

January 10, 2009

Library 101 – A Primer for Local Governments

Attention Library Board Chairs/BCLTA Liaisons:

As promised, your BCLTA Board has completed work on a Library Primer for local governments, which we encourage you to use as a communication piece with newly elected and returning municipal councillors and regional district directors (as well as local government staff and others with an interest in or a need to know about public libraries). We suggest including the Primer in a letter addressed to Mayor and Council/Chair and Directors – ideally seeking an audience at an upcoming council/board meeting in order to present the Primer and discuss issues specific to your library.

Please note that this is a general overview and communication piece about the BC public library system. Some of the contents have been modified from BCLTA's Effective Board Member Handbook (developed with the assistance of Dr. Ken Haycock) and from Public Library Services Branch resources. The basic Primer is a three-page PDF document and we are also sending a Word version which includes a customizable fourth page where you can add information, photos and details about your own library. We have included a few suggestions as to the content you may wish to include here, but you should feel free to add whatever suits your needs.

For those libraries that would like to make the Primer available as a handout to library patrons, please note that we have also prepared a very slightly re-titled and adapted version to address a more general audience. This version also comes in three or four pages – the latter being a customizable Word document. Both the local government and general audience Primers will also be available for download under the "Advocacy" tab on the BCLTA website at www.bclta.org.

The local government Library Primer will be included in the binders distributed to new and returning councillors and directors at the 2009 Local Government Leadership Academy Elected Official Training Seminars – previously known as the Union of BC Municipalities' Newly Elected Official Seminars. We hope this will be an effective way to raise the public library profile among the local government crowd – including newly appointed councillor/director trustees. Your BCLTA Board also hopes to have an onsite presence at as many of these seminars as possible over the coming months – likely an information table with a Board and/or staff member on hand to answer questions.

We welcome your feedback on this first iteration of the Library Primer – some of the information we have included will need to be updated on a regular basis, so there will be plenty of opportunity to change the content in response to suggestions from the BCLTA membership. Let us know what works and what doesn't – or what else you'd like to see included in future editions. And please use and it distribute widely!

Any questions or concerns about the foregoing can be directed to BCLTA's Executive Director, Errin Morrison, at execdirector@bclta.org.