2007 Legislative Wrap-up

by Marc Galbraith, Deputy State Librarian

The merger of the Kansas Library Advisory Commission and the Library Network Board was approved overwhelmingly by both the House and the Senate and was signed into law by the Governor. The approved bill becomes law July 1, 2007.

Funding, in the form of an enhancement to the State Library of Kansas budget, was also approved to promote the Kansas Talking Book program. While many eligible Kansans use the wonderful services of the Talking Book program, a great many more Kansas residents could benefit from the service. The approved funding is earmarked to cover the expense of marketing the benefits of the Talking Book service to all Kansans.

The 2007 legislature also approved funding to hire a Coordinator for the Kansas State Data Center (SDC). The SDC is a partnership organization between the state of Kansas and the U. S. Bureau of Census. The State Library is the lead agency in the partnership. The most immediate function of the new Coordinator position will be to organize the state for a complete count in the upcoming 2010 Census.

Funding for a proposed statewide library delivery system was not approved. Neither was funding approved to provide for statewide library information resources for students. While these initiatives were not authorized, there was considerable discussion and consideration about each–even into the waning hours of the omnibus session. Hopefully, this conversation laid the groundwork for further consideration of these important issues during the 2008 legislative session.

Finally, the State Library's budget was approved at the current year funding level, including funding for grants-in-aid to local libraries.