



CEO's Report to Members

October 20, 2010

Meeting with Minister Chan

While at the Conference of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario on August 16th, Federation representatives Jim Bennett, Sonia Lewis and David Allen met again with Michael Chan, Minister of Tourism and Culture. The meeting was only 15 minutes, but provided the opportunity to update the Minister on the work of the Provincial Funding Committee. The Minister acknowledged that “library funding is not right”, and he described his efforts in sharing this sentiment with his colleagues in Cabinet. He has asked his Parliamentary Assistant, Laura Albanese and Acting Deputy Minister of Culture, Donna Ratchford to study the provincial operating grant issue.

Meeting with Acting ADM

On August 30th, David Allen had a teleconference with Donna Ratchford, Acting ADM for Culture, plus other Ministry staff, Bob Goulais and Ivan Paris. Ratchford is responsible for advising PA Laura Albanese on:

- How the Province gains by funding public libraries to a greater extent;
- How to distribute any new funding;
- How specifically the new funding should be used.

David briefed Donna on the work already completed by the Federation in developing a funding model. She acknowledged that a large part of her mandate could be streamlined based on this work. She asked the Federation to forward its recommended funding model to her as soon as it is finalized.

Provincial Funding Committee

Given the stakeholder feedback on the funding model presented at the 2010 AGM, the Provincial Funding Committee has been exploring the feasibility of an improved supplement for northern and rural libraries. This analysis is nearing completion and the Committee anticipates presenting a draft report to the Federation Board in November. While the Committee has been working to address concerns of northern and rural libraries, it has not lost sight of its original goal to develop a funding model that serves the needs of all libraries in an equitable manner.

Deputation to Minister of Infrastructure

On behalf of the Federation Jim Bennett made a deputation on August 25th to Bob Chiarelli, the new Minister of Infrastructure, and three other Eastern Ontario MPPs, who were seeking input on Ontario's 10-year infrastructure plan. Jim emphasized the need for part of this plan to include an infrastructure fund dedicated exclusively to Ontario public libraries.

Value Proposition for Investing in Public Library Literacy Programs

When Federation representatives met with staff of the Ministry of Tourism and Culture on July 9th to discuss the findings of our recent study of the scope of literacy programs in public libraries, we were asked to provide a document that describes the value proposition for why other ministries should include public libraries in their early literacy and healthy community initiatives. This document could facilitate the efforts of Ministry staff in raising awareness amongst their colleagues in the Ministries of Education, Children & Youth Services, and Training, Colleges & Universities, regarding the valuable role public libraries can play in fulfilling their objectives. The Federation produced and delivered such a document to the Ministry in August.

Reception for MPPs

The Federation's 3rd annual reception for MPPs will be held on November 24, 2010 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm in the Legislative Dining Room at Queen's Park. Minister Chan plans to attend. Invitations to MPPs have been mailed.

Acting Positions at the Ministry

Effective September 7th, Drew Fagan became Deputy Minister of Infrastructure. Until his replacement is found, Steven Davidson has been named Acting Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture. In turn, Donna Ratchford has become Acting Assistant Deputy Minister for the Culture Division, replacing Steven Davidson. And Suzanne Rowe Knight has temporarily assumed the role of Acting Director of the Culture Policy Branch, replacing Donna Ratchford.

New Director of Programs and Services Branch

On August 26th, David Allen met with Peter Armstrong, the new Director of the Programs and Services Branch at the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. He replaced Richard Mortimer. Peter's background is in health and with MTCU. The purpose of the meeting was primarily to acquaint him with the public library sector and its issues. Peter had helpful suggestions on contacts we should establish and programs that libraries might be eligible for.

Municipal Elections Toolkit

Mid summer, the Federation released its Municipal Elections Toolkit to members and posted the toolkit on its website. The toolkit contained:

- A letter to all candidates, which could come from either the Federation's Board Chair or the local public library's Board Chair
- A letter to the editor, which the Federation will try to get the media to publish, with assistance from local libraries
- Answers to frequently asked questions from the media
- Sample questions to pose at All Candidates Meetings.

These resources provided an excellent opportunity to "speak with one voice" and inform local Councilors about the contribution that public library make to their communities, and

the key issues impacting public library services. Response from members has been very positive.

Meeting of First Nation Libraries

Sheri Mishjibijima coordinated an opportunity for David Allen to meet with First Nation librarians at their networking session in Sault Ste. Marie on September 22nd. David gave an overview of the Federation's mandate and recent accomplishments and then led a discussion on how the Federation can serve the needs of First Nations libraries better. A key action item resulting from this meeting was a commitment to adapt the Municipal Elections Toolkit for elections of Band Councils.

Ontario Public Library Week (OPLW)

This year the Federation partnered with the Canadian Library Association in producing OPLW posters and bookmarks. Packaging and distribution was handled by the printing company that produced the posters and bookmarks. All libraries received their promotional materials by the beginning of September.

The Federation website was updated and graphics of the posters and bookmarks were made available. A list of activities occurring at public libraries province-wide was compiled and posted to the Federation website. A draft media release and proclamation were sent to members in advance.

This year marked the 25th anniversary of OPLW from October 17th to 23rd. The official launch of OPLW occurred at Aurora Public Library on October 18th. Minister Chan spoke at the event, as did Federation Board Chair Jim Bennett. The launch was preceded by a short reception with the Minister for the Board Chairs and CEOs of York Region libraries.

