Plan of Service Focus Group Session
Ulster County Trustees | February 23, 2011

Challenges & Issues:

- **Facilities**
  - Dealing with lack of space, renovation and expansion projects was the #1 self-identified challenge.
  - Libraries are simply out of space; "for books and people."
  - More patrons are seeking space to use; "We don't have room for people to just sit down and read."
  - Lack of handicapped accessibility
  - Lack of space for programming
  - Lack of office space for staff is hindering operations; clutter is becoming a major problem
  - Lack of parking is a big issue for many.
  - Space for computers competes with space for people and books.
  - Looking to maximize what they have – making most efficient use of space.
  - A fair number are seeking to build new buildings or move to a new location
  - Seeking ways to make their buildings more energy efficient and "green."
  - Concerned about having the finances; "patrons seem apathetic about space needs"
  - More libraries would like to explore Dewey-free system

- **Funding**
  - Concern that the funds "just won't be there" in the future for library funding
  - Trustees are concerned that they are not keeping up with providing adequate salaries
  - Worried about upcoming budget votes: "Taxpayers seem unwilling and suspicious of giving us more money."
  - Low voter turn out
  - Budgets are not sustainable. Reserves are shrinking.
  - "Fear" of asking for more
  - Feeling that small libraries are competing with larger libraries
  - Working together, through the System, makes operations affordable

- **Community Awareness**
  - Would like to increase overall community awareness of the value of the library and the specifics of what we have to offer
  - Would like to increase affiliation and partnerships in the library's "neighborhood"
  - Libraries are becoming more about a meeting place – connecting with other people. "We're the hub, the new town square."

- - - o Feeling that they have less interaction with the community due to lack of programming space.
    - o "There seems to be a lot of misperceptions about who uses the library out there."
    - o Access to materials through System services impresses users

- **Technology**
    - o Computers have become a "centerpiece."
    - o Big concerns about "keeping up with technology"
        - ▪ Funding
        - ▪ Staff know-how

- **Board Development**
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- **Planning**
    - o Very keen to make sure they are offering the services that matter most to the community.
    - o Many are hoping to develop comprehensive facility plans.
    - o "As we become more of a gathering place, how does this shift our mission?"
    - o Concerned about collection development and format type expansion
    - o Libraries want to be proactive

What do you hope people say about your library?
- They can't live without us.
- Library is essential
- I love going there
- Something for everybody
- Best deal in town
- The "meet and greet" center of town
- A good use of money
- How can I get involved
- The community center of town.