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ABSTRACT

The Interim Study Committee on Library Issues was directed to study all aspects of public libraries, and review the space and document security problems of the state archives. The "Introduction and Reasons for Study" section highlights the Committee's 1993 findings and recommendation; 1994 goals; and conditions at the state archives. The next section, "Summary of Work Program," covers the topics reviewed at each of the five committee meetings in 1994 as well as one subcommittee meeting. The "Summary of Testimony" section discusses the state archives; library governance; the role of libraries in an era of technological change; library standards; access to/funding of public libraries; and Indiana Library Federation (ILF) recommendations. The final section, "Committee Findings and Recommendations," summarizes its findings and recommends actions regarding public library governance, access, standards, funding, and the state archives. The Interim Study Committee membership roster and a witness list are also provided. (MAS)

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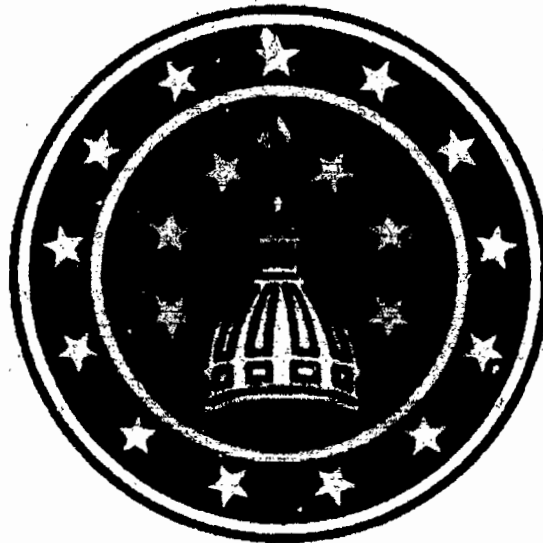
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FINAL REPORT OF THE INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY ISSUES



**Indiana Legislative Services Agency
200 W. Washington St., Suite 302
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November, 1994

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**INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE
ON
LIBRARY ISSUES**

Membership Roster

Senators

James W. Merritt, Jr., Chair
Indianapolis

Lawrence Borst
Indianapolis

Beverly Gard
Greenfield

Douglas Hunt
South Bend

Larry Macklin
Decatur

Vi Simpson
Bloomington

Representatives

Richard Bodiker, V. Chair
Richmond

Paul Cantwell
Indianapolis

John Day
Indianapolis

Kathy Richardson
Noblesville

Sue Scholer
W. Lafayette

Katherine Willing
Lebanon

I. STATUTORY DIRECTIVE

Legislative Council Resolution 2-94 established the Interim Study Committee on Library Issues (the Committee). The Committee's directives are as follows:

1. Study all aspects of public libraries (HB 1178, SCR 49, HCR 15);
2. Review space and document security problems of the state archives (HCR 53, SCR 30).

The Committee is an interim study committee that expires December 31, 1994.

II. INTRODUCTION AND REASONS FOR STUDY

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Committee was established to understand the current challenges of Indiana public libraries and build on the progress of the 1993 Library Issues Study Committee. The 1993 final report included three findings and one recommendation.

1993 FINDINGS

1. The committee found that available time for committee work in the 1993 interim was adequate to explore problem areas and to receive informative testimony on the specific aspects of public libraries assigned for study. However, the available time was not sufficient for the committee to craft solutions to the problems. Thus the committee found that further study was necessary to effect viable solutions to the problems explored during the 1993 interim.

2. The committee found serious interest among its members and the library community in exploring certain topics implied but not specifically listed in the committee's charge. These topics were:

- A. The relationships between schools and public libraries
- B. The need to increase public knowledge of, appreciation of, and support for public libraries.
- C. The role and nature of the public library of the future in the information age.

3. The committee found that the broad subject of the organization and funding of public libraries affords a variety of study topics of sufficient public policy importance to merit continuous legislative study.

1993 RECOMMENDATION

The General Assembly should enact into law a bill to recreate the Public Libraries Study Committee as a permanent statutory study committee under the direction of the Legislative Council. (The 1994 General Assembly chose to establish the 1994 Committee as an interim study committee rather than a statutory study committee.)

