

Report to the Wyoming Library Association Executive Board
Cheyenne, Wyoming
February 8, 2007
Legislative Committee

The 2007 Legislative Session and its consequence for the Wyoming Library Association and its member libraries have already been significant. The Library Endowment Bill SF0032 was introduced by sponsors John Schiffer and Mike Massie and heard before the Senate Appropriations Committee on January 20th. WLA Lobbyist Marian Schulz and Legislative Committee member Carey Hartmann were present for this discussion. The bill passed unanimously with several amendments. The initial one-year appropriation will be \$8.4 million dollars or 1/3 of the original request. The remaining portion of the total \$25.3 million (\$16.8 million) will be deferred until the 2008-2010 biennium budgets. As Lobbyist Schulz explained, "The specifics of how the \$8.4 million will be spent will be at the recommendation of the bill sponsors and the libraries. Members of the Appropriations Committee whole-heartedly support this legislation. The members believe the libraries would be unable to raise the full amount in a year's time, thus the "delayed" match funding. There is still a chance that full funding could be restored once other spending bills have made their way through the process. This is by no means a "cut", and is in fact a very smart political move by the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Philip Nicholas, to assure the full funding amount." The bill has since gone through second and third readings in the Senate and has gone to the House of Representatives and has been assigned to the House Appropriations Committee. It will go through the same process on the House side. Sponsors in the House are Rosie Berger, Roy Cohee and Colin Simpson.

WLA Lobbyist Marian Schulz, who was hired on November 15, 2006, has been called upon to take a vital role for WLA and the Endowment legislation and she has responded excellently. She has shown herself to be well informed, knowledgeable, and willing to work hard. She has been on top of the legislative process for us, attended hearings, kept the WLA membership informed of the bill's progress and emailed timely and concise updates. Communication is a strong asset for Marian. She has been accessible to answer questions each and every time I have needed answers. I believe the successes we have enjoyed with this legislation are due in part to her diligence on our behalf.

Legislative Committee members have also been closely involved as the bill has moved to and through the Legislature. Numerous phone

conference calls and emails have taken place. This committee has been awesome in its commitment and dedication to this effort.

It is the Legislative Committee's opinion that upon passage of the Library Endowment bill, it will be imperative to start planning immediately for foundation training and development for every county library foundation. WLA cannot stop with a successful legislative funding effort. We cannot leave library foundations to flounder under the burden (even though it is a welcome one) of transforming marginal foundations into ones that can manage large amounts of money well and who are ready to take on fundraising efforts. It cannot be stated too strongly that these foundations will be responsible and accountable to the Wyoming Legislature regarding the endowment matched funds. Success in effectively raising funds lies in every foundation member having a belief that they are capable of doing this and that they are prepared to do it.

We suggest a "summit" meeting of WLA Executive Board members (all or selected ones), Wyoming State Library personnel and Legislative Committee members be scheduled without delay upon passage of the bill. Our largest task lies ahead.

In other Legislative Committee news, Paul Heimer, Albany County Foundation Director, has been named co-chair in charge of federal issues and will attend National Library Legislative Day in Washington, DC on May 1 & 2, 2007.

Legislative Committee members have discussed the need for changing the language of the WLA bylaws as they apply to the Legislative Committee. If it is the Executive Boards' pleasure, I will appoint an ad hoc committee to create that language and have it ready for review in time for the 2007 library conference in Casper.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Twing
Legislative Committee Chair