

SLTA BRIEF TO THE HONOURABLE ANDREW THOMSON
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR LIBRARIES
November 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association (SLTA) annually presents a brief to the Minister responsible for Libraries to raise awareness of the issues and to urge the Minister to take specific actions in support of libraries. The SLTA is the voice of the more than 2800 library trustees.

Saskatchewan's "one-province" library system is a network of municipal, regional and northern libraries, working together with the assistance of the Provincial Library, to share resources and to improve the quality of life in all Saskatchewan communities, wherever they may be.

Public libraries face many challenges, including the development, maintenance and enhancement of e-libraries, addressing the digital divide, improving the scope of CommunityNet, providing for the recruitment, retention and retraining of library employees and for pay equity, ensuring the continuation of the library book rate, and addressing emerging issues of governance. These are all outlined in this brief. However, the key issues for libraries now are:

Provincial funding for libraries - The province-wide library network, comprising both traditional and e-library services, built on co-operation and co-ordinated effort, is a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. This province-wide network contributes significantly to the quality and viability of life in all Saskatchewan communities, especially in rural and remote areas. Provincial funding for the library network supports the province as a whole and not just the individual communities of which it is composed.

Funding for capital expenditures - Several system headquarters, as well as the main branches in the municipal libraries of Regina and Saskatoon, are in a crisis caused by aging or structurally unsound buildings. In order to protect and maintain library collections to preserve this inheritance for future generations, these inadequate physical structures must be repaired or replaced. Capital funding for computers, which become obsolete and unrepairable much more quickly than buildings, adds a substantial burden to the capital funding needs of all libraries.

Provision of library services to Aboriginal peoples - The SLTA strongly supports the recommendations of the Minister's Advisory Committee to examine the issue of access to library services by Aboriginal peoples in the province. All too often and for a variety of reasons, library services do not reach Aboriginal peoples. We will continue to work co-operatively to implement the committee's recommendations to establish a firm foundation from which libraries may reach a large and growing proportion of Saskatchewan's population.

The SLTA appreciates the past support of the Minister responsible for Libraries and welcomes continuing

support in the future.

INTRODUCTION

For more than 35 years (since 1968) the Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association has been presenting a brief annually to the Minister responsible for Libraries. The SLTA is a voluntary association of library trustees from across the province who have joined together in their dedication to help provide library services that will meet the needs of Saskatchewan people and thereby improve their quality of life. SLTA was established in 1967 and was incorporated under provincial law in 1969. A brief chronological account of public library development in Saskatchewan is attached as Appendix A.

In the past, the SLTA brief has served the dual function of updating the Minister responsible with respect to the current issues facing libraries and of providing an historical background and context for the Minister, which has been necessary because of the frequent changes in ministerial responsibility for libraries that the Government of Saskatchewan has chosen to make. The SLTA is pleased that in 2004 it is able to present its annual brief to a Minister who has met with the SLTA before. The following brief introductory comments are intended, therefore, more as an overview and reminder to a Minister who the SLTA knows is aware of the SLTA and its role as well as of Saskatchewan's excellent library system.

There are more than 2,800 library trustees in Saskatchewan, representing libraries throughout the province, in northern hamlets and rural communities, as well as in towns and cities. All persons in Saskatchewan may access the information in these libraries, in whatever media they are provided, without a user fee. Resource-sharing and co-operation are the fundamental strengths of what is called Saskatchewan's "one province" library system – a system that is the envy of the country.

Municipal public libraries exist in Regina and Saskatoon. The seven regional library systems in southern Saskatchewan are Chinook, Lakeland, Palliser, Parkland, Southeast, Wapiti and Wheatland. The northern part of the province is served by the Paskisimon Nuyeháh Library.

To date, funding for libraries has been provided largely by the municipalities they serve. The advent of the information age and the crucial role libraries play in a democratic society emphasize the need for funding for libraries from senior governments as a means to ensure viable communities.

PROVINCIAL LIBRARY

The Provincial Library is a vital component in the one-province library system. The SLTA recognizes the province's support of the Provincial Library as an additional investment in Saskatchewan Libraries that provides key expertise, advice, support and co-ordination of many of the co-operative initiatives in which libraries are involved.

The SLTA recognizes, in particular, the contribution of the Provincial Library to the success of the Multitype Library Board, which has assisted all Saskatchewan libraries, not just public libraries, to share

resources and expertise. The Multitype Library Board is gaining recognition from the library community outside Saskatchewan for its important work, to the point of being recognized as a model for others in Dr. Ken Haycock's 2003 Report on *The Crisis in Canada's School Libraries, the Case for Reform and Reinvestment*.