1994 GOALS

Approximately 9.2% of Indiana's residents are "unserved" by a public library, meaning these people do not live in a library taxing district. The goal of the Committee, through examining issues of library governance, access, standards, and funding, is to recommend changes to the public library system that will provide every Indiana resident access to a public library while maintaining strong library standards and an equitable funding mechanism.

STATE ARCHIVES

Adequacy of space, structure and document security are problems faced by the state archives. In addition to the issues facing public libraries, Legislative Council Resolution 2-94 charges the 1994 Committee to explore issues regarding the state archives.

III. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAM

Senator James Merritt, Jr., Committee Chairperson, presided over five meetings during the 1994 interim. Four meetings occurred in Indianapolis, IN and one in Nashville, IN. The Committee established a Subcommittee to examine the issue of access to public libraries. The Access Issues Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) met three times in Indianapolis. The three Subcommittee meetings were held between the second and third Committee meetings and will be discussed below.

MEETING #1

The first meeting was held at the Indiana State Library Auditorium, Indianapolis, IN on June 30, 1994. Topics reviewed at this meeting were:

1. Space and document security problems of the state archives; and
2. Public library governance issues.

MEETING #2

The second meeting was held at the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) Library Auditorium on July 28, 1994. Topics reviewed at this meeting were:

1. The role of public libraries in an era of technological change; and
2. Access to public libraries.

At this meeting the Committee decided the issue of access needed closer scrutiny. As a result, the Subcommittee on Access Issues was formed. The Subcommittee was chaired by Senator Beverly Gard, and included Representative Richard Bodiker, Representative Sue Scholer, and Representative Katherine Willing.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

All three Subcommittee meetings were held in Indianapolis, IN. The meetings occurred on August 16, 1994, September 6, 1994, and September 13, 1994. The Subcommittee discussed current barriers to access in unserved areas. The Subcommittee worked on a preliminary legislative proposal to extend access to all unserved areas, change the current petition/remonstrance process and provide additional state funding for public libraries.

MEETING #3

The third meeting took place in the Statehouse, Indianapolis, IN on September 20, 1994. Topics reviewed at this meeting were:

1. Public library funding and standards; and
2. A report from the Subcommittee on its activities.

MEETING #4

The fourth meeting occurred in the Abe Martin Lodge, Brown County State Park, Nashville, IN, on October 12, 1994 in conjunction with the Indiana Library Federation (ILF) annual Legislative Forum. The purpose of this meeting was to hear reactions from the ILF regarding the Committee's preliminary legislative proposal and to discuss the content of this final report.

MEETING #5

The final meeting was held in the Statehouse on October 25, 1994. Topics of review at this meeting were:

1. Review of ILF legislative proposals;
2. Further discussion of state archives issues; and
3. Committee findings and recommendations to the 1995 General Assembly.

IV. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY

The first four Committee meetings centered on specific topics regarding the state archives and public library issues. At the fifth meeting, the Committee revisited all of the issues and arrived at its findings and recommendations. This section will discuss each topic.

THE STATE ARCHIVES

The Indiana state archives are housed in the basement of the Indiana state library. The archives currently occupies approximately 16,400 square feet and have a storage capacity of approximately 24,000 cubic feet. The archives save approximately two percent of the records generated by the various branches of state and local government. Approximately 20 counties use the archives' vault space to house backups of vital records. The archives are managed by a 12-person staff.

State Archivist Jerry Handfield explained the archives' needs. He suggested it was imperative to move the storage of records out of the state library basement. Leaking pipes and walls are threatening much of the collection, and storage space has become inadequate. In some areas, boxes of newer documents stand in front of shelving units containing older documents, creating access problems and safety concerns for archives' staff needing to retrieve older documents.

While popular thought may be to computerize many of the archives' documents, archivists and librarians are concerned about the security and life of information stored on computer disks versus paper. An additional concern is that with the variety of computer hardware and storage mechanisms, the archives would be required to provide computer hardware and software capable of reading all types of formats. The cost of such a system could be large.

