members. The cuts have been particularly deep in the regional field offices where we have 4 vacancies among the regional librarians and clerical staff has been slashed from 16 to 5. These positions are important as they provide assistance to the 116 public library systems across the state. About 2/3 of these libraries do not have librarians with master's degrees, so many need assistance from our regional offices to operate.

Secondly, our need for additional archives space is critical. With the expected arrival of the Fletcher Administration papers and circuit court records from Fleming County, space is exhausted. Our staff estimates that there is 14,000 cubic feet of records awaiting transfer to the State Archives – some in unsecured space and most are not housed in an archival environment. As each new courthouse is constructed records storage space is being eliminated with the intention that records will be transferred to KDLA. Our request for a high density, high volume repository storage vault will allow us to provide legally mandated services and will preserve these important state papers for future generations. I am pleased to report that the Capital Planning Advisory Board has endorsed our expansion so we are approved to request funding in the next budget cycle.

We are also requesting funding for the public library construction fund - \$2,000,000 in new funding each year of the biennium. Additional space is needed in about 2/3 of our public libraries. The cost of construction makes our assistance important, particularly for smaller and more rural counties where the tax base is limited. This would allow at least 12 projects each year. Also requested is \$6,000,000 annually to fund the Public Library Improvement and Equalization Fund which was established by the General Assembly in 2000 but never funded. Allocated in direct aid to public libraries, the money could be used for construction, technology, programming, collections, or other operating needs.

We are supporting requests from other agencies that would assist libraries. The Council on Post-secondary Education is requesting additional funding for the Kentucky Virtual Library and for a new catalog to replace the current Endeavor catalog used by the university libraries and KDLA. The current catalog is rapidly aging and needs a major upgrade. In addition the Education Cabinet is requesting funding for a demonstration project to connect KDLA and selected public libraries to the KEN network. This is the Internet pipe used by school systems throughout Kentucky. If this project is successful it will lead to the connecting of all public libraries to KEN. With KDLA's connection to KEN, we will be able to provide more distance learning opportunities from KDLA.

The public library legislative committee is planning for lobbying and Feb. 13 has been chosen as the day librarians will be going to Frankfort to meet with their legislators. The committee has also planned to create read posters with the photos of legislators.

There are also developments on Federal legislation. The U. S. House Representatives failed to override the President's veto of the appropriations bill that included funding for the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the agency that provides our federal funding. The bill included \$171.5 million for IMLS. While the President vetoed the bill for its high cost, ironically the amount he requested for IMLS was reduced by Congress! We are supporting the \$171.5 million included for IMLS as it is enough to trigger a 2003 distribution formula that would increase Kentucky's funding by about \$125,000. The House included \$167.5 million but that would not be enough to trigger the 2003 formula. This bill is scheduled to come up for consideration by the House in the second week of December. We are asking House members (especially Rep. Chandler who has been very supportive of libraries) to include \$171.5 for IMLS in any bill that goes forward.

Items from around KDLA and the state

One example of the increased need for technology in our public libraries, the state government has migrated to a new system for the state employment process which requires applications for state jobs to be filed electronically. We expect many people to use computers in public libraries to apply for state jobs in the future and the Personnel Cabinet is suggesting that applicants can apply at their public libraries.

The strategic planning process for KDLA is continuing. We are currently developing action plans for 13 objectives we have identified. This process should be completed by the next meeting and I plan to make a presentation to the Council on the strategic plan.

Incorporation of the records retention schedules into administrative regulation has moved through the approval process. The Administrative Regulation Subcommittee approved changes to the administrative regulations so they will become effective Dec. 7.

KDLA staff members are participating in an effort led by the Administrative Office of the Courts to digitize historical legal materials of the state including the proceedings of the 1890 constitutional convention and decisions of the courts widely available. It also provides another opportunity for us to work with agencies in determining standards and processes for digitization so we can be consistent throughout state government in digitization efforts and create savings through cooperative projects.

We were disappointed with the vote in Jefferson County that turned down the Library District. Local officials are working with the Louisville Free Public Library to develop an alternative expansion plan. The Lincoln County Public Library survived an attempt to recall the Library's property tax increase adopted earlier this year. The leader of the unsuccessful recall attempt filed suit against the tax increase but the suit was dismissed by the circuit court so Lincoln County is proceeding with plans for a new library. Rockcastle County failed in a petition effort to double its property tax, which is one of the lowest in the state. They plan to try again in the future.

I have had discussions with Fannie Cox about the possibility of archiving KLA reports in KDLA's e-archives program. More discussion about this possibility will follow.

Submitted by Wayne Onkst