Provincial Library provides a valuable link in the chain of public libraries in Saskatchewan along with a number of highly effective services. The cataloguing and interlibrary loans departments are key to the operation of the public library system, especially at the regional level. Provincial Library's co-ordination of co-operative ventures to share the cost of on-line information sources, providing the public with a single access to all library services through an information gateway and co-ordination of the co-operative remote electronic reference services are examples of the contributions made to public libraries in Saskatchewan by Provincial Library.

While these large projects and many smaller ones have been made financially possible with funding from federal, provincial and local governments and library boards, the hard work of Provincial Library staff was needed to provide leadership, co-ordinate effort, and lever federal and other funding. Because of the critical role that Provincial Library plays in Saskatchewan's one-province public library system, it is important to appreciate that any improvements or enhancements in funding to the library systems cannot occur at the expense of Provincial Library.

CHALLENGES FOR LIBRARIES

While a great deal of extremely good work has been done by all involved in the library community, of course it must continue; not only to provide continuing support for necessary programs and services, but also to meet the new challenges that arise. Libraries face many important issues of an on-going nature, including e-libraries, the digital divide, CommunityNet, capital funding, recruitment, retention and retraining, pay equity, provincial funding, Aboriginal peoples, and the library book rate. In the last year there has also emerged the critical issue of governance. Each of these is addressed below in the context of the strategic plan goals developed by the Department of Learning.

GOAL 1: Learners Succeed

Provincial Funding for Libraries

While public libraries are not by definition directly involved in optimizing children's readiness to learn "in school", they provide a valuable support to the development of readiness to learn through programs such as pre-school story hours and other programs developed specifically for young children.

A significant number of library users are persons in schools at all grade levels and the resources of the public library are an important supplementary support for the K-12 curriculum. In addition, home schoolers are a growing segment of education providers, and the public library is indispensable to supporting their programs of study. Public libraries are also an essential support to distance education. The technological

networks that public libraries have developed through initiatives such as community CAP sites and CommunityNet provide a critical support for community development everywhere in the province.

It is for all these reasons that funding for public libraries is an appropriate investment by the province. The province-wide library network, comprising both traditional and e-library services, built on co-operation and co-ordinated effort, is a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. It is this province-wide network that contributes significantly to the quality and viability of life in all Saskatchewan communities, especially in rural and remote areas. Provincial funding for the library network, in all its facets, supports the province as a whole and not just the individual communities of which it is composed.

Libraries have a long history of doing more with less. We have previously reported in our brief to the Minister that library systems have eliminated positions over the last several years, have reduced open hours in branches and have less funds available for acquiring books and other library materials. Libraries have had to absorb the increased costs in books and other materials, increased wages, increases in minimum wages, and the application of the municipal employees pension legislation to an increased number of library workers. All of these increases have been provided almost entirely from increases in local municipal grants. While municipal grants have risen by as much as 50% to 60% over the past decade, provincial funding, prior to 2003-2004 has increased in some cases by small amounts and in other cases has even declined. The 2003-2004 increases, while welcome, are targeted to particular, albeit worthwhile, objectives, and not in support of the general increases of all kinds in the expenses that libraries face.

Provincial funding for libraries is a small investment in dollars that yields phenomenal returns, both financially and in the quality of life that people enjoy in Saskatchewan. As well as filling the role of community centre, libraries are a key support to people in an ever more complex world. The funding pool for libraries must be increased to a level sufficient to restore the funding levels of these systems, while at the same time respecting the allocation of resources among the systems as recognized in the new grant structure. While we are grateful for past provincial support for libraries, we must continue to press for additional increases to enable public libraries to continue to be the lifeblood of their communities.

GOAL 2: Seamless Continuum

E-Library

E-library services are the library resources and services that are provided electronically to patrons, more and more frequently over the Internet. Resources provided in this manner include: access to library catalogues, magazine databases, web resources, and library materials in digital form such as e-books. Services that can be provided electronically include: e-mail, on-line reference, interlibrary loan requests, and circulation services that will include remote patron authentication. **The critical elements of the provision of e-library services are hardware, software, telecommunications, technological support and staff training.**

The e-Library is a tangible reality in Saskatchewan. Libraries were among the very first institutions to recognize and take advantage of the benefits of what in the 1970s and 1980s was called “automation”. Automation started humbly with the simple conversion of library card-catalogues into electronic databases. Once that step was accomplished, many more amazing things became possible that simply could not be done without the computer. In the last decade, the explosion of the Internet has increased those amazing possibilities geometrically. This is particularly true in rural and remote libraries, which are now able to access reliable information electronically.