Many citizens, including former Governor Robert Orr, testified in support of assisting the archives out of their present situation. The Indiana Friends of the Archives stated their

willingness to work with the Committee to arrive at viable solutions to solving the archives' problems. The Friends of the Archives and others noted that genealogy is one of the top three hobbies in the United States, and that demand on the archives to provide genealogical information is growing.

Peter Harstad, Director, Indiana Historical Society (IHS), also testified regarding the proposed Indiana History Center to be built by IHS. The plan as of the first meeting was to provide approximately 3,500 square feet of storage space in the new center for the archives. The plan did not specify the types of shelving units which would be used; therefore, no assessment was made regarding available storage space in terms of cubic feet. The Committee asked the interested parties to provide specific recommendations to resolve the problems with the records storage.

On Sunday, August 28, 1994, rainwater from a heavy thunderstorm flooded the basement of the Indiana State Library, which houses the state archives. Alan January, an archives collections manager, was working at the time and reached Mr. Handfield. With the efforts of several employees, a disaster was averted. Since the flood, documents which were moved upstairs in the state library to a staff room and other manageable space remain and continue to dry out and receive repairs by archive employees.

Mr. Handfield suggested the flood posed significant short-term costs and underscored the long-term concerns regarding safety and adequacy of continuing to house documents in the state library basement. He noted that representatives from the Governor's office, the Department of Administration, the Indiana Historical Society, Friends of the Archives, the State Library, and others were working together to solve the short term problem of space to store documents removed from the basement after the flood and the long term problems discussed above.

At the fifth meeting, the Committee supported concepts for solving the short-term problems created by the August 28 flood and for solving the long-term problems regarding safety and adequacy of continuing to house archive documents in the state library basement.

LIBRARY GOVERNANCE

Beverly Martin, Johnson County Library Director and Indiana Library Federation Legislative Committee Chairperson, directed much of the discussion regarding the issues public libraries face. The work of the Committee builds upon the work of the 1993 Library Issues Study Committee.

Regarding library boards, the ILF recommends that boards in Indiana remain as appointed entities rather than elected, and should retain full fiscal autonomy. Other speakers reiterated the ILF position, noting that the current system works well and that those responsible for public library policy making and operations must have fiscal autonomy in order to work free of censorship issues and political agendas. They suggested that the cost and time pressures of an election may deter some people from library board service.

THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN AN ERA OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

The Committee heard testimony suggesting that public libraries will be a vital link to the Information Superhighway (the Internet) for residents who cannot afford the necessary computer hardware and software in their homes or do not have access through their place of employment or educational institution.

Barbara Fischler, Director, IUPUI University Libraries, demonstrated some capabilities of the Scholar Workstation -- the wealth of information which can be accessed via the Internet. As access to the Internet and understanding of its capabilities increases, Indiana residents will have worldwide information at their fingertips. She stressed that all Indiana libraries need Internet connections and workstations for public use if Indiana is to remain competitive heading into the 21st century. James Neal, Dean of University Libraries, Indiana University-Bloomington, noted that while 21% of libraries in the United States have Internet connections, only 3% of Indiana libraries currently are connected.

The library community supports the concept of a statewide technology plan. Mr. Neal recommended six facets such a plan should include:

- 1) A defined government role in supporting public libraries;
- 2) The promotion of statewide literacy;
- 3) The promotion of statewide computer networks;
- 4) The use of public libraries to deliver government information and services;
- 5) Reasonable availability of dial-up access to the Internet for all Indiana residents;
- 6) Indiana's participation in national Internet training efforts;

It was generally agreed that today's technology was fascinating and that one of the major responsibilities of Indiana libraries will be to provide these services. The Committee agreed that funding is a central concern regarding provision of new technological services.

LIBRARY STANDARDS

Current Indiana Library and Historical Board Rules provide broad minimum standards for public library operation, personnel, facilities and accessibility, eligibility for receiving local, state, and federal funds, and levels of service provision. Each standard contains several guidelines, which are suggestions for achieving the standards. However, these guidelines are not required as a part of the standard. The ILF recommends that the Library and Historical Board promulgate rules which add the guidelines as part of the required standards. This would provide public libraries more specific direction in daily activities, resulting in improved service for public library patrons.

