



Thank you to the members of the Assembly Committee on Libraries and Education Technology for allowing us the opportunity to touch upon the impact of the 2015-2016 State Budget on the Southern Adirondack Library System and its thirty-four member libraries located in Hamilton, Warren, Washington and Saratoga Counties. There are 353,366 people who live in our service region. Our libraries welcomed 2,191,986 people through their doors. 832,997 people accessed the internet through a library's Wi-Fi. Our libraries also employ 248.6 full time equivalents.

In 2015, the Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS) state aid was reduced approximately 10.3% from the NY State Education Laws funding levels. Over the years, the SALS Board of Trustees and staff had to make difficult decisions due to the rising cost of health care and retirement. A department was eliminated, and through attrition and downsizing, the number of SALS staff was reduced.

SALS working closely with the Mohawk Valley Library System (MVLS), chose to share an automation system. Public libraries in eight upstate NY counties share hardware, software, and a virtual private network to display the materials owned in all of the public libraries in our region. People may borrow books, DVDs, CDs, locally or regionally. There are delivery vans that move these items from library to library in the joint MVLS/SALS service area. In 2014, 474,595 items were shared among SALS member libraries and the items were delivered through the SALS courier. An efficiency study was done, and it showed if these items were mailed among the libraries, it would cost \$1,276,660.55 out of the individual library budgets. The delivery service, administered by SALS costs \$182,755. The items are delivered within two days; if mailed, the items would take at least a week, using library rate.

Through the NY State Public Library Construction Aid, SALS is allocated \$396,655 to be shared among thirty-six buildings. Each year, difficult choices are made regarding final funding recommendations.

In 2016, nine libraries submitted construction requests for projects costing \$1,704,591. These projects included handicapped accessibility, new building or expansion, land acquisition, and energy efficiency. If SALS was allocated \$852,295, each project would have been allocated at least a 50% match. Increases in NY State Public Library Construction Aid would benefit many residents in our region. It would also lead to greater savings, allowing libraries to complete projects in a timelier manner.

Here is one example illustrating how important public library construction funding is for libraries. The Pember Library and Museum is located in Granville, NY. The impressive

building was built in 1909. While one may marvel at the beautiful Victorian granite building, the building is not suitable for today's needs. The building is not ADA compliant. The second floor of the building is neither accessible for the disabled nor does it have a fire exit nor secondary means of egress.

The proposed \$240,625 project, will add an addition that will allow the installation of a three-stop elevator. This elevator will provide pedestrian and wheelchair access from ground level to the first and second floors. An enclosed fire stair from the second floor will be built, and an ADA-compliant entranceway to the building will become a reality. It was with regret do the demand, SALS could only allocate \$40,000 to the project.

Libraries continue to be vibrant in each of their communities, despite limited New York State funding. Our thirty-four public libraries connect people to local and national resources through the internet and resource sharing.

The Easton Library is the source of broadband in its community. Many Easton residents only have access to dial-up in their homes.

The Town of Indian Lake Public Library is working with the county to provide job readiness via computer classes for its residents.

In Washington County, libraries provide early childhood literacy in communities without Head Start or other preschool options.

The Stony Creek Free Library is the cultural and educational hub as well as the neutral public space for people of all ages.

In all of our libraries, parents and caregivers read to their children in a safe and comfortable environment. Teens have a safe place to go after school. Job seekers use the computer workstations to apply for jobs, develop and print their resumes. Tourists, seasonal residents and international workers communicate with their work colleagues and family. And, older adults learn how to use email, Facebook and other online tools to keep in touch.

Increased funding will pay library workers a viable and livable wage. One library director earns less than \$13,000 a year.

Increased library funding, will mean more people will have access to a higher broadband.

Increased library funding will make more of the older buildings handicapped accessible, energy efficient and sustainable, and have enough power outlets to meet the mobile device demands.

Increased library funding will allow SALS the ability to provide additional services to the libraries to help them meet the growing needs and demands of their communities.

Increased library funding will allow SALS to provide continuing education for library staff and trustees that in turn, will mean stronger and better libraries in our region.

I will be happy to answer questions and provide further documentation. Thank you for your time.

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