The Gateway, just launched in 2001, allows anyone in Saskatchewan to find any library resource anywhere in the province in a matter of moments, with one electronic search. Province-wide database licences provide access to almost 6,500 full-text on-line magazines and journals, which access would otherwise be unaffordable by any one library system. Usage of these databases increased by 46% in 2003 and the Multi-type Library Board’s partnership with the Health Quality Council to provide access to health information for the public and health care practitioners will no doubt result in larger increases in 2004 – and more library users.

Officially launched in 2002, CommunityNet, linking communities all over Saskatchewan via the Internet, is providing an effective mechanism by which those in smaller communities can receive e-library services directly. The greatly increased line speeds enhances the library’s capacity as information provider and realizes savings at the local level – an important benefit for rural and remote communities that are struggling with declining tax bases and increasing costs.

Public libraries are a critical institution in a democratic society, and their role is even more significant in the information age. This is especially true in a province like Saskatchewan, where climate and geography have always been the most important forces shaping our provincial character and also the most difficult barriers that we must struggle around in all our endeavours. E-library services are an effective means by which to overcome those barriers in the provision of library services, and to keep Saskatchewan as an integral and knowledgeable participant in the world economy.

Unfortunately, however, the costs of e-library service continue to rise. While the actual cost of hardware has plummeted over the three decades since libraries in Saskatchewan first embarked on the automation adventure, the growth in the technology that has accompanied that drop in cost means that computer hardware and software is a capital investment that must be made over and over again. The life of a computer system now is realistically only three years – and that is an optimistic expectation. And changing technology brings with it a continuing need for staff training and technological support.

At the same time, libraries have been cutting costs through the savings realized from automation and centralized e-library initiatives such as the Gateway and virtual reference services, and implementing efficiencies at every level of their operations. Public libraries are lean institutions; municipal governments just don’t have the depth or range of financial resources to draw on to significantly increase their support of e-library services.

In addition, as senior governments move more and more of their services such as employment insurance applications on-line, libraries feel a direct impact. More publicly accessible internet terminals are required in all public libraries with printers to enable documents completed on-line to be printed out. When more people must access on-line programs for longer times, more library computer terminals are required. In addition, library staff are the front line resource for the technical questions relating to the use of the computer and the Internet and also, increasingly, with respect to the government programs themselves. While on the one hand this allows government to offer services directly to the public, on the other hand it effectively places responsibility for delivery of those services on libraries, and libraries require a corresponding increase in resources to meet this new demand.

All of these factors lead to the conclusion that the provincial contribution to library resource sharing – the principled basis on which the province has provided funding to libraries in municipalities – must now take into account the key resource that libraries share, and that is the province wide electronic network.

The various systems in the province-wide public library network have estimated their investment in e-library services using the following factors:

hardware - the number of computers to be replaced each year based on a three-year lifespan and an adequate number of computers for the population served

network infrastructure - replacement cost over four years of web server, mail server, internal file server, firewall, uninterrupted power supply, domain name server, routers and hubs, CD tower, etc.

library software - new library specific software and maintenance agreements

electronic information - access to periodical and other information databases. Creation of library digital resources, such as databases for local community information, digitized local histories

e-library services - Gateway to all library catalogues, interlibrary loans through the Gateway, remote patron authentication, electronic reference service (Ask Us!), universal library card, circulation services, etc.

staffing costs - trainer resource requirements, technical support resource requirements, travel costs, headquarters staff training, public education and training

telecommunications costs - with CommunityNet: headquarters, main branch/resource libraries and approximately one-half of the branch libraries will be free, costs remain the same for the remaining 160 dial-up locations.

Using these factors, the public library systems estimated in 2002 that they would need to spend almost \$5 million in support of e-library and e-library services. If anything, this cost has increased in the intervening two years.

Libraries understand that their funding is a co-operative effort and responsibility. Increased costs are met from internal efficiencies and savings, municipal grants and levies, and provincial and federal governments.

In 2002 libraries requested an additional provincial government commitment of at least \$1 million in anticipation of future costs to enable all libraries in Saskatchewan to continue to share this most significant of resources, the province wide network. While the Government of Saskatchewan provided an additional \$250,000 in 2003 to libraries to improve library services for Aboriginal peoples together with a 3% general increase in 2003-2004 and 1% in 2004-2005, this increased funding does not address the e-library funding gap. We hope and trust that the Government of Saskatchewan will continue in its recognition of the importance of public libraries to the life of the provincial community and to deliver on its commitment to libraries through additional funding to meet the challenge of sustaining e-library services, especially in the services they provide to rural and remote communities.