The ILF also suggests that all public libraries provide a basic technology package, including a computer capable of becoming a file server (future goals include each library connected to the Internet), a CD-ROM unit, a modem, printers, fax machines, and appropriate software. The library community sees provision of emerging technological services as critical to their role as information providers.

The ILF recommends an accreditation process for public libraries. Based on the level of standards each library achieves, accreditation may be rewarded. Librarians from Iowa, which has an accreditation process, suggest accreditation is a measure of pride. The ILF suggests that each library would work very hard to gain accreditation, resulting in quality library services geared to meet the patrons' informational needs.

The Committee discussed using additional state dollars as an incentive for achieving higher standards for service.

ACCESS TO/FUNDING OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The issues of access to public libraries and funding mechanisms will be discussed together in this section. The common goal of the Committee and the ILF is to provide a framework under which every Indiana resident has access to a public library. All ILF proposals regarding governance, standards, access and funding support this goal.

Approximately 9.2% of Indiana's population (508,000 people) currently live in an area "unserved" by a public library. State library staff provided a demographic analysis of unserved areas, which focused on 15 counties in which 63% of the unserved people live. No clear pattern emerged regarding demographic characteristics and location in an unserved area, but many of the counties fall below the state averages for median household income

and percentage of people with a bachelor's degree. Some unserved areas remain as such due to voter disapproval of property taxes.

Librarians from Delphi, New Palestine, Rossville, and Wells County shared their experiences with the Committee. In certain communities, attempts to merge an unserved area with a served area have failed, due largely to the issue of increased property taxes. In other communities, as many as 1/3 of the children in school districts live in an unserved area. As a result, teachers are hesitant to assign lengthy research projects or other projects which may require the use of a public library. Librarians are concerned that if these trends continue, children of these communities will suffer from a lack of equal educational opportunity compared with counterparts in areas served by public libraries.

The Committee, realizing the issues of access and funding are linked, formed a Subcommittee to address this issue further. The Subcommittee worked with Bev Martin to prepare a preliminary legislative proposal - Preliminary Draft 3298 (PD 3298). PD 3298 included measures to create local library planning commissions which would develop a plan to provide access to all residents in unserved areas. The proposal also included \$3 million per year in lottery profits to provide funds for the following purposes: 1) 30% (\$900,000) for reciprocal borrowing support; 2) 20% (\$600,000) to assist planning commissions in extending access to unserved/underserved areas; and 3) 50% (\$1.5 million) for new technology support.

The Subcommittee returned its proposal to the full Committee at its September 20, 1994, meeting. The Committee was concerned that the petition/remonstrance process favored the petitioners. The intent of the Subcommittee was to provide a petition/remonstrance process for the inclusion of unserved areas which would provide both sides equal time to gather signatures supporting their position.

Public libraries receive approximately 81% of their money from local taxes -- primarily property taxes (the nationwide average local contribution is 77%). Approximately 2.5% of total local property taxes are levied for public libraries. Approximately 0.42% of total library funding comes from the state. The remainder comes mainly from private sources. The ILF recognizes that property taxes are not popular, but are nevertheless a stable revenue stream and should continue as such. The ILF also recognizes the need to seek new funding sources for public libraries. Following are the ILF recommendations regarding access and funding.

ILF Recommendation #1

The centerpiece of the ILF recommendations is larger state support. The ILF recommended total state support of \$2 per capita, per year (approximately \$11 million for each state fiscal

year). One dollar per capita (approx. \$5.5 million) would be distributed to libraries according to population served and would be used for collection development. In exchange for this money, all public libraries would agree to serve any Indiana resident. The other dollar was recommended to be distributed through the state library for new technology grants and assistance for public libraries in achieving stricter standards.

The ILF said that reciprocal borrowing and interlibrary loan programs have the potential of transforming local resources into state resources, ensuring equality between library districts. Public library cooperation and its resulting benefits transcend library boundaries and will help make all Indiana residents information rich. The ILF regards greater state support as the key to ensuring the continuation of these programs.

