

Four County Library System



Winter 2009

NYS budget crisis may lead to 20% cut in funding for libraries, systems

Governor Paterson's 2009-2010 executive budget proposal calls for an unprecedented \$18 million cut in library aid. If it passes and becomes law, total library funding would be pushed back to \$80.5 million – a level not seen since 1993. Total funding for libraries amounts to less than one-tenth of one percent of the state's entire budget.

"Eighty percent of the Four County Library System's budget comes from the state of New York," says **David Karre**, executive director and CEO. "The governor's cut of nearly twenty percent would lead to extremely challenging circumstances that could trickle down and adversely affect all of our member libraries and local citizens."

NYLA's prognosis is grim

In testimony before a joint legislative budget committee on January 28, **Michael Borges**, executive director of the New York Library Association, said "The impact of these cuts on library systems will be particularly devastating, especially for those systems that rely heavily on state aid to fund a majority of their operations." Besides the reduction in the new budget, library funding was cut twice last year to help offset the state's shortfall.

Mr. Borges reminded legislators that the new cut would result in a corresponding loss of \$2 million in federal funds for library services in New York. He also emphasized that public library usage skyrockets during tough economic times, whether it's to find a job, to access public assistance programs, or to save money on books, magazines, CDs and DVDs.

"Every year we've gone to Albany to meet with our legislators and fight for every nickel," David adds.



David Karre and Lisa Wise are interviewed by reporters at the Broome County Public Library on December 19 as part of the news conference and ribbon-cutting that kicked off the database consolidation between Four County and BCPL.

"During good economic years we never saw any funding increases. Now Four County is being told to accept a funding cut that would amount to about \$300,000. We'd be willing to share the pain if we had ever shared in the gain."

Get on the bus to Albany on March 10

Member library directors and trustees are urged to participate in NYLA's Library Day in Albany on Tuesday, March 10. We've chartered a bus and have scheduled appointments with your legislators. You can help them understand the critical need for adequate funding. The bus ride is free, but registration is required. Contact **Sherry Gorman** at ext.305 or sgorman@4cls.org.



At the ceremonial ribbon cutting for the consolidation kickoff at the Broome County Public Library, Lisa Wise and David Karre (center, with scissors) were joined by Broome County legislator Chris Kuzel (far left); Norm Sweeney, BCPL trustee (background far left); 4CLS trustee Janet Ottman; BCPL trustees Lanny Kipp and Tom Gray (front right), along with representatives of other member libraries.

Consolidation efforts ongoing

The automation department continues to work on several issues related to the complex consolidation of databases by Four County and Broome County Public Library. The resource-sharing initiative was kicked off with a brief ceremony at BCPL on December 19.

"We're moving forward and we'll continue to clean up the database," says **Jeff Henry**, automation manager. "It's still a work in progress, as we anticipated."

Efforts include fixing BCPL's index to the *Press & Sun-Bulletin* and the set up and configuration of the serials control module that will allow periodicals to be circulated more efficiently by all member libraries.

Mailing of overdue and hold notices for BCPL customers has begun, with Johnson City and Endicott to follow soon and other libraries when requested.

Providing consolidated programs, services and specialized resources that help 42 public libraries serve their communities in Broome, Chenango, Delaware and Otsego Counties.

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Walton collaborates to get new grant for reading series

Director **Sally Cranston** reports that the **William B. Ogden Free Library** in Walton and the New York Council for the Humanities have joined forces to create *Together: Book Talk for Kids and Parents*, a weekly family reading and discussion series that will run for six weeks starting in March.

The program is for fourth and fifth graders and their parents or guardians. It is intended to give kids the chance to enjoy reading outside of school, and it gives adults the chance to share books that their kids are reading.

Everyone reads the same books, which are loaned to the adults and children. The kids will then get to choose one of the six books to keep. The library also provides snacks, childcare and activity materials for younger siblings.

Sally, formerly a public school teacher in the District of Columbia, will be one on the discussion leaders. "The books are true page-turners that offer a different twist on the three themes of Being American, Courage, and Freedom," she says. The project is supported by the *We the People* initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Construction grant requests exceeded \$400,000 in 2008

Construction grant applications approved by Four County trustees and submitted on behalf of ten member libraries under the two NYS programs amounted to nearly \$412,000 in funding requests. A grant can cover up to half of a project's total cost. The projects are:

- » BCPL \$39,210 total project cost for paving and lighting; grant application written by **Lisa Wise**
- » Deposit \$33,570 for a roof, windows, shed; **Becky Hochuli**
- » Endicott \$17,750 for an automatic door opener, HVAC; **Ed Dunscombe**
- » Greene \$43,500 for an electric boiler; **Mary King**
- » Lisle \$76,072 for parking; **Harold Walker**
- » New Berlin \$81,788 for solar panels; **Darlene LaBrie**
- » Otego \$15,536 for a front porch and \$12,663 for a new roof; **Mary Johnson-Butler**
- » Oxford \$419,240 for a new addition; **Nancy Morey**
- » Roxbury \$32,760 for new siding and insulation; **Lorrayne Lang-Bolger**
- » Richfield Springs \$102,959 for director's office, storage, reference section; **Dr. Bill Taber**

Total cost of these projects is more than \$875,000. A survey conducted by Four County last May revealed that its members have construction needs totaling more than \$22 million.