Universal Library Card

Although Saskatchewan's one-province library system is an amazing accomplishment, this is not widely known by the Saskatchewan public who use the library resources of the whole province. Through reciprocal borrowing arrangements and inter-library loan protocols, any resident of Saskatchewan has access to the entire public library system, province-wide. Libraries, working together, wish to develop a universal library card. In its basic form, the concept is that each resident of the province would have one Saskatchewan Libraries card that would entitle him or her to service in any library anywhere in Saskatchewan.

The identified benefits of such a card include increased patronage of libraries, removal of the need for patrons to maintain multiple cards, reduction in the number, and hence the cost and administration, of interlibrary loans, better collection of statistics on library use, and development of easier cross-sectoral usage.

However, there are also identified barriers to implementation of a universal library card. These include the cost associated with the requirement for hardware and software upgrades and customization, the increased number of books returned to libraries other than the one from which they were borrowed, the requirement to develop new processes to support the use of the card, the need to develop policies associated with borrowing status and eligibility, and the need to address privacy issues and develop policies associated with exchange of user data.

These disadvantages are all cost items. An investment by the province in the development and implementation of the universal library card will enable Saskatchewan libraries to realize the significant advantages of such a card while off-setting the costs that libraries are unable to afford locally. Again, this

is a provincial investment in a province-wide network of sharing scarce resources. It is also an important investment in the maintenance of the one-province library system.

GOAL 3: Inclusiveness

The Role of Libraries in addressing the Digital Divide

The Province's special Digital Divide initiative was a pilot project that ran from October 2001 to March 2002 and assisted libraries to provide Internet training to communities. Its primary objective was to narrow the gap between the information rich and the information poor. The pilot project was a huge success and very popular, largely, in our view, because it addressed very specifically the inequities of the information gap. The initiative was targeted to low income and Aboriginal people.

Libraries have not been able to carry on this important work in the absence of new funding for e-library services. A critical piece of the project as it was originally conceived was the translation into Cree and Dene of "Tools for Today", a CD providing self-guided access to basic Internet use (a copy of which is enclosed with this brief). Sadly, phase two of the project has never been funded and this important part of it remains unfinished.

CommunityNet

The SLTA supports the efforts of the province's Information Technology Office in the development of CommunityNet and is proud of the participation of libraries in this important provincial initiative. Again, we applaud the Government of Saskatchewan for its efforts in making CommunityNet a reality. While CommunityNet will assist and enhance the provision of e-library services, the savings it generates do not generally accrue to the library systems; those savings are realized at the local level, as local communities previously supported the internet access costs of their local branch libraries. It should also be noted that high speed lines for 162 rural branch libraries would otherwise be totally unaffordable.

However, the 162 branch libraries that are included in CommunityNet represent only half of Saskatchewan's branch libraries. While about 35 other branch libraries will be included in CommunityNet through the participation of schools and still others are not eligible to be included because they are not on SaskTel's infrastructure, there are still about 35 libraries that are not connected because the infrastructure funding was not sufficient to enable their participation. The approximately 60 libraries in communities where there is no SaskTel infrastructure require satellite access or some other wireless solution.

The performance and efficiency of e-library services are much improved if libraries can connect to each other within CommunityNet. The members of the SLTA, at their 2004 AGM, passed a unanimous resolution to urge government to provide funding to the remaining branch libraries into CommunityNet. A copy of the resolution that was adopted is attached as Appendix B. Government support is clearly needed, but the exact source and form of that support is not so clear.

And while CommunityNet is a great success, it is already evident that its capacity must be upgraded. For example, PNLIS has an urgent need for a videoconferencing capability for on-line meetings in the north.

Finally, CommunityNet does not recognize the partnerships that libraries have built in their communities with municipal councils, art galleries, museums, and others, because these groups are not covered by the CommunityNet project. These partnerships are important aspects of building communities and would greatly enrich the CommunityNet concept. Libraries should not be forced to abandon these important relationships in order to participate in CommunityNet.

Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services to Aboriginal Peoples

As we reported to the Minister in 2002, the SLTA strongly supported the Minister's initiative in appointing an Advisory Committee to examine the issue of access to library services by Aboriginal peoples in the province. We know that all too often and for a variety of reasons, library services do not reach Aboriginal peoples, particularly where they reside in First Nations communities. We will continue to work co-operatively to implement the committee's recommendations to establish a firm foundation from which libraries may reach a large and growing proportion of Saskatchewan's population.

We also appreciate that it is in the provincial interest that access to library services by Aboriginal peoples be strengthened and extended. We are extremely grateful to the Government of Saskatchewan for the provision of \$250,000 in the last and current fiscal years to public libraries to assist us in supporting these worthwhile goals and look forward to continuing support in the coming fiscal years. Libraries acknowledge that they need to do much more to reach out to the Aboriginal community in offering their services by making them accessible and relevant. For example, library systems have used the additional moneys to improve and enhance their Aboriginal materials and to improve awareness of the work of Aboriginal authors, playwrights, poets and educators.