The ILF also recommended eliminating the current \$0.55 library property tax rate cap. Approximately nine libraries' tax rates are at or approaching this statutory maximum. Librarians who face increasing demands for their services but already are taxing at or close to the cap told the Committee the continuation of the cap at its current level will mean reduction in service hours, greater reliance on volunteers, delays in capital renovation, and delays in technological improvements.

The ILF supports continuation of the current excess levy appeal process for all libraries. The ILF considers the excess levy appeal necessary to respond to significant increases in demands for services and to implement emerging information technologies.

Upon hearing the ILF initial recommendations, the Committee suggested that the total cost of the \$2 per capita per year (approximately \$22 million over the biennium) would likely be more than the General Assembly could appropriate. The Committee asked the ILF to prioritize libraries' needs and return with a proposal assuming \$1 per capita per year.

ILF Recommendation #2

At the fifth meeting, the Committee heard the ILF alternative proposal, which requests \$1 per capita per year in state assistance (approximately \$5.5 million per year). The proposal suggested that \$3 million per year be provided as assistance for the reciprocal borrowing program. Half (\$1.5 million) would be distributed on a per net loan basis; the other half on a per capita basis. The ILF suggested that dividing the money in this manner would assure that small libraries, which may not have a large population base but which loan a great deal of materials under the reciprocal borrowing program, would receive equitable funding which would enable them to continue their loaning activity.

Under the ILF proposal, the next \$2 million would be distributed on a per capita basis (based on population of library service district) for new technology grants. The remaining \$500,000 (approx.) would be used to assist newly established county library planning commissions in creating plans to provide service to all residents in areas currently unserved by a library district.

The ILF proposes that the state money be distributed only to those library districts meeting the following criteria:

- The \$3.5 million per capita distribution (\$1.5 million for reciprocal borrowing plus \$2 million for new technology grants) should be based on the population of the library taxing district;
- Libraries must meet state standards or have been granted waivers from the standards;
- Libraries must charge a minimum fee of \$25 for a non-resident library card.

The \$3 million for reciprocal borrowing is seen by the ILF as the bottom line necessary to eliminate the Public Library Access Card (PLAC). The original PLAC card was developed in 1992 to allow residents access to all public libraries. Under P.L. 37-1993, SECTION 1, a non-resident of a library district was provided the option of obtaining a PLAC by paying the card fee of \$16.77 (the fee decreased to \$16 in 1994) plus the library district's operating fund expenditure per capita in the most recent year for which that information is available. Senator Gard noted she heard of situations where individuals would be required to pay \$170 in order to gain access to a public library under the PLAC system. Bev Martin said the \$3 million could end the PLAC program, and she hoped the \$25 non-resident fee would provide an incentive for individuals to support the work of the county library planning commissions to include all residents in a library district.

The ILF supports continuation of the current excess levy appeal process for all libraries. The ILF considers the excess levy appeal necessary to respond to significant increases in demands for services and to implement emerging information technologies.

V. COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Governance

Finding: The Committee finds that the current library board structure, which provides for locally appointed, fiscally autonomous boards, is acceptable and should remain unchanged.

Access

Findings: The Committee finds unacceptable the current percentage of Indiana residents living in areas unserved by public libraries. The Committee also finds the current PLAC system unacceptable in providing reciprocal borrowing library services.

Recommendation: There was consensus among Committee members that the concept of establishing county library planning commissions found in Preliminary Draft 3298 be introduced as legislation.

Standards

Finding: The Committee supports the Indiana Library Federation (ILF) suggestion that the guidelines in the Indiana Library and Historical Board rules become actual standards. The Committee supports the concepts regarding provision of a basic technology package and a public library accreditation process. These concepts are discussed in the "Summary of Testimony" section.

Funding

Findings: The Committee finds the current funding structure for public libraries inadequate to provide all Indiana residents access to public libraries. The current structure also cannot meet current and future service demands. Reciprocal borrowing and new technologies are specific areas in which libraries must be ready to meet the needs of Indiana residents.

