

# TRUSTEEtips

INFORMATION AND EVENTS FOR TODAY'S SC PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEES

JULY 2007

## **Library Boards are Responsible for Developing Policies**

Policymaking is one of the board's most important responsibilities. Policies are vital tools in carrying out the board's planning and evaluation decisions. In county and regional library systems, policies established by the board govern and guide all phases of the public library system's operation. Effective policies are management tools for running the library. The trustees, with the help of the director and staff, create these tools. The director and staff use them.

### **Benefits of Policy**

- Determines the library's mission and roles and makes sure that the library's goals and objectives, plans and procedures support the mission.
- Guides the director and staff in implementing the board's decisions.
- Provides direction and consistency in day-to-day services and operations.
- Assures that library users and staff are treated fairly and consistently.
- Encourages informed and proactive decision making by anticipating needs and problems before they reach the crisis stage.

### **Who Makes Policy?**

While only trustees have the legal responsibility and authority to make policy, experience shows that this process works best when the library director and staff are involved in researching options, drafting policies and making reports and recommendations to the trustees. Effective library services and development are the result of partnerships. The trustees, director and staff should cooperate with one another and complement each other's efforts.



It is the **responsibility of the director and staff** to keep the trustees informed about progress and problems. They advise, assist, report and recommend. When policy decisions are made, they implement the board's decisions, administering the library's programs within the framework of the board's policies, plan and budget.

It is the **responsibility of trustees** to establish library policy. In so doing, they should solicit information and advice from the director, the staff and library users. The board should make sure that policies are consistent with the library's conditions and circumstances. Because the board understands that for a policy to be meaningful, it must be implemented, they help the director and staffs understand, accept and follow library policies.

## Regional Trustee Training Wrap Up

The State Library staff provided regional trustee training in six locations earlier this year. Over 160 trustees participated in the late afternoon training session. Trustees reviewed the basic roles and responsibilities of being a trustee. One of the values of regional training is that there is time for trustees from different libraries to discuss common concerns and issues.

If your library system has recruited new trustee members, SC State Library staff welcomes requests to come to a board meeting and provide trustee training. Deborah Hotchkiss, Library Development Consultant can be reached at [dhotchkiss@statelibrary.sc.gov](mailto:dhotchkiss@statelibrary.sc.gov) or 803-734-8646.

## New SC Public Library Trustees

Appointed since January 2007

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