Library Book Rate

While this issue is not one controlled by the province, libraries require the support of the province in dealing with the federal government on it. As the Minister is aware, the Library Book Rate has been in place since 1939 and is in effect a subsidy from the Government of Canada, through the Department of Canadian Heritage, to Canada Post to allow it to provide a lower rate for the delivery of books by libraries to rural and remote areas via the mail.

The elimination of the Library Book Rate would make it **impossible** for public libraries to deliver books by mail and would thereby seriously undermine resource sharing, which is recognized by clause 3(1)(c) of *The Public Libraries Act, 1996* as one of the fundamental components of the public library system in Saskatchewan. We are grateful for the support of the province on behalf of all libraries to extend the Library Book Rate.

GOAL 4: Social and Economic Development

Capital Funding to Continue and Expand Service

While the provision of e-library services is certainly an important funding requirement for libraries in the 21st century, there is also an urgent need to preserve existing materials and information so that it remains in a useful state for sharing. Several public libraries and system headquarters are in a crisis caused by aging or structurally unsound buildings. In order to protect and maintain library collections to preserve this inheritance for future generations in Saskatchewan, these inadequate physical structures must be repaired or replaced. This will be an on-going need. It is a need that is expanding as libraries have automated to get connected. Computers become obsolete and unrepairable much more quickly than buildings, and this adds a substantial burden to the capital funding needs of all libraries.

SLTA acknowledges the existence of various infrastructure programs that have been designed to address these types of funding needs. However, as designed, these programs have been a problem for regional library headquarters, because these funds cannot appropriately be applied for from a single municipality. On the other hand, the kind of regional co-operation that municipalities display in the provision of library services should be encouraged and supported through the design of infrastructure programs that can provide funds accessible for these joint municipal purposes. The SLTA urges the Government to provide this type of incentive in its infrastructure programs and requests the Minister's support in Cabinet in this regard. Capital under-funding is not just a concern in the regional systems. The municipal libraries in Regina and Saskatoon face the same problems with their main or headquarters branches. Capital funding must be provided to libraries in the same way that is provided to other institutions in the learning sector.

As the former Minister advised in a previous meeting with the SLTA, Saskatchewan Libraries are working together with Provincial Library officials to develop a province wide capital plan to identify and prioritize these more traditional infrastructure needs. Once this inventory is completed, the SLTA looks forward to working with the Department of Learning to find a means by which to address these needs in accordance with the priorities of the library community.

Recruitment, Retention, Training and Re-Training

Libraries, as others, are facing a large potential loss of staff over the next several years. It is already difficult to recruit and retain persons to work in Saskatchewan, especially in rural and remote areas. This difficulty is likely to increase. In addition, salaries in the library sector are low and this is an added difficulty in competing for scarce human resources.

However, Saskatchewan does have available an important, largely untapped, human resource in its Aboriginal population, where the median age is only 17. The SLTA will continue to work with other libraries in Saskatchewan to develop new ways of attracting and keeping library workers, including in particular Aboriginal workers, keeping in mind that because there is no library school in the province professional staff have to be attracted back after they have left.

These staffing issues also carry with them an increasing need to train and, as people move and technology is altered, to re-train. Again, the SLTA appreciates that training is a concern that faces all libraries and we wish to support the co-operative efforts that are on-going in this regard across the province and between and among various types of libraries. We applaud initiatives such as the establishment of a bursary for a student in library studies who comes back to work in Saskatchewan. We commend the Multitype Library Board, the Saskatchewan Library Association, and the Provincial Library, as well as the Government of Saskatchewan for providing funding for this important effort.

Pay Equity

A resolution supportive of pay equity for library workers was passed at the 2003 Annual General Meeting of the SLTA and was included with our 2003 brief to the minister (it is attached as Appendix C to this brief for convenience of reference). Trustees recognize and applaud the significant contribution made to the growth and development of public library service in Saskatchewan by library workers. Trustees are aware that library workers are paid significantly less than the wages paid to workers performing other similar jobs.

As the resolution itself sets out, the province-wide network of library resource-sharing requires a greater investment from the province and from municipalities, and this is particularly necessary in relation to the improvement of wages and benefits for library workers. The SLTA is aware that unionized library workers in the province are pressing for the extension of the Government's pay equity framework to the library sector, as it was previously extended to the health care sector. The cost of pay equity is one that cannot be borne by the property tax base and the SLTA urges the Government of Saskatchewan to consider this point in making decisions in this regard.

