

ST-1

Arizona Library Association Report, March 2005
Submitted by Teri Metros, Arizona Representative

AzLA Tucson Conference a Success

Breaking with a 15 year tradition, the 2005 Arizona Library Association annual conference was held in Tucson in December. Attendance at the conference was comparable to the Phoenix location and attendees enjoyed the resort atmosphere provided by the Hilton El Conquistador. Keynote speakers included library action figure model and Booklust author, Nancy Pearl, and Dr. Robert Martin, Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

New Association Officers

New AzLA officers were installed at the conclusion of the annual conference. Joining President Laura Thomas Sullivan on the executive board are the following individuals who were elected to office: President-Elect, Deborah Tasnadi, Peoria Public Library; Secretary, Louisa Aiken, Scottsdale Public Library System; Southern Regional Representative, Susan Evans, Yuma County Library District; Northern Regional Representative, Mary Roberts, Mohave County Library District; and ALA Councilor, David Gunckle, Sierra Vista Public Library.

AzLA Legislative Agenda

AzLA's annual Legislative Day was held on February 25, 2005 at the Arizona State Capitol. Arizona librarians and library users met in the morning to review the Association's legislative agenda and were provided with talking points to be used during individual meetings with their local legislators. Working with the Association's lobbyist, Robert Voss, AzLA has developed the following legislative agenda for 2005:

- Funding of the State Library Archives and History Building: Thanks to the support of AzLA last year, the legislature approved \$2 million for the design of this much needed facility. An additional \$35 million is needed to construct the new archives building.
- School Librarian Certification: Establish school librarian certification as a requirement and designate school librarians as teachers, rather than administrators.
- State Grant-in-Aid: Increase state grants-in-aid from 12 cents per capita to 16 cents per capita.
- Library Tax Credits: Library tax credits would allow libraries to receive funds directed by taxpayers to specific libraries and to receive a dollar for dollar tax credit on their income tax statement.
- Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records Budget: Restore funding to the ASLPR budget.

New Library Directors Selected

Nancy Ledeboer joined the Tucson-Pima Public Library as Director on January 24th. She replaced Betsy Stunz-Hall who served as interim Library Director since the retirement of Agnes Griffen in June 2003. Ms. Ledeboer previous position was Deputy Director of the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, a position she held since 1999. Prior to joining Las Vegas-Clark County, she held a number of positions in Washington state including Youth Services Coordinator and Assistant Director-Public Services at the Spokane Public Library and Associate Director for Public Services with the King County Library System. Nancy received her Masters degree in Library Science from the University of California at Berkeley.

Deborah Tasnadi, AzLA's President-Elect, was recently named to be the Library Manager at the Peoria Public Library. Ms. Tasnadi was previously employed at the Maricopa County Library District where she served as the North Valley Regional Library Coordinator. Deborah has over 25 years of library experience. Originally from Wisconsin, she worked for nearly ten years for the Arizona State Library and the City of Scottsdale Library System. Ms. Tasnadi received her MLS from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

Public Library Systems Facing Budget Challenges

Although the City of Phoenix is in the second year of its economic recovery, it is still faced with a shortfall of \$68.7 million dollars for the next fiscal year. As a result, the city is considering a number of budget cuts including some that could impact the operations of the Phoenix Public Library. Among the more drastic would be the closing of Phoenix libraries on Fridays and delaying the opening of a new branch by three months. A series of public hearings will be held in March in each of the eight council districts to provide residents with the opportunity to comment on the proposed cuts.

The City of Mesa Library is also faced with some serious budget challenges. The City of Mesa does not have a property tax and relies on sales tax and a city-owned utility for operational funding. Forced layoffs, cuts in city services and hiking certain fees to generate extra revenue are among the ideas Mesa is considering as it prepares its 2005-07 budgets. The library system has eliminated almost 450 programs because of city budget constraints. Over the last several years, the library has lost 13 positions and could lose another 22 positions.