AMO Conference

The Federation was an exhibitor at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference in Windsor on August 15th and 16th. In preparation, Federation staff produced a full colour handout describing how public libraries address municipal priorities, which was subsequently posted on our website. Volunteers who staffed our booth included: Federation Board members Jim Bennett, George Saarinen, and Terry Metcalf; Kitchener PL CEO Sonia Lewis; and Windsor PL representatives Ray Guillet, Barry Holmes, Ron Bertram and Lorena Shepley. Participation in this conference continues to be quite valuable because of the number of municipal councillors and mayors who attend. This year there was far more traffic in the exhibit hall than at last year's conference in Ottawa. Next year's conference will be in London.

Public Opinion Survey

Over the summer the Research Task Force finalized the wording of the questionnaire to be used by Market Probe to update opinion surveys in 2000 and 2005 regarding the utilization of and attitudes towards public libraries. Market Probe began its telephone interviews (available in both official languages) with 1,100 Ontarians during the week of September 20th. Quotas were established to get statistically reliable sample sizes from

various age groups and geographic regions. Steps were also taken to increase contact with First Nation communities. Market Probe's draft report is expected in mid November.

IT Guidelines for Accreditation

The IT Guidelines Sub-committee of the OPLG Council met a number of times over the summer months. Frances Stocker of Kestrel Info Services, the consultant for the project has worked with the sub-committee on the following:

- Completion of an on-line survey of information technology in Ontario public libraries, which had 182 respondents.
- Interviews with key members of our sector to gather valuable information and perspectives about IT in Ontario public libraries.
- A draft document of the guidelines which was presented to the OPLG Council on October 14th.

The final report should be released in November.

Literacy Outcomes Study - RFP

Jim Bennett, David Allen, Jane Pyper and other TPL staff met to discuss the approach for undertaking a study of outcomes of public library-based literacy programs. The goal is to go beyond surveying program participants, their parents, instructors and school teachers of the *perceived* benefits of these programs. If possible, this study should quantify improvements in literacy skills using assessment tools accepted by the education and academic communities. The Federation is currently exploring partnership opportunities with leading educational and academic institutions, as well as potential funding sources. And we are evaluating whether the study should focus on emergent/early literacy programs or summer reading programs.

New Librarian - Administrative Assistant

Wendy Bray left the Federation on September 15th to assume the position of Development Officer with the Kensington Health Centre Foundation. **Erin Menzies** was appointed as the Federation's new Librarian - Administrative Assistant, effective September 20th. Erin is a graduate of the Masters Program in Information and Library Studies at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, Scotland. Her work experience includes serving as a Data Analyst at the Discovery Commons of the University of Toronto, Reference Librarian and Acting Health Sciences Centre Librarian at the University of Manitoba, and Administrative Assistant for Manitoba Health and Healthy Living.

Facebook Page

The Federation has launched a Facebook page with the following link: <http://on.fb.me/aGYiVX> . We also established the Twitter handle @FOPLnews (<http://twitter.com/foplnews>). The launch took advantage of Ontario Public Library Week (OPLW), whereby members were asked to tag their OPLW photos, videos and articles with the Federation's information so we could begin some cross promotion. This also provides an opportunity to solicit all members with social media presence to forward their information to the Federation's office so we could mark them as favourites and promote their events for OPLW on our page.

OLS-North's Marketing Symposium

OLS-North hosted a Marketing Symposium on October 6th, funded in part by an LSDF grant. The symposium was an opportunity to hear from experts on creating effective marketing initiatives that Ontario public libraries might adopt. While OLS-North kindly kept the Federation informed of their programming decisions along the way, planning of the event was the exclusive responsibility of OLS-North.

Annual Report

One of the tasks in the Federation's Marketing Plan is the development of an Annual Report that would describe the current state of the public library sector and the issues it is facing. Together with the Marketing Task Force, Rudi Denham and David Allen have been drafting this Annual Report. The final draft will be completed by November.

Funding Proposal

The Federation resubmitted a proposal to the Ministry requesting an operating grant similar to the one given to OLA.

AGM Timing

The Federation's Annual General Meeting is being scheduled later on the day preceding the OLA's Super Conference, in order to catch delegates who will be attending the opening plenary that evening. Our AGM will be held on Wednesday, February 2, 2011 at 4:30 pm. Members will receive official notice 90 days prior. The notice will highlight the importance of and process for proxies, so that quorum can be assured.

Translation of Federation Materials

Sincere thanks go to Francine Ste Croix, Board Chair of Moonbeam Public Library for translating the Federation's Municipal Elections Toolkit into French. She also coordinated the translation of the questionnaire that Market Probe used in their public opinion survey. This was a considerable contribution to the Federation!

The Federation is piloting the use of external translators to produce French versions of regular reports to members, beginning with this CEO's Report to Members.

Board Meetings

Since the last CEO's Report to Members, the following meetings of the Board and its committees have occurred:

- Board of Directors – September 24th
- Advocacy Task Force – September 9th
- Marketing Task Force – September 8th
- Research Task Force – July 15th
- Provincial Funding Committee – August 19th, September 10th, October 13th
- Accreditation Council – October 14th
- Accreditation IT Guidelines Working Group – August 4th, August 11th, Sept 28th