

**Report to the
Alliance Library System Board of Directors
August 20, 2009
Executive Director's Report**

This is the first August ALS Director's Report I have ever written, which is a testament to the fact that we are living in very different times!

Financial concerns have been our #1 issue the last few months. Last Wednesday, in a conference call with the Illinois State Library, we learned:

- **All LSTA competitive grants have been cancelled** for this year. There has been considerable unhappiness expressed by members, but it came down to per capita grants for the state or special LSTA projects. The ISL did the best they could in a very difficult situation.
- **Public Library Per Capita Grants cut by 16%**. This money was generally used by libraries to augment their materials budget, special programs, or events. There was considerable understanding by most members that this reduction was difficult but understandable. I am currently writing an **On a + Note** about how folks are handling this reduction.
- **School Library Per Capita Grants cut by 3%**. School is just back in session so I am waiting for responses from the school library community on this reduction.
- **ALS funding cut by 17.11% \$321,591** (- 16.5% \$310,190 for every system, and Chicago Public plus the loss of the per capita funding for Sherrard Public Library who moved to PALS -\$11,400). In addressing the cuts, Anne Craig gave the following direction:
 - 1) Delivery at no cost to members and at the FY2009 frequency level
 - 2) Support of RSA at the FY2009 level
 - 3) With justification, other activities and programs may be conducted if sufficient funding remains

As I write this, Paul, Kendal, Lee, Lori and I are redrafting the Alliance budget and will have a series of recommendations to the Board early next week. All of our recommendations are made with the membership in mind and how to cut costs; it's a tough balancing act! At the Board meeting Thursday, August 27th we will be in closed session and review all the options we have. I would be remiss if I didn't warn members that these will be very tough decisions as we have very little left to cut.

As of this morning, we are still waiting for one payment of \$164,240 to complete last year's allocation from the Secretary of State.

The 2008/2009 audit process began yesterday with their annual site visit. This spring Willcock, Waring and Co. was awarded a three year contract to complete

our audit at a flat rate of \$14,000 per year (\$12,500 for ALS and \$1,500 for the RSA audit). They have done our audits for the last seven years. A complete audit report will be before the board in September.

Staff is working on the annual report and getting organized for the Annual Meeting and ALS Awards, Thursday, October 22th. We are thrilled to have our new IT support company, Basic ITS (who are just down High Point Lane) sponsoring the \$1,000 ALS Librarian of the Year Award and Learning Times LLC, (who we have partnered with many times), sponsoring the \$500 ALS Technology Award. However, for budgetary reasons, there will be no financial awards from ALS and the member's reception from 5-6 has been scaled back to simply coffee.

On July 30th ALS and the InfoQuest text message reference project partnered with Learning Times to host an online Handheld Librarian Conference to feature programs and a community around the hot trend of mobile library services. Approximately 500 individuals (\$49 each) and groups (\$89/group) registered for the online conference with an estimated 3500 total in attendance at the day's programs. Also featured for the conference was a "hash tag" for twitterers which is like a collaborative blog about the conference. There were 384 twitterers who sent 2,143 tweets!! ALS netted \$4,500 as a result of this effort and we are planning three more online conferences in the next year.



As we head into the tail end of summer; staff are working on; grant applications with members, CE for the fall, and trying to keep up with the escalating demands of the delivery service!!

There is no doubt, as I continue to write [On a +Note](#), that these are tough times. But, I am more convinced than ever that team work, focusing on the community we serve, and a positive attitude will help us dig out of this recessionary hole and we will all be better library leaders for the experience.

Personally, I take great pride in the leadership ALS is providing for its members in these challenging times. Helping members decide how to wisely spend the taxpayers dollar and still make a difference in the lives of folks who, like never before, truly need our assistance.

Kitty Pope
Executive Director