



BCLTA

To develop and support library trustees to advance public library service in British Columbia

February 17, 2006

To: Library Board Chairs and BCLTA Liaisons
Please distribute to all trustees on your board.

An Update on The Provincial Strategic Plan – Libraries Without Walls: The World Within Your Reach

Just over a year ago, the provincial government introduced their strategic plan for public libraries in BC - Libraries Without Walls: The World Within Your Reach. As we head into 2006, and with many new trustees joining Boards around the province, it's the perfect time to provide an update on the implementation of the plan. The attached document was prepared by Public Library Services Branch (PLSB) and gives a comprehensive summary of the strategic plan implementation activities to date. A number of initiatives are well underway.

We strongly encourage all trustees to read the attached information. It explains some of the broader library initiatives that are occurring across BC. The vast majority of these plans affect every library in the province. Some initiatives, such as the provincial purchase of selected licensed electronic databases, will directly reduce purchasing costs for your library. Targeted grants provide matching financial support for literacy and technology projects. Other initiatives, such as the Gateway project, will facilitate access to resources beyond your own library system.

Trustee involvement in the plan's implementation takes a number of different forms. Most of the major initiatives begin with a symposium to gather and exchange ideas. Each public library in the province is invited to send representatives to participate in these opening discussions. These representatives may be from your library staff and/or from your Board depending on the topic under discussion; it is up to each library to determine who will best represent your library's interests. As well, to further encourage participation, the provincial government provides financial support for travel to each symposium for one representative from each library – again it could be a trustee or a staff member. There were two symposiums in 2005 – Virtual Reference and Gateway. More than 16 trustees attended the Gateway Symposium and two trustees sit on this committee. The next symposium is slated for the fall of 2006 - Libraries in Dialogue with Government and will be held in Victoria.

Another key opportunity for trustee involvement will be the review of the Library Act that is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2006. Trustees will be included on this committee which will invite input from all Boards in BC.

At BCLTA we are working with Public Library Services Branch to keep trustees up to date and involved in strategic plan activities - BCLTA representatives attend all symposiums, we receive regular updates from PLSB and our Board members are involved with various initiatives at their local libraries.

We encourage you to discuss the involvement of your local library in these provincial initiatives with your local library Director or Chief Librarian.

Sincerely,
Lawrence Lavender
President - BCLTA

Have you Heard?