

Library Legislative Day Held in Topeka

by Marc Galbraith, Donna Lauffer and Jim Minges

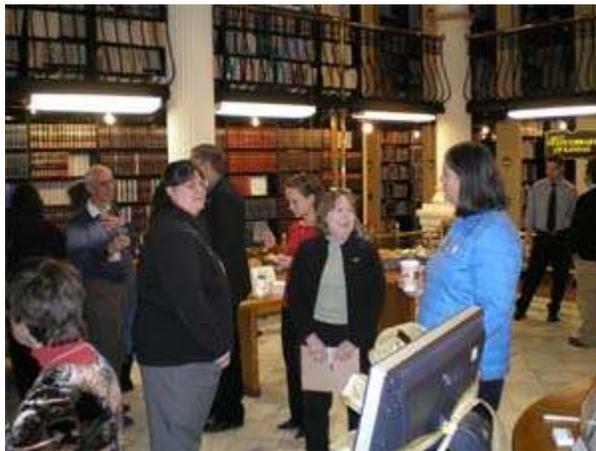
Although severe weather prevented some librarians from attending, the 2008 KLA Legislative Day was a lively event. Over 100 librarians, trustees and library advocates came to Topeka to meet with their legislators on Thursday, February 21.

The participants had a light breakfast provided by the Bibliographic Center for Research (BCR), chatted with State Library staff members and



Christie Brandau Cuts Ribbon on New State Library Website

began meeting with their legislators.



Carol Barta Chats with State Library Staff

Christie Brandau cut the ribbon on the new State Library Website. Joshua Motsinger of K.U. Medical Center received a Shining Star Award for his work with the new website. Many people commented on the virtual tour of the State Library, photographed by Josh Motsinger and

narrated by Rhonda Machlan.

There was a briefing on the legislative issues at 9:00 led by Donna Lauffer, Director of the Johnson County Library, and another at 10:30, led by Jim Minges, Director of the Northeast Kansas Library System. Michael Byington, a well-known advocate for the visually impaired, spoke eloquently at both briefings.



Josh Motsinger is Awarded a Shining Star for his Work on the State Library Website



Donna Lauffer Briefs Participants at Legislative Day

At noon, librarians lunched with their legislators or returned to the State Library to lunch with their colleagues. A Shining Star Award was awarded to Governor Kathleen Sebelius for her support of Kansas Reads to Preschoolers. It was accepted by Vicki Buening, Director of Constituent Services in the Governor's Office.

The Kansas Library Association had prepared well for Legislative Day 2008. They presented maps, answers to frequent questions, information on the Kansas legislators and information on

the 2008 legislative issues.

The 2008 Legislative Priorities are:

- Funding to establish a statewide delivery system for library materials. Amount Requested: \$250,000. This delivery system would extend connections to transport books from one library to another and to at least 120 libraries throughout Kansas. This system would cost approximately \$500,000 per year. We are requesting a state investment of \$250,000 with the remaining amount coming from the participating libraries, Kansas Regional Library Systems, and other sources.
- Funding for database of standardized tests, a statewide database to assist Kansans in career and education test preparation. Amount Requested: \$200,000. This database would make career and educational tests available at one aggregated online site to every resident in the state. Tests include GED, ACT, GRE, Paramedic, Nursing, Real Estate, U.S. Citizenship, and many others. This service would be available from a library, home, or office, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Statewide Youth Services Consultant for libraries. Amount Requested: \$60,864. There is no one person on the state level dedicated to children's library services. The requested Youth Services Consultant would be an employee of the State Library of Kansas and would work with libraries to enhance children's library services in every part of the state. Many Kansas libraries focus on children as an important constituency and would benefit from this consultant service.
- Digitizing newspaper files. Amount Requested: \$70,000. The State Library of Kansas has collected newspaper articles on Kansas legislative subjects for decades. As a result, the State Library has approximately 500,000 newspaper articles in paper format, arranged by topic and year. This funding would begin putting these Kansas-centered articles into an Internet-accessible, searchable, archival collection, making it more accessible. This is a valuable file used by many people.
- Talking Book Service. Amount Requested: \$76,500. In an effort to improve, restore, and ensure ongoing maintenance of outreach efforts and excellence in service, the State Library of Kansas requests an ongoing enhancement of \$76,500. This funding would allow for further development put in place this year for the most effective impact.
- Broadband Internet access for all public libraries is needed. Today, less than 20% of Kansas public libraries have sufficient T1 Internet access to support online information resources. This is a basic access issue that needs support.

Several days after Legislative Day, the KLA Office sent the following update:

On Thursday, February 21, the House Education Budget Committee met to vote on the budget and enhancement package requests made by the State Library of Kansas. Three of the five requests that KLA supported this year were advanced - thanks to your efforts and conversations

with legislators.

Funding for the Statewide Courier System, the Talking Books promotions, and the statewide Youth Services Consultant for libraries were all recommended to the House Appropriations Committee as items that should be looked at during Omnibus. This means all of these requests are still very much alive.

Earlier in the session the Senate Ways and Means Subcommittee recommended that the Statewide Courier System and the Talking Books promotions be advanced to Omnibus, also keeping these requests alive.

The full House Appropriations Committee will hear these items on March 13.