Approval letters from the NYS Education Department can be expected shortly, according to the Division of Library Development, the agency that manages the \$14 million and \$800,000 construction grant programs.

Contact **Paul Golaszewski**, community relations manager, at ext.304 or pgolaszewski@4cls.org if you have any questions about these annual grants.

Book drive enhances juvenile and young adult collections

Four County and its member libraries are the beneficiaries of Barnes & Noble Bookseller's annual book drive. The retailer coordinates a book drive for a non-profit organization every year, and 4CLS was chosen to be this year's recipient of books for grades K-12. Local public radio/TV broadcaster WSKG administered the effort. Four County's **Noelle Holmes** and **Starr LaTronica** generated a wish list of nearly 700 titles, and Barnes and Noble staff added others to a display located in the children's section of the Vestal store. Books were then purchased by the public for donation to 4CLS. They will be added to the Cybermobile collection and distributed to member libraries.

Sign up now for next cycle of Circuits Program

Looking for a cost-effective way to enhance your library's collection? Then join the 31 other member libraries that already participate in Four County's **Circuits Program**. It's a smart and easy way to have a rotating packet of materials – chosen by program participants – delivered right to your library's doorstep four times per year.

Choose from three circuit options: unabridged books on audio CD; movies on DVD; or large-print books. Cost per circuit ranges from \$200 to \$300 per year. Each packet contains 40 to 50 items. Best of all, at the end of the year some materials will be yours to keep.

"Participants are getting a lot more than what they're paying," says **Staci Rogers**, technical services manager. The deadline to join is April, and payment is due by July. Contact **Laura Henry** at lhenry@4cls.org or extension 366 for details.

Briefly noted . . .

4CLS – Special thanks to **Nancy Seitz** of the GFJohnson Library in Endicott for going above and beyond the call of duty. She volunteered several hours of her time on a very snowy day to help at the BCPL circulation desk during the database consolidation kickoff... Recent news stories in major publications have detailed the alarming plight of public libraries, with headlines such as *'More Demand, Less Funding'* and *'U.S. Libraries on Borrowed Time?'* As our NYS budget process moves forward, we'll be asking everyone to **continue advocating for library funding** by calling, emailing and/or visiting their legislators... If your library has issues with a **Gates Grant** computer, check the 4CLS intranet for some "how-to" tips or contact the automation department at gatesgrant@4cls.org...

Four County has partnered with the **Phelps Mansion Museum**, in cooperation with other local library sponsors, to bring author **Gregory Maguire** to Union-Endicott High School on March 9th at 7 pm. He'll read from his new novel *A Lion Among Men*, answer questions and sign books... **Lisle** – Board member **Arden Jones** passed away recently... **Margaretville** – **Diana Cope** is the new director... **Norwich** – **Melanie Battoe** resigned as director, effective November 30. The library's board of trustees is conducting a search for her replacement... **NYS Education Department** – Commissioner **Richard Mills** announced that he will leave in June... **NYS Library** – The Board of Regents has appointed **Bernard Margolis** as the new state librarian. He most recently served as president of Boston Public Library, the country's oldest municipal public library.

March

- 6 Youth Services SRP Workshop, 10am-1pm, Greene
- 10 NYLA Library Day, Albany
- 16 Central Library Advisory Committee, tba
- 21 4CLS Board, 10am, Sidney
- 25 Tech Services Advisory Committee, 10am, Sherburne

April

- 20 Online Advisory Committee, tba

May

- 4 Youth Services meeting, 10am-1pm, Walton
- 10-12 ALA National Library Legislative Days, Washington, D.C.
- 15 Governing Council, 10am, Afton
- 18 Central Library Advisory Committee, tba
- 21 4CLS Board, 6:30pm, tba
- 25 Memorial Day, 4CLS closed

June

- 8 4CLS Annual Dinner, tba
- 24 4CLS Organizational Board, 6:30pm, tba

July

- 4 Independence Day, 4CLS closed
- 10-14 ALA Annual Conference, Chicago

August

- 21 Governing Council, 10am, Walton



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