

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT – October, 2011

Levy

The draft levy is within your packets. There will be a 7 p.m. special meeting preceding the regular board meeting this month for a public hearing in taxation hearing before adoption of the 2011-12 levy.

The levy defines the categories in which tax dollars are being allocated to. The recent legal notice simply does not allow us to provide the detail necessary or the reasons that adequately describe levy intentions. Homer Township Library operates in a fiscally conservative manner. We proactively pursue grants, sponsorships, special event fundraisers, and awards that benefit our community. The library board and administration are proactive in trying to maintain our tax rate so we can operate effectively. Over the long term, the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law ("tax cap") has reduced the library's tax rate from the .15 rate that was originally established in 1982. Due to the tax cap our rate has eroded down to .1268. This creates a significant loss of funds for library services and in providing for the operation of the library. The library levies a higher amount than we actually will receive in part to ensure we do not lose further ground. The levy notice cites a 32.9% increase this will certainly not be realized, as we anticipate an actual gain of approximately 2-3%, and that will be dependent on actual "new growth" monies. Last year the levy notice was essentially the same and we saw a 4% increase, again due to new growth monies. The levy request helps the library to:

1. Retain the maximum dollars that as a taxing district we are allowed by statute.
2. Insure that we capture both the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and New Growth monies. If there is new growth in the community and we are serving more people, our rate is adjusted so the library has proper funds to operate to serve residents adequately and meet State Standards. If there is limited or no new growth we see narrow or no gain.

So in effect the 11% increase on the corporate and special purpose levies was "ballooned" to capture any new property in addition to the CPI increase. This 1/3 of the levy increase was to capture tax revenue for new property and, to the extent that all the new property does not materialize, then it will not be extended and collected. The other 2/3rds of the increase is for a back-up levy put into place for a new bond issue. However, the District plans to pay the bond payments from operating revenues and does not anticipate using this back-up levy. Accordingly, the District will abate the bond levy before the County extends and collects the tax.

At one time the library accounted for approximately 3% of a homeowner's tax bill. We now account for approximately 1.8% of a person's tax bill. Our Library mission is to make available to all people (from birth through senior citizenship) the materials and resources they need to participate in lifelong learning, enjoy a good quality of life, and to remain civically engaged. As a community center we take great pride in serving our community with excellence. Usage has increased 14% in the past two years and we have between 500-600 visitors daily. Long range budget planning continues to allow us to serve our Homer Glen and Homer Township communities well.

Sunday Statistics

The newest statistics for usage show that Sunday library hours (4 hours from 4-8pm) grow increasingly popular in our community. September/October usage on Sundays is approximately 112 visitors per hour (or 449 visitors each Sunday). Over the past 2 years we have seen a 30% increase in Sunday usage. Last year we circulated approximately 80 items each hour or 322 items each Sunday. Statistics are being compiled for this year's circulation use. Capitalizing on strong Sunday usage, we offer Sunday programming, such as the Reptile Club and Family Movie Night. We may add other music and family entertainment events this winter and spring.

Senior Harvest

90 seniors participated in the library and Goodings Grove Lions Club joint Fall Harvest program. Seniors enjoyed hot dog lunch and received a bag of fruits and vegetables through the generosity of the Goodings Grove Lions Club, Homer Vision Center, First Midwest Bank, Walmart, Dominick's and Berkot's. We thank our sponsors for their generosity and support of this annual event.

ILA

The annual Illinois Library Association conference is always educational. Various managers attended and each appreciated the opportunity to learn the latest in library trends and issues, network, attend meetings, bring back new ideas, and see the newest in materials and items from vendors. AS Director Alex Annen and Heather Colby undertook presentation duties, too. Highlights this year included programs discussing change and seeing the latest equipment on the vendor floor. The high spot of course was seeing the IL community honor our YS Director Kathryn Mitchell for her excellence in youth services. Kitty was recognized at both the Award Luncheon and at the YS Forum event.

Programs + Events

October and fall library events and programs include:

- ◆ October Illinois Arts Month
- ◆ October 22 Halloween Costume Swap
- ◆ October 26 Job Club begins (a series of job search strategy programs)
- ◆ October 27 Star Wars Specialty Program
- ◆ October – Nov. College Prep/ACT Tests Prep/Strategies program series
- ◆ October-Dec. Chess and Checkers Club on select Wednesdays
- ◆ October – Dec. Friendship Club on select dates
- ◆ November Food for Fines Month
- ◆ November – Dec. Armchair Travelers Program Series
- ◆ November 12 National Game Day
- ◆ November 17 Family Reading Night
- ◆ December 17 Visit with Santa

Outreach to Schools

Homer Library provides quality school support. Approximately 30 students from 15 classes have begun to visit the Homer Library and get a “behind the scenes” tour and book-talk program in October and November. They finish each classroom visit by having the teacher spin our “Wheel of Fortune” to receive a special classroom gift from the library.

Our Web page features a homework/assignment link to submit a library alert form. Teachers use this as a means of sending our staff messages, questions, or comments. A Teacher’s Flier is sent annually to all schools and details how we can assist them. YS Director Mitchell and staff will be visiting Goodings Grove and Reed School in November as guest readers for each school’s Family Reading Night. Goodings Grove School has requested visits from the Bookmobile on Nov. 16 and 17th. Efforts like these help meet outreach goals.

Teen Open House

On Tuesday October 18th from 6-8:30 pm we showcased our Teen Area with food, fun, and fellowship. We thank our generous sponsors: Chesdan’s, The Creamery, Pepe’s, and Charter Fitness for their support of this program. Teens had a wonderful evening with the following popular elements:

- * Spin the Crazy Wheel
- * Food Fear Factor
- * X-box Dance
- * Pizza, snacks, prizes and raffles!

Reptile Club

A very popular program showcases reptiles via a fun and educational program series. YS Staff member Dianna Hollingsworth has created an interactive club for elementary youth. This program is being featured on Sundays and has many eager participants.

Building and Grounds

- ✓ The Fire Department's annual inspection of the building and the bookmobile garage is finished. We are in compliance and meet all requirements.

In General

1. The Library Calendar that lists all of our programs is accessible from the Web page.
2. Both fall school visits and registration have begun to promote the library's collections, services and support of teachers and students.
3. The Library Web page highlights a "quick click" homework/assignment alert form on the site at www.homerlibrary.org. Teachers use this as a means of sending our staff messages, questions, or comments.
4. The annual audit has been completed.
5. Distribution of monthly calendars to local schools is ongoing via a parent information log-in portal.
6. We have scheduled a full slate of quality fall programming.
7. November 1st begins "Food for Fines" month. Patrons are encouraged to return overdue items and give canned goods in lieu of fines.

Conclusion

We continue work with the consultant and architect. Plans are in the development stage and the architects have contacted the Village. Upcoming priorities include continued grant writing and space planning. Proactive publicity has begun and will continue. Community information session will be planned. This is an exciting time as we realize the vision of all of our hard work and budget planning to be able to expand and update our facility to better meet the growing need of the Homer community.

These reports are intended to give you a good overview and pertinent information on local and regional issues. If there is any issue that you would like information about or if you need anything detailed more fully, please let me know.

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Library Director

10/21/11