

November 2010

Federation's Recent Accomplishments

During the past year, the Federation can point to a number of deliverables that demonstrate the value of membership.

In terms of **advocacy** initiatives, we:

- Met with staff of the Ontario Premier's Office, and provided background on the scope of and legislative framework for public library services and how those services fit with provincial priorities. Then we made specific asks:
 - Fix the provincial operating grants situation, created by the Harris Government.
 - Increase provincial support for library infrastructure through a matching fund designated just for public libraries.
 - Include public libraries in provincial literacy strategies and funding streams, especially for 0 to 4 year olds.
- Met twice with the new Minister of Tourism & Culture, Michael Chan, where we presented a proposal to increase provincial operating grants. In response, the Minister has declared publicly that he is trying to improve the funding situation of public libraries in next year's provincial budget, and has assigned his Parliamentary Assistant the task of determining how this should be done.
- Made a deputation to the new Minister of Infrastructure, to include a capital fund dedicated exclusively to public libraries in Ontario's 10-year infrastructure plan.
- Released to members a Municipal Elections Toolkit containing:
 - A letter to all candidates, describing the contribution that public libraries make to their communities, and the key issues impacting public library services.
 - A letter to the editor, which libraries could encourage their local media to publish.
 - Answers to frequently asked questions from the media.
 - Sample questions to pose at All Candidates Meetings.
- Planned a third reception for MPPs at Queen's Park, scheduled for November 24, 2010. These receptions have been well attended and have provided an excellent forum to voice issues directly with policy makers.
- Participated in the Ontario Finance Minister's consultation regarding the 2010 Provincial Budget.
- Advised members on dealing with Bill 128 and Bill 202, private member's bills that proposed mandatory Internet screening in all public libraries.

- Assisted Knowledge Ontario in developing materials to facilitate involvement of public libraries in its recent advocacy campaign.
- Continued to advise government on the proposed Information and Communication Accessibility Standard of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

In terms of **marketing** initiatives, we:

- Developed a multi-year Marketing Plan that targets funders and policy makers. This marketing plan was presented to members at our pre-conference session at the 2010 OLA Super Conference.
- Once again provided an exhibit booth at the 2010 conference of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, which proved an efficient vehicle for connecting with hundreds of municipal funders and potential members. New promotional materials were prepared specifically for this conference.
- Took responsibility again for the theme, promotional material and provincial launch of Ontario Public Library Week, which is a key lever for raising the profile of our sector.
- Launched a Facebook page with the link: <http://on.fb.me/aGYiVX> , and established the Twitter handle @FOPLnews (<http://twitter.com/foplnews>).

In terms of **research** initiatives, we:

- Conducted a study to determine the scope of literacy programs currently being delivered through Ontario's public libraries and shared the study findings with all MPPs and senior staff at both the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Tourism & Culture. Subsequently, we provided the Ministry of Tourism & Culture with a document that describes the value proposition for why other ministries should include public libraries in their early literacy and healthy community initiatives.
- Established a Provincial Funding Committee to analyze various per capita funding models that the Ministry of Tourism and Culture might eventually be asked to adopt to replace the current problematic operating grants. Preliminary results of the Committee's analysis were unveiled at the 2010 AGM, followed by a series of consultation sessions with members. The Committee is currently refining its recommended model based on the feedback received.
- Received a grant from the Ministry's Library Strategic Development Fund to update market research done in 2000 and 2005 on Ontarians' use of and attitudes toward public

libraries. Research results will be shared with members at the 2011 OLA Super Conference.

- Surveyed members to identify the level of financial support received from their municipalities so they could do peer comparisons and strengthen their case for support.

In terms of **member services** initiatives, we:

- Oversaw the Ontario Public Library Guidelines Monitoring and Accreditation Council's development of new information technology guidelines, which will be officially released at the 2011 OLA Super Conference.
- Compiled and circulated a list of potential sources of capital/infrastructure funding and how to apply.
- Conducted an assessment of alternative models for the membership fee structure, which concluded that the current model, while not perfect, is the best option.
- Increased our membership rolls from 184 to 206 public and First Nations library boards, who in aggregate serve 78% of Ontario's population. This is remarkable given the current economic climate.

Our expanding membership ranks reflect a growing recognition within the public library community of the benefits of joining the Federation and "speaking with one voice". With the continued support of our members, the effectiveness of the Federation will be enhanced even further.