CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION
AGENDA ATTACHMENT 4

MEETING DATE: Thursday, November 21, 2013
AGENDA ITEM #: 10

ITEM: REPORT FROM COUNTY LIBRARIAN

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
None.
MEETING DATE: Thursday, November 21, 2013
AGENDA ITEM #: 11 A
ITEM: STATE LIBRARY FUNDING ISSUES

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Commissioners will address State Library funding.
Subject: Restore Funding for California’s Public Libraries!

Dear Governor Brown,

On behalf of the residents of Contra Costa County who are many of the over 1,000,000 Californians who use a library each day, we urge you to restore public library funding as you prepare the 2014-15 budget. The current funding of $4.7 million allocated in the 2013-14 Budget will provide much needed support for literacy programs that teach adults to read and other services. However, it’s not enough.

California libraries are being used more than ever. Increasingly teens and children are using libraries as their go-to education support resource. In this difficult economy, job seekers are lined up at the doors of their library every morning, looking to use the computers to search for work opportunities.

California public libraries:

- Provide Summer Reading programs that assist school age children.
- Provide school readiness programs that help children become kindergarten ready.
- Provide a safe place for students to do their homework.
- Provide a low stress and anonymous learning environment for immigrant and low income families.
- Provide everyone with an equal opportunity to access computers and current technology no matter their socio-economic standing.
- Provide full service resources for people who are seeking employment, applying for the Affordable Care Act, or looking to complete their GED.

Increasing library funding would strengthen California libraries in their ability to support education and a growing economy.

Good libraries, just like good schools and roads, are an essential part of our state’s infrastructure. As such, we trust that you will restore funding for public libraries in your 2014-15 Budget. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Shirley S. Peck, Ph.D.
Chair, Contra Costa County Library Commission

cc: Senator Mark DeSaulnier
    Senator Loni Hancock
    Senator Lois Wolk
    Assembly member Susan Bonilla
    Assembly member Joan Buchanan
    Assembly member Jim Frazier
    Assembly member Nancy Skinner
    Federal Glover, Chair, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
    David Twa, County Administrator
    Contra Costa County Library Commission
LIBRARIES CHANGE LIVES

Declaration for the Right to Libraries

In the spirit of the United States Declaration of Independence and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we believe that libraries are essential to a democratic society. Every day, in countless communities across our nation and the world, millions of children, students and adults use libraries to learn, grow and achieve their dreams. In addition to a vast array of books, computers and other resources, library users benefit from the expert teaching and guidance of librarians and library staff to help expand their minds and open new worlds. We declare and affirm our right to quality libraries—public, school, academic, and special—and urge you to show your support by signing your name to this Declaration for the Right to Libraries.

LIBRARIES EMPOWER THE INDIVIDUAL
Whether developing skills to succeed in school, looking for a job, exploring possible careers, raising a baby, or planning retirement, people of all ages turn to libraries for information, support, and access to computers and other resources to help them lead better lives.

LIBRARIES SUPPORT LITERACY AND LIFELONG LEARNING
Many children and adults learn to read at their school and public libraries. Summer reading programs, story hours, internet access, library card access to computers and other opportunities. Others come to the library to learn the technology and information skills that help them answer their questions, discover new interests, and share their ideas with others.

LIBRARIES STRENGTHEN FAMILIES
Families find a comfortable, welcoming space and a wealth of resources to help them learn, grow and play together.

LIBRARIES ARE THE GREAT EQUALIZER
Libraries serve people of every age, education level, income level, ethnicity and physical ability. For many people, libraries provide resources that they could not otherwise afford—resources they need to live, learn, work and govern.

LIBRARIES BUILD COMMUNITIES
Libraries bring people together, both in person and online, to share information and to learn from and help each other. Libraries provide support for seniors, immigrants and others with special needs.

LIBRARIES PROTECT OUR RIGHT TO KNOW
Our right to read, to write, to communicate, and speak freely must not be taken for granted. Libraries and librarians actively defend this most basic freedom as guaranteed by the First Amendment.

LIBRARIES STRENGTHEN OUR NATION
The economic health and successful governance of our nation depend on people who are literate and informed. Our public, academic and special libraries support this basic right.

LIBRARIES ADVANCE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP
Knowledge flows from knowledge. Whether doing a school assignment, seeking a cure for cancer, pursuing an academic degree or developing a more fuel efficient engine, scholars and researchers of all ages depend on the knowledge and expertise that libraries and librarians offer.

LIBRARIES HELP US TO BETTER UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER
People from all walks of life come together at libraries to discuss issues of common concern. Libraries provide programs, collections and meeting spaces to help us share and learn from our differences.

LIBRARIES PRESERVE OUR NATION'S CULTURAL HERITAGE
The past is key to our future. Libraries collect, digitize, and preserve original and unique historical documents that help us to better understand our past, present and future.
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