Governance

The controversy in Regina in 2003-2004 that arose as a result of the community's response to the Regina Public Library (RPL) Board's decision to close a number of branch libraries as well as some services unique to RPL highlights the need to review three key and interrelated issues: board structure, relationship to municipalities and the property tax base. While there are many matters of detail involved in this particular controversy about which reasonable people may reasonably disagree, there remains one particular point that seems to have near universal acceptance: the need for genuine consultation by libraries with their communities about what constitutes the appropriate level or nature of library services to be provided.

Citizens expect library boards to act autonomously in support of the library and independently from the municipalities that now appoint the persons who serve on those boards. The municipality's understandable concern to control increases in property taxes regardless of the purpose for which the funds may be required nevertheless undercuts the library board's ability to advocate for the library.

The SLTA is of the view that the time is right for a comprehensive review of governance and funding for public libraries in Saskatchewan and recommends that the Minister establish such a process to address

these critical concerns in the interests of ensuring that Saskatchewan continues to have a library system that is the envy of the country.

CONCLUSION

Progress for libraries has been possible because of the vision, support and encouragement of the Provincial Library, the Minister and the Department. The Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association requests the Minister's continuing and renewed support in including funds in future annual budgets to support:

- 1) Success of learners through the development, maintenance and enhancement of the library system through increases to the library funding pool
- 2) A seamless continuum of informal learning opportunities through
 - province wide sharing of the provincial network that makes e-library and e-library services possible
 - the development and introduction of a universal library card
- 3) An inclusive system providing opportunities to Aboriginal peoples through
 - implementation of the recommendations of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services to Aboriginal Peoples
 - the public library's presence in CommunityNet
- 4) Social and economic development through the provision of
 - capital funding for library buildings
 - recruitment, retention, training and re-training of library workers
 - a review of library governance and structure

The Library Trustees of Saskatchewan are committed to maintaining and enhancing the one-province library system of which Saskatchewan is so justifiably proud, and look forward to the Minister's support of a venture that is truly the backbone of the Saskatchewan community.

Appendix A

History of Public Library Development in Saskatchewan

Historical Development

Saskatchewan, over the years, has developed a province-wide system of public libraries for the benefit of all its citizens. Today the provincial public library system consists of seven regions, two municipal libraries in Saskatoon and Regina, a northern system and the Saskatchewan Provincial Library.

Following is a chronology of developments.

Chronology of Library Development

- 1900 Mechanics and Literary Institute Ordinance Territorial (Legislative) Library established.
- 1906 *The Public Libraries Act.*
- 1909 Regina Public Library established.
- 1912 At the request of the Women Grain Growers, the Open Shelf Service was initiated to provide books of literary and educational value and was the responsibility of the Legislative Library.
- 1913 Saskatoon Public Library established.
- 1914 A system of travelling libraries was developed in Saskatchewan. These travelling libraries consisted of large wooden boxes of 60 to 80 books that were loaned to a group or a community for a period of one year. In the beginning, books from the Legislative Library were used, but as the demand for materials increased, a separate collection was established.
- 1922-
- 1944 The travelling libraries were placed under the supervision of the Bureau of Publications. The Open Shelf mailed materials upon request to individual borrowers and placed an emphasis on providing reference materials.
- 1945 The Open Shelf Service was reorganized and became the Public Information Library.

- 1946 As a result of the recommendations of the Saskatchewan Library Advisory Council, *The Regional Libraries Act* was enacted to provide for the appointment of a Supervisor of Regional Libraries with responsibility for promoting the development of such libraries. By this time, it was recognized that libraries in rural Saskatchewan could not exist except in larger units of service or regions.
- 1950 The first regional library, North Central Saskatchewan Regional Library, was formed. (This region is now the Wapiti Regional Library)
- 1951 A Provincial Librarian (Mary Donaldson) was appointed.
- 1953 The Provincial Library was officially created with responsibility for library extension work in the province. There were 851 travelling libraries in Saskatchewan, containing slightly more than 38,000 books.
- 1958 Centralized cataloguing service was added to the Provincial Library's responsibilities. This involved cataloguing all books acquired by municipal and regional libraries, and allowed the creation of a union catalogue of books which facilitated resource sharing and interlibrary loan.

The Saskatchewan Library Advisory Council was formally established in legislation. The first members, some of whom served on the Council previously, included: Dr. Carlyle King (Chairman), Gustave Baudais, Mrs. J.B. Harrington, Mrs. Kathleen McDonald, Mrs. Henry Nelson, Wilson Parker, and Dr. J.W. Tait.

- 1965 Southeast Regional Library was formed.

