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NEWS RELEASE

Library System's 2014 budget continues trend to focus on needs of member libraries

December 18, 2013 - The Library System Board of Directors announced today that the proposed 2014 budget will support a continuing trend to focus on the core needs of its fourteen member libraries. The budget continues a multi-year investment in information technology services. It also makes new investments in the department that processes tens of thousands of books, CDs, DVDs, etc. for the member libraries.

Included in the budget is a new systems' specialist to assist member libraries with software related problems. An open IT position has been upgraded to provide services to help member libraries develop more robust and interactive websites. Additional funds will be used to upgrade network capacity as well as command and control systems.

Plans include making new investments in ongoing work to improve efficiencies of CAS (Cataloging and Acquisition Services) with the creation of a CAS Management position. There will also be the addition of staff hours for processing books and other library materials that will impact the department's effectiveness in getting books on the library shelves faster.

These new investments in priority services will come as welcome news to member libraries but do come at a cost. Like municipal governments and libraries across the state, the library system has seen a decline in revenues over the last several years while at the same time seeing an increase in the need for services. In order to best use available funds for library services that are most critical to the member libraries, existing funds will be used for the creation of new capabilities, while some programs and services will be reduced or eliminated. Unless additional funds can be found, the business program will shut down March 31, 2014. Also in March of 2014, the bookmobile will go to a reduced schedule and at the end of June 2014 a staff position in the administrative department will be eliminated. As a result of all program changes, the library system will lose three long time staff members. This is the fourth year in a row that staffing has been reduced due to economic pressures.

According to System Administrator, Bill Hudson "In these difficult financial times, we have to make some painful decisions. We have to become laser focused on the services most needed by the member libraries." Despite declining revenues, program and staff cuts, there is still a clear need for the creation of new capabilities and the enhancement of existing core services to the member libraries. "These changes will best position us to provide a higher level of service to the member libraries in the services they need and want most." stated Hudson.

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