

**Missouri Library Association  
Proposed Legislative Agenda  
2008**

**MLA will work for the restoration of funding from the Non-Resident Professional Athletes & Entertainers Tax (143.183 RSMo)**

The Non-Resident Professional Athletes and Entertainers Tax (*A&E Tax*) is a tax on the earnings of professional athletes and entertainers when playing or performing in the State of Missouri. It is collected by the State of Missouri and, by Statute, is to be distributed among the following five groups: **Missouri State Library Networking Fund (10%), Missouri Humanities Council Trust Fund (10%); Missouri Public Television Broadcasting Corporation Special Fund (10%); Missouri Historic Preservation Revolving Fund (10%) and the Missouri Arts Council Trust Fund (60%).**

The 10% of the A&E funds distributed to public libraries is to purchase books and other library materials.

From FY2003 to FY2005 no funds were appropriated as outlined in Missouri Statutes and the income went into general revenue for other purposes. An appropriation of \$100,000 was made for FY2006, below the Governor's recommendation of \$600,000 and the \$2,632,332 requested by the Secretary of State, based on collections. For FY2007, the appropriation was increased to \$550,000. For FY 2008 the appropriation was increased to \$1,300,000. However, that amount is still well below the amount due if based upon actual funds collected as reported by the Missouri Department of Revenue.

Librarians, trustees and the Missouri Library Association are requesting that full funding be restored to the Missouri State Library Networking Fund for public libraries and the other qualifying agencies at the levels outlined in the Statutes. The amount of funds available should also be based upon the actual amount collected as reported by the Missouri Department of Revenue.

MLA will oppose any attempts to allow groups other than the above listed cultural partners to benefit from A&E revenues prior to fair and equitable distribution of A&E monies to libraries.

**MLA will support, at a minimum, the appropriation requests of the Secretary of State and for the University of Missouri Related Programs such as MOREnet.**

***These appropriations include:***

***Missouri State Library*** funding covers staffing/programs of Missouri State Library, library development and consultant services to libraries in the State as well as the following programs:

State Aid for Public Libraries totaled \$4,004,456 for FY2008. The appropriation included funding that allowed 55 cents per capita state aid based on 2000 federal census figures and the remaining for increased funding of equalization grants for libraries in Missouri's poorest counties.

The FY2006 appropriation for State Aid to Public Libraries had been cut by 25%, which resulted in a reduction in state aid to 41.49 cents per capita and meant the loss of equalization grants for 18 libraries. The appropriation for State Aid to Public Libraries for FY2007 totaled \$3,001,744, keeping the per capita amount at the reduced rate of 41.49 cents.

The amounts being requested for the coming legislative session have not yet been determined. These amounts may not be known until the day of the Governor's Budget

Message in January of 2008. As stated above, MLA will support, at a minimum, the appropriation request of the Secretary of State or an appropriation that results in a 55-cent per capita state aid as was appropriated in FY2008.

***Remote Electronic Access for Libraries (REAL)*** provides Internet connectivity and bandwidth for public libraries. In addition, it also provides statewide electronic licenses for information databases for Missouri libraries. In FY2003 11% (\$365,750) was cut from the REAL appropriation. These cuts were not restored in FY2004, in FY2005, in FY2006, in FY2007 or in FY2008. Although an appropriation of \$150,000 was made in FY2008 to purchase a new database to support curriculum, the addition of this database does not offset the previous losses. It is important that the previous cuts be restored.

Other programs included in the Missouri State Library appropriations include the administration of federal grants and Literacy Investment for Tomorrow (LIFT).

The *Show-Me Connection* study from June 2004 concluded the following. “Summer learning loss is real. Spending time reading over the summer has proven effective in reducing this loss. Cooperating with the local public library to provide a summer reading program allows students to read more consistently while simultaneously giving them expanded opportunities to access resources. Summer reading programs impact student achievement.” To support this conclusion, the legislature has provided funding in the core budget to support summer reading programs. MLA supports the core appropriation for summer reading programs, would oppose any decrease in the core funding for the program.

In 2007, the Secretary of State proposed the Missouri Digital Heritage Initiative. The program was created to fulfill several missions. First, the program would build a technological structure with the capacity to search millions of pages of resources that local groups can use to make their historical records easily accessible on the web. The program would also create a partnership between the Missouri State Archives and the Missouri State Library, divisions of the Secretary of State’s office, and local governments, public libraries and community institutions. Finally, the program would identify, digitize and make millions of pages of information – documents, maps and photos – accessible via the Internet for instant access and use by students, citizens, historians, journalists and genealogists. To support this important effort, the legislature has provided funding in the core budget to support the Missouri Digital Heritage Initiative. MLA supports the core appropriation and would oppose any decrease in the core funding.

Funding for the ***Wolfner Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped*** supports the cost of housing the collections of material and equipment as well as services and staff.

***University of Missouri Related Programs*** includes appropriation requests for funding of the following programs:

MOREnet (Missouri Research and Education Network) manages a statewide education and research network that links public libraries, schools, higher education institutions and state agencies to a secure broadband Internet connection and to each other. MOREnet also provides vital technical support, security services, and E-rate assistance in addition to staff training, video services and access to on-line resources.

From FY2003 to FY2006, reductions to MOREnet funding totaled approximately \$6,800,000. Of this total amount, \$4,400,000 was cut in FY2006. In FY2007, the total appropriation was \$10,254,612 and reflected a 1% increase of \$101,531.

