

Plan of Service Focus Group Session

Greene County Directors | February 16, 2011

Challenges & Issues:

- **Funding**

- Libraries in this county without a secured funding stream are very concerned about the future. "Town is not increasing our budget."
- Directors report that trustees do not want to take the "risk" to raise the budget even when the community is asking for more from the library.
- Lack of funds is resulting in an inability to keep up with materials purchasing and filling holds; staff are being asked to do more for less (no raises); hours do not reflect what the community wants; services are not meeting community expectations.
- Working to hold unserved areas accountable financially.
- Organizational growth is happening erratically due to lack of funds. "Our part-time library needs to grow to full time."
- Concerns about Systems financial future and survival. "We are only able to grow because of the System."; "You have to make it work for us all to survive."

- **Staffing**

- Inadequate staffing levels.
- Some directors are "doing everything" and administrative tasks are suffering for lack of time and attention which hinders helping the board move forward on funding plans. "I don't have time to do all my tasks. I'm doing the best I can without short changing anything. It feels impossible some days."
- Would like to be better at managing and tapping into the abilities of others to expand what can be offered.
- Directors expressed frustration with volunteers working the front desk and battling the misperception that volunteers are "free labor." Identified needing help with matching volunteers with the right job and conveying to boards the amount of management time needed for volunteers.
- Multiple directors expressed a need specifically for a children's staff person and a desire to bump up YA programming.

- **Marketing/PR**

- Directors understand that it is important that the director be the face of the library in the community to make connections and get the word out but lack of staff means the director is tied to the library building.
- Seeking new ways to bring in more people.
- Looking for ways to get the word out to parents about library services. Would like to use the schools more as an ally in getting the word out.
- Dealing with an ongoing challenge of getting the word out about basic services and combating misunderstandings about the library; beginning to use word-of-mouth more.

- Looking for ways to get the board to start taking a more active role in community outreach. One library reported that they have formed a new board committee to focus more effort on community communication.
- Seeking partnerships to stretch the reach of the library's message.
- Looking for ways to use readers advisory to attract patrons.
- **Planning**
 - Planning for the facility is disconnected (or nonexistent) from planning for the future of library operations and funding.
 - How to meet the demands we're experiencing for books on CD, DVDs?
 - "As we work on our policies, the more we get done the more we see needs to get done...the goals from MHLS is very helpful to get the library on track."
 - Technology is bringing more people in (access to computers and bandwidth). How do we keep up?

What do you want people to say about libraries in Greene County?

- Good customer service. Served well.
- That you can get what you need.
- That enough people are talking about the library.
- Good experience / positive experience.
- Friendly. Greeting patrons. Excellent on phone (Greenville).
- Staff making the extra effort (renew, help with copier) – thrilled patrons.
- Exceed expectations – necessary in a small community.