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Dear Municipal Council,

The Southeast Regional Library Board is concerned that the Province of Saskatchewan will constrain or backtrack on public library funding as part of their current 2011 budget preparations. The regional libraries saw their overall provincial government funding for 2010 frozen with Southeast Regional Library's provincial library grant actually being reduced. Early indications would lead the library trustees to anticipate continuing restraint.

The Saskatchewan Information and Library Services (SILS) single integrated library system project was launched two years ago with the announcement that substantial funding was being provided by the Ministry of Education. (Please note the attached documentation on the new system and its initial success.) It is the Southeast Regional Library Board's concern that the Province of Saskatchewan is poised to reduce or delay its funding commitments for this initiative. Such a reduction in provincial funding would directly increase the municipal library grants payable to regional libraries.

Please find attached a SUMA resolution that the City of Moose Jaw has prepared on this matter. We understand that a similar SARM resolution is also in the works. Please support the resolution in whatever forum you have available to you including contacting your local Member of the Legislative Assembly.

Thank you for your support.

Yours truly,

Kenneth Sutherland
Chairperson
Southeast Regional Library

SUMA Resolution

Whereas The Province of Saskatchewan, represented by the Minister of Education on behalf of the Saskatchewan Provincial Library entered into an agreement to provide the following financial support to complete the SILS project:

"The Minister shall advance to the Managing Library up to \$4,200,000 as follows:

- (i) up to \$2,525,000 on or before March 31, 2009**
- (ii) up to a further \$525,000 on or before March 31, 2010**
- (iii) up to a further \$825,000 on or before March 31, 2011**
- (iv) up to a further \$325,000 on or before March 31, 2012"**

and,

Whereas the implementation of the SILS Project is ongoing and,

Whereas the success of the SILS Project has shown strong increase in the provincial sharing of local resources and,

Whereas the cost of implementation and support of the SILS Project continues to increase,

Therefore be it resolved that the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association urge the Province of Saskatchewan *to continue* to meet the maximum funding commitment as defined in the Single Integrated Library System Agreement and further, that the Province recognize the long term benefits and expenses associated with the success of the SILS Project.

Background:

In October 2008, the province entered into an agreement with all seven Saskatchewan Regional Library Systems, Pahkisimon Nuye?ah Library System (the Northern Library System), Regina Public Library, Saskatoon Public Library and Provincial Library to create the Single Integrated Library System.

This innovative program created the first province-wide public library system in Canada. Now known as Saskatchewan Information & Library Services Consortium, this system united all 313 branch libraries into one automated computer system. Library patrons now have the entire provincial collection at their fingertips. They can search, place holds, and receive materials from any branch in the province. Accessible from any computer, the interface is easy to negotiate for those with even the most modest of familiarity with computers.

SILS became operational on December 14, 2009 and by September 29, 2010, all ten regional library systems as well as the Provincial Library collections were available.

Implementation of the system continues with more features being added and wrinkles are being ironed out. The SILS project is already showing exceptional success - exponential growth in interlibrary loans and sharing of resources throughout the province, as well as overall increases in circulation are being experienced.

It is vital to the SILS project that funding remain in place to help offset the costs of success. SILS has helped unite the Province by making resources available to even the smallest branches and, at the same time, displayed Saskatchewan's pioneering spirit and innovation for all the other provincial library systems watching SILS.

Further information:

In October 2008, the Provincial Government, through the Ministry of Education, entered into an agreement to assist the public libraries of Saskatchewan with the purchase of a single integrated library system which would serve all the citizens of the province. After careful consideration the SILS Consortium entered into negotiations with Innovative Interfaces Inc. (III) to purchase their Millennium and Encore software products. Using "Amazon.ca" or Google-like searches, they allow all residents to simultaneously search the 7,500,000 titles held by our public libraries. The books are then brought in to the closest branch from the nearest location to serve the patron's education, information or recreation needs.

By September 29, 2010 all 10 public library systems and the provincial libraries collections were available province-wide. However, there is much left to do. Several enhancement products are being added. Data clean-up, an inevitable result of merging eight systems, is needed. Additional staff is required to complete the project. New cost projects include a \$530,000 System Service Fee /software maintenance fees beginning on January 1, 2011. Under the conditions of the contract with the Ministry of Education, we are also obliged to set aside another \$150,000 per year to replace the server hardware.

The III Millennium System has benefited all residents. As of October 21st 2010 5,729,783 items have circulated using the system. 626,167 holds were filled across the province – not bad considering only 4 of the 11 systems were live for more than six months! Concern had been expressed that there was a possibility of the rural libraries placing a drain on the city collections. This did not materialize and the province as a whole benefited. Not only was information that was previously only available in the cities being made easily available to the rural areas, but the cities benefited by being able to tap into the large store of recreational reading to be found out in the rural areas.

To date the government has funded the original purchase of the hardware and the software plus provided assistance by funding a project coordinator. Beginning in 2011-2012, an annual amount of \$50,000 has been pledged by the Minister to cover all requisite Provincial Library maintenance and membership fees.

In 2008 the municipalities, through their city, regional or northern library systems contributed another \$530,000.

In 2009 the municipalities contributed another \$423,600 to SILS to cover direct expenses such as salary, data clean-up, etc. The municipalities, through their library systems, spent another \$100,000 to convert their data. **The library systems have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars in in-kind technical and administrative support to the SILS project.**

It is expected that, over and above the Provincial projected contribution, the municipalities are contributing at least another \$880,000 per year, to maintain and develop the system. The libraries are fortunate to have a supportive ministry. We

did not lose funding in the 2010 budget but we also did not gain. We need your support in helping us convince the government that it is to the benefit of all Saskatchewan to continue funding this project and to provide us with assistance to make sure that this remains a truly Saskatchewan-wide service.

Allan Johnson
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