



Report of the NCLA Public Policy Committee July 16, 2004

We hope that this report will be amended soon to announce that because of an advocacy effort undertaken by NCLA and the North Carolina Public Library Directors Association (NCPLDA), NC LIVE has received \$1.5 million in new funding. Now, however, the situation is fluid, with the two houses of the North Carolina General Assembly working to reconcile differing spending plans.

Both the House and Senate budgets contain the new NC LIVE funding, but each budget appropriates it differently. Therefore, it is at issue in the House/Senate conference. If the two houses are unable to agree on a final overall budget, it is possible that the legislature will recess and return after the July 20 primary election.

The initial goal of this year's advocacy campaign called for a \$2.25 million increase in the State Library budget for NC LIVE to maintain existing resources in the face of rising costs. The request was scaled back to \$1.5 million on the advice of library advocates in the legislature. The House budget included the \$1.5 million and placed it in the State Library budget; the Senate budget divided the funding between the State Library and University system budgets.

The NCPLDA's Legislative Day event on Wednesday, June 2, featured an appearance by House Co-Speaker and strong library advocate Richard Morgan, as well as a brief meeting with Senate President Pro-Tem Marc Basnight that included Public Policy Committee Chair Ross Holt, NCPLDA President Bill Snyder, a delegation of Basnight's constituents led by East Albemarle Regional Library Director Tom Shepley, and Ken Eudy, our lobbyist.

The county-by-county network of NCPLDA has proven critical once again in our presumed legislative success, as has Ken Eudy. Much of the efforts this session have taken place behind the scenes, where Ken has been instrumental.

The Public Policy Committee will meet within the next two months to begin planning an advocacy strategy for upcoming legislative sessions. How to continue to pay for a lobbyist – an indispensable part of an advocacy campaign – is an issue that the committee will have to address.

Assuming that the NC LIVE funding increase ultimately comes through, the chair strongly encourages NCLA to use its track record of library advocacy success as a selling point in recruiting and retaining members.

Submitted by Ross A. Holt,
NCLA Public Policy Committee Chair