The Library Inquiry Committee was appointed by the government to study development of library service in the province. Included in the Report were recommendations that the Provincial Library act as a clearing house for interlibrary loan and provide in-depth information services. Committee members were: Judge John H. Maher (Chairperson), Dr. W.A. Riddell, and Rusty H. Macdonald.

1967-

- 1973 The remaining five regional libraries were formed. Zealous promotion and concerted activity on the part of the Provincial Library, as well as devoted work on the part of local volunteers, had established an effective co-operative network of libraries. Two regions, Wheatland and Parkland, were formed in 1967, while Chinook, Lakeland and Palliser were formed in 1971, 1972 and 1973 respectively.

1968-

- 1981 In 1969, the Library Development Board replaced the Library Advisory Council. The new members of the Development Board were: Rusty H. Macdonald, Mrs. E. N. Davis, Miss Marion Graham, Wilfred L. Harvey, Willard Kallio, James S. Porter, Mrs. P.J. Sherman, and Mrs. A.B. Van Cleave.

The Public Information Library Division was changed to Readers' Services Division and greater emphasis was placed on reference services. Fewer than 5,000 reference requests were answered in 1968; 21,000 were answered in 1981. Automated information retrieval expanded the capability of providing specialized research information.

The collection of books in the resource collection expanded from about 100,000 volumes in 1968 to 180,000 in 1981, while circulation increased from 189,000 to 344,000.

1968-

- 1981 Bibliographic Services Division was formed in 1969 to provide expanded interlibrary loan service. Five thousand interlibrary loan requests were received in 1968; 10,600 in 1969; and 87,000 in 1981. Services Division handled 17,000 requests for cataloguing in 1961; 86,000 in 1979; and 46,000 in 1981. The cataloguing system was automated and partially decentralized in 1980.

- 1981 The Bureau of Management Improvement evaluated the automated cataloguing project and the organizational structure of the Provincial Library. Several of the recommendations were implemented in June, 1981.

- 1981 The Committee to Review Library Legislation was appointed by the Minister-in-Charge of Libraries in April, 1981. The committee held public hearings throughout the summer of 1981. Members of the Committee included: Merry Harbottle (Chairperson), Allan Quigley (Vice-Chairperson), George Bothwell, Vic W. Hay, Rowena Lunn, Rusty H. Macdonald, Charles Phelps, and Marion Sherman.

- 1982 A new funding formula was introduced in the spring of 1982.

The Development Branch was disbanded in July, 1982.

Provincial Library policies were formulated, discussed widely with interest groups, and implemented. These clarified the services of the Library, and, in effect, decanted some services to the local level.

Reference and Research Services Division replaced Readers' Services Division.

1983 A Design Team prepared a Discussion Paper on Library Legislation. Feedback and responses were presented to the Minister in June, 1983.

A Joint Venture Agreement between Regina Public Library, Saskatoon Public Library and Provincial Library was signed in February, 1983, to convert the pre-1980 holdings of the three libraries to the automated database.

A Request for Proposal to research a provincial automated database was approved by the Minister and Treasury Board in February, 1983. An Automation Task Force was established in March, and a consultant with widely recognized expertise was contracted to assist with the analysis.

The Library Development Board was disbanded in the belief that library “development” was now complete.

1984 *The Public Libraries Act, 1984*, a new Act, was passed by the Legislative Assembly.

The Provincial Library was renamed the Saskatchewan Library and a new provincial board constituted, called the Saskatchewan Library Board. The new Act updated the mandate of the Saskatchewan Library by strengthening its research, coordination and leadership role. The role of the Minister’s Advisory Board was strengthened and expanded. The autonomy and development of the regional libraries was given greater recognition. Members of the Saskatchewan Library Board included: Nick Gabruch (Chairperson), Leola Moore, Vi Spencer, George Hyde, Isabelle Butters, Peter Foga, Don Burton, Beverly Tansley, Edith Kerr, Val Kononoff, George Cook, Claude Gauthier, George Bothwell, and Rolland Pinsonneault.

1987 The Saskatchewan Library became a part of Saskatchewan Education in a reorganization of provincial government departments and agencies. Saskatchewan Library took on the new name of Saskatchewan Provincial Library.

1988 The Northern Library Services Section of Provincial Library moved to La Ronge in preparation for a new northern library system governed by an autonomous board and responsible for co-ordinating library services in the north.

1989 Provincial Library automated with the installation of the Dynix Library System. Provincial Library Collection Policy released.

1990 Legislation to enable the formulation of the northern library system was passed in August; first northern board meeting was held in December.

1991 Provincial Library became part of the newly formed Saskatchewan Community Services and subsequently changed to Saskatchewan Municipal Government.

