

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Status of Advocacy Initiatives

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
Information only

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
Cathleen Bourdon, Communications and Member Relations AED
Marcy Merola, Director, Office for Library Advocacy

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DRAFT OF MOTION:
N/A

DATE: April 9, 2009

SUMMARY:

Participation in state library conferences and marketing to non-library groups; an update on the Library Ecosystem initiative; information about Ilovelibraries.org; a new partnership with the Safeway Corp.; and plans for the ALA Annual Conference are discussed. The library funding report is presented on behalf of PIO.

State Conferences

Marcy Merola participated in an Advocacy Institute at the Texas Library Assn. Annual Conference, March 20, 2009. Carol Brey-Casiano, Chair, Committee on Library Advocacy and Gloria Meraz, Lobbyist, Texas Library Association, co-presented. Guest speakers included Susan S. Mann, Director, City of Hillsboro (Texas) library and Jill Stimson, School Library Media Specialist, Austin Independent School District who discussed local library advocacy efforts.

Marcy Merola is scheduled to host an all-day Advocacy Institute at the Massachusetts Library Assn., May 5, 2009.

ALA Presence at American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Conference

The Office for Library Advocacy (OLA) exhibited at the AASA Conference in San Francisco, February 20 and 21, 2009. OLA worked with AASL to provide materials to

attendees, including information on Add It Up: Libraries Make the Difference; website; Ilovelibraries.org; and *Standards for the 21st Century Learner*. Although the Communications and Member Relations Department has made several forays into non-librarian conferences, this was the first directly related to schools.

The Library Ecosystem

Jim Rettig's Ad Hoc Advocacy Task Force is selecting a consultant to produce a web resource to live on Advocacy University focusing on Building Statewide Coalitions, which will emphasize the need for different facets of the library community to work together in order to be stronger advocates.

Ilovelibraries.org

A redesign of Ilovelibraries.org is scheduled for May of 2009. Benefits include an updated look as well as improved functionality. The website is currently generating 19,000 hits daily or almost 600,000 monthly.

ALA & Safeway Corp. Partnership

OLA is leading an in-kind ALA partnership with the Safeway Corporation to bring public awareness and advocacy messages about libraries to consumers through a new cereal box campaign.

Beginning this summer, packaging of Safeway's "family cereal line" will feature five different back panels about libraries. They will be distributed nationally to approximately 1,500 Safeway-owned stores around the country, which include Dominick's, Genuardi's and Safeway Stores.

The panels will focus around themes such as genealogy, lifelong learning, discover the world, get rich (promoting the value of the library), and great mysteries of the library. Special thanks to Nann Blaine Hilyard for bringing a previous Safeway and libraries collaboration to OLA's attention.

Plans for 2009 Annual Conference

OLA will offer a half-day program on ways for libraries to cope in a tough economy. "Surviving in a Tough Economy: an Advocacy Institute Workshop" will take place on Friday, July 10, 2009 from 2:00-5:00 p.m. at the Harold Washington Library.

On Saturday, July 11, 2009, from 4:00 to 5:30, Jim Rettig's Advocacy Task Force will conduct a panel discussion on the topic of building statewide Coalitions for All Libraries in a Tough Economy.

Library Funding

Blacksburg, Virginia – March 22, 2009 – The university library system at Virginia Tech, which already operates on a much smaller budget than most comparable universities, is considering over \$900,000 in cuts to its scholarly publication subscription budget. The proposed cuts have been submitted in the face of a \$30 million reduction in state funding to Tech. – From *The Roanoke Times*

St. Paul, Minnesota – March 10, 2009 - More than 100 people came to the Hamline Branch of the St. Paul Public Library to listen to Mayor Chris Coleman and library director Melanie Huggins talk about the city's budget woes and the proposed closure of the facility, as well as to voice their concerns to Coleman and Huggins over the potential loss of a vital community institution.

Coleman and Huggins said that while they didn't wish to close the library, tough decisions would have to be made in order to trim \$2.1 million from the library system's budget in the face of a projected \$44 million citywide budget shortfall. They suggested, however, that it could be possible to keep the building open for the rest of the year, with the goal of getting a community process going that would result in finding partners to enhance services at the building.

Aside from closing the Hamline branch, other proposed cuts include the elimination of 29 positions, reducing operating hours, and slashing the collection and materials budget. – From the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

Bayonne, New Jersey – March 10, 2009 – Two branches of the Free Public Library of Bayonne are to be closed, with the employees to be transferred to the main library. The budget cuts are part of a city-wide \$5.7 million in overall budget cuts. – From the *Hudson Reporter*

Dade City, Florida – March 11, 2009 – In the face of a staffing shortage caused by the layoff of 17 employees and a hiring freeze, the manager of Pasco County's library system won approval to cut operating hours to 40 hours a week. The cuts come at a time when demand for the library's services is increasing during the current recession. Like all other agencies in the county, the library system has been asked to cut 18 to 20 percent from its budget for next year, which could force even more hour cuts, or even closures. – From the *Tampa Tribune*

South Deerfield, Massachusetts – March 9, 2009 - As a result of a 14 percent cut in the budget of the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System instituted by Gov. Deval Patrick, the system may cut its bookmobile service. The bookmobile, a small truck, has served 60 libraries in 4 counties in Western Massachusetts since the 1940s and enables smaller libraries to expand their collections with DVDs and books about every 11 weeks. – From *abc40.com*

Brooklyn, New York – March 6, 2009 – Facing a \$14 million cut in the budget from the city, a \$1.4 million cut in state funding, and the added prospect of further reductions in operating hours, the Brooklyn Public Library launched a fundraising campaign. Compounding the library's problems are unfunded maintenance costs for its 65 aging buildings – 18 of which are over 100 years old – which are estimated at \$375 million. – From the *New York Daily News*

Westbrook, Maine – March 6, 2009 – Following a unanimous decision by its board, the Warren Memorial Library will cease operation no later than May 1st. The closure of the

facility is due to large losses of the library foundation's endowment, its main source of funding. The facility's collection will be distributed to other municipal institutions in the area. – From *wmtw.com*

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – February 13, 2009 – Outlining the city's final budget cuts during a recent meeting, Mayor Michael Nutter and Free Library of Philadelphia President and Director Siobhan Reardon stated that the library system would operate with a \$2.44 million cut in the budget and the loss of 67 positions. Last year, the system faced the closure of 11 branches, and the elimination of 111 positions, which included 25 full time librarians or librarians-in-training, which were halted by a judge's ruling. – From the *Philadelphia Inquirer*

Lebanon, Pennsylvania - January 5, 2009 - Facing a variety of budget impacts including increased costs, a deficit left over from last year, and a six percent cut in state funding, the Lebanon Community library will be reducing hours, cutting some programming, and eliminating two part-time positions. In addition, the library is also affected by lower returns from its endowment as well as increased health insurance costs. - From *PennLive.com*

Newark, New Jersey - January 2, 2009 - As the economy worsens in New Jersey, its libraries are feeling the pinch. Patricia Tumulty, Executive Director of the New Jersey Library Association, says as demand increases for library services, budgets are being slashed - bringing reductions in collection development, operating hours and facility closures. Shortfalls in Newark and elsewhere are causing libraries to make such cutbacks. - From *MyFoxNY.com*