In addition to the \$1 per capita recommendation discussed below, the Committee finds that positive consideration should be given to allowing those libraries with a current property tax rate at or approaching the \$0.55 cap the ability to appeal an excess levy which would raise their property tax rate above the cap. The Committee finds the current excess levy appeal process appropriate to address the additional needs of public libraries not approaching the rate cap constraint.

The Committee finds that state support for public libraries is insufficient. The Committee finds that positive consideration should be given to a proposal similar to that in PD 3298, which would provide \$3 million in lottery profits per year for public libraries.

Recommendations: The Committee recommends increased state support for public libraries in the amount of \$1 per capita per year (approximately \$5.5 million), to be distributed as follows:

- 1.) \$3 million for reciprocal borrowing support
 - a) \$1.5 million on a per capita basis
 - b) \$1.5 million on a per net loan basis
- 2.) \$2 million for new technology grants, distributed on a per capita basis
- 3.) \$500,000 (approx.) in assistance to library planning commissions in extending public library access to all Indiana residents.

The Committee recommends the money be distributed according to the following criteria:

- The \$3.5 million per capita distribution (\$1.5 million for reciprocal borrowing plus \$2 million for new technology grants) should be based on the population of the library taxing district;
- Libraries must meet state standards or have been granted waivers from the standards;
- Libraries must charge a minimum fee of \$25 for a non-resident library card.

STATE ARCHIVES

Findings:

The Committee finds that the state archives stores and manages documents and materials invaluable to Indiana residents and government agencies. The Committee considers continued safekeeping of these materials a matter of public duty and trust.

The Committee finds that there are significant space and document security problems at the state archives. These problems have been greatly exacerbated by the August 28, 1994 flooding of part of the state library basement, which houses the state archives.

The Committee commends the joint efforts of the Governor's office, the Department of Administration (DOA), the Indiana Historical Society, the Indiana Friends of the Archives, the Indiana State Library, and other parties in searching for solutions to the short-term problems caused by the flood and the long-term problems of continuing to store and maintain archive documents in the basement of the state library.

Recommendations: The Committee recommends the following short-term solutions for storing documents damaged or threatened by the August 28 flood:

1. Move as much archival material as possible from the state library basement to the Academy of Science (located in the state library, second floor). Move the newspaper storage room in the state library mezzanine area to the basement and use the mezzanine area for additional archive document storage.
2. Support the DOA's efforts to produce a maintenance plan for the state library building. This would include complete analysis of the rooftop drainage and basement electrical systems.
3. Continue searches for other interim storage facilities for archive documents.

The Committee further recommends that all appropriate government agencies and interested parties fully research the feasibility of including in the current Indiana History Center plans an additional building which would house the state archives.

WITNESS LIST

F. Gerald Handfield
State Archivist

Governor Robert D. Orr

Governor Otis R. Bowen

Donald F. Carmony
Emeritus Professor of History, Indiana University

Beth Greene
Indiana Friends of the Archives

Kent Shadley
Vice President, Sagamore Environmental Enterprises

John Hammond
Attorney

Dale Drake
Morgan County Historian

Mary Morgan
Indiana Daughters of the American Revolution

Pamela Bennett
Director, Indiana Historical Bureau

Dutch Bole
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John Glen
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Peter Harstad
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Bob Barrows
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Ray Ewick
Director, Indiana State Library

Beverly Martin
Director, Johnson County Library; Chairperson, Indiana Library Federation Legislative Committee

John Barnett
Attorney; Representative of ILF

Hugh Wolfe
Trustee, Carmel/Clay Township Library

Matthew Win
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Marti Miller
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Roberta White
Delphi Public Library

Diane Lawson
Rossville School Librarian

Marcia Parker
New Palestine Community Library

Barbara Elliott
Wells County Public Library

Jim Schwarzkopf
Principal, Southern Wells High School

Senator Katie Wolf

Richard Bell
Fortville-Vernon Township Public Library

Leslie Dwyer
Association of Indiana Counties

Jeff Krull
Director, Allen County Public Library; Chairman, ILF Funding Task Force

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Indiana State Archives