Because of the ever-changing advances in the world of technology, it is critical that additional funding be provided to MOREnet for new equipment that will allow upgrading and increasing the present capacity of the current backbone. With the State of Missouri's every increasing use of technology and the Internet as a means of conducting business and communicating with its citizenry, it is vital for the State to assure access to this information to all citizens. MLA will support efforts to obtain these new funds along with additional funds to increase Internet access capacity and K-20 member connections in FY2008.

The State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia houses the Missouri newspaper collection as well as a collection of materials relating to Missouri's heritage. Funding for FY2007 was increased by \$189,220 for a total appropriation of \$1,019,561, restoring the 10% cut received for FY2006. MLA will support, at a minimum, funding at the current level.

Common Library Platform is a state/institutional partnership that allows students and faculty in Missouri to access books and materials owned by public and independent colleges and universities throughout Missouri. MOBIUS (Missouri Bibliographic and Information User System) is the consortium that oversees the administration of this system. MOBIUS has not received any state appropriations for these purposes in recent years. MLA supports appropriations for MOBIUS to enhance resource sharing and to strengthen the Common Library Platform.

**MLA will monitor all property tax legislation.**

Local property taxes, both real estate and personal property, are the primary funding source of Missouri's public libraries. Percentages may vary from library to library, but it is not unusual for a library to have over 90% of its annual income being derived from property taxes.

While public schools and local community colleges are not as dependent on property taxes as public libraries, these institutions still receive a portion of their income from these taxes.

Any legislation that attempts to lower property taxes or do away with them would adversely affect Missouri's public libraries and could also have a negative effect on school and community college libraries.

For this reason, MLA will monitor all property tax legislation and make members of the Missouri General Assembly aware of how specific pieces of legislation could affect library service in the state. MLA supports efforts to establish methods to fairly assess personal property.

MLA will monitor legislation that attempts to provide a diversification of revenue from alternate tax sources, including state wide and local options.

In addition, MLA will monitor any legislation that attempts to aid assessors in property assessments. MLA will study cost versus the benefits of any proposed legislation as well as any Hancock Amendment implications.

**MLA will monitor all legislation dealing with Tax Increment Financing (TIFs), Chapter 100 RSMo, Chapter 353 RSMo, enterprise zones and tax abatements and the effects of the implementation of such legislation.**

Economic development and growth is vital to the State of Missouri and to local communities. However, there are concerns when incentives offered to developers and new industries include the new tax revenue that would go to local taxing entities.

Under TIFs and tax abatement, developers use the funds that would normally pay the property taxes on new developments to cover costs associated with the project. This means that taxing entities are not receiving property taxes on the new development because the funds are being diverted.

When TIFs and tax abatements are used to finance commercial developments, some of the entities having their tax incomes diverted do receive additional new income from the sales tax generated by the development. Public libraries, along with other entities such as fire and ambulance districts, do not receive sales tax. Therefore, these districts must wait until the TIF or tax abatement is retired before any financial benefit is received. This wait can be over 15 years.

Because of the effect TIFs and tax abatements can have on the funding of public libraries, MLA will continue to monitor any proposed legislation. It is the position of MLA that these laws should be more restrictive regarding eligibility requirements for developments.

**MLA will examine and support that legislation which strengthens public library districts' status as political subdivisions and will monitor all legislation pertaining to the governance of libraries.**

It is important that all public libraries be strong, independent political subdivisions regardless of their type of library district.

Library districts should have the same basic powers that are granted to other political subdivisions of the State, including, but not limited to the power to set their tax levies, budget their funds, make decisions regarding services and enter into contracts.

MLA will closely monitor any proposed legislation relating to the boundaries between municipal library districts and county library districts (referred to as the '65 law) as well as proposals relating to broadening the library sub-district law.

Any legislation that relates to the governance of libraries shall be studied by the MLA Legislative Committee to determine its effect upon libraries. This will include proposed legislation relating to Chapter 182 (County and City Libraries – Libraries Generally) and Chapter 181 (State Library) of the Revised Statutes of the State of Missouri.

**MLA will monitor legislative activities and court actions related to the Hancock Amendment and other proposals related to state revenue/expenditures limitations.**

Because the Hancock Amendment (Article X, Sections 16 to 24 of the Constitution of Missouri) deals with revenue limitations including limits on the amount of taxes the legislature may impose as well as the setting of tax levies and fees by all political subdivisions in the State, any legislation related to Hancock would have an effect upon all political subdivisions receiving tax funds. This would include funding for Missouri State Library, universities, public libraries, school districts and community colleges.

Any proposals relating to placing limitations on state revenues and state expenditures or proposals affecting any state funds that benefit libraries will be very closely monitored.

**MLA will monitor all Internet filtering legislation.**

MLA believes that a local library's Board of Trustees should make the decisions regarding all library services. Missouri's public libraries have been encouraged to adopt their own policies regarding Internet usage. These local policies will take into consideration the community needs of that library district.

Filters do not block all sites some consider harmful. Filters, depending upon the criteria used for blocking, can restrict access to sites that contain valid and important information.

A state law mandating filtering could cause financial and logistical hardships on individual libraries.

**MLA will continue to build coalitions with political subdivisions that have similar interests in legislation and funding.**

Many of the issues that are of concern to librarians as well as trustees and friends also affect other political subdivisions in the State. By working together, MLA and other groups will increase awareness of these concerns and needs.