1992 SLA and SLTA published “Independent But Together”, recommending a multitype advisory committee as part of a modern conceptual framework for developing library co-operatives.

The Northern library office received the official name of Pahkisimon Nuyeyáh Library System.

1994 The Multitype Library Development Advisory Committee was appointed by the Honourable Carol Carson, Minister of Municipal Government.

1995 The Saskatchewan online union catalogue at Provincial Library was made accessible through the Province-wide Library Electronic Information System (PLEIS).

1996 *The Public Libraries Act, 1996* and *The Libraries Co-operation Act* passed.

The Multitype Library Development Advisory Committee published its report: *Think Globally...Search Locally: A strategic Plan for the Implementation of a Multitype Library System in Saskatchewan.*

Review of regional library funding and services in Saskatchewan.

1998-

1999 “Every Library Connected Project” with funds from the Provincial and Federal Government.

1998-

2000 Appointment of first Multitype Library Board for the Province. Chaired by Merrilee Rasmussen, Q.C. representing SLTA; other members are: Colleen Warren and Darlene Fichter representing academic libraries, Jeffrey Barber representing SLA, Michael Keaschuk representing public libraries, Valerie Laliberte representing northern Saskatchewan, Helene Stewart and Beverley Scarrow representing special libraries and Ernie Pappas and Janet Merkowsky representing school libraries.

2001 The Library Gateway is launched, which permits an electronic search of all library catalogues in the province at one time.

AskUs!, a province wide electronic reference service, moves from pilot project to on-going service.

- 2002 CommunityNet is launched to bring high-speed internet access to 162 rural and remote library locations.
- 2003 By December, 2003, the cooperative pooling of funds by libraries known as the Multitype Database Licensing Program brought 6,500 online magazines and newspapers to all Saskatchewan residents. Public usage increased a whopping 46 percent in 2003!
- 2004 The Multitype Library Board held Digitization Forums in Regina and Saskatoon to bring together libraries, archives, museums and other community organizations to create a province-wide strategy for digitization.

APPENDIX B

SLTA
Resolution 1
Annual General Meeting
May 8, 2004

CONNECTING LIBRARIES ONLINE - FUNDING

Whereas Saskatchewan libraries continue to seek out funding for provision of electronic access to services on-line and through the Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association application to the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program, 162 of the over 300 public libraries were provided with broadband access and a few others have achieved this through joint locations with schools; and

Whereas a new program, just announced by the federal government, the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, also a federal-provincial program is now available and may provide an opportunity to provide the remaining libraries with broadband (high speed) access; and

Whereas 45 libraries were not included in the original program simply because there was not enough money to include them; however, those 45 communities have high speed lines (broadband access) and

Whereas 63 libraries are located in communities where high speed lines are not an option, and the needs of those communities would be met by two-way satellite; and

Whereas Provincial Library is estimating that it would take about \$2M to extend broadband access to all public libraries in the province;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Library Trustees' Association continue to lobby the federal and provincial governments for funding for all public libraries to connect to CommunityNet.

APPENDIX C

A resolution passed at the SLTA 2003 Annual General Meeting

Resolution 1 - Pay Equity

1. Whereas provincial financial support for public libraries in Saskatchewan is rooted in the ever-increasing need to share information resources between public libraries and the residents of Saskatchewan; and
2. Whereas the public library system is an essential component in providing an opportunity for the residents of Saskatchewan to engage in life-long learning; and
3. Whereas provincial financial support for public libraries in Saskatchewan has not kept up with the increasing costs of providing public library services, and in fact the province's share of public library funding has fallen over the last decade resulting in a de facto offloading of provincial financial support for public libraries to municipalities; and
4. Whereas public libraries have added a full range of e-library services in response to user demands and encouragement from provincial and federal governments without on-going sustainable funding to maintain these services; and
5. Whereas public libraries have had to absorb the costs of changes to provincial legislation such as the legislation governing the Municipal Employees Pension Plan and changes to minimum wage levels without financial assistance from the province; and
6. Whereas public library employee compensation levels are typically well below those of similar jobs in related occupations; and
7. Whereas many public library systems are finding it extremely difficult to prepare balanced budgets that will maintain basic public library services;
8. Whereas public libraries believe that better wages attract quality people to jobs and Saskatchewan needs to be competitive in recruiting and retaining people;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association urge the Government of Saskatchewan to continue to make increased public library funding a priority; and

Be it further resolved that the Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association urge the Government of Saskatchewan to provide an ongoing funding mechanism that would support public libraries in the continued provision of electronic library services to the residents of Saskatchewan. Carried.

The following resolution was Tabled:

Be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association urge the Government of Saskatchewan to provide dedicated funding to municipalities and regional library boards to implement pay equity for library workers.