



FEBRUARY 21ST, 2014

DEAR LIBRARIANS AND TRUSTEES:

This year, we invite you and your library to participate in regional Legislative breakfasts. These events were held annually from 1999 through 2008, and enabled libraries across the state to engage with their local legislators about library related issues. For 2014, the Vermont Library Association's Government Relations Committee is reviving the regional legislative breakfasts (or gatherings) statewide the week of April 7th, and we hope you will join with libraries across the state to advocate together for our services to Vermont and Vermonters.

While the format of these gatherings varies, they all provide an opportunity for legislators, librarians, and trustees to talk about library activities and needs, share concerns about literacy skills and access to information, and hear about the legislative process and the financial realities libraries face. It is important to create connections with legislators and let them know what our libraries are doing to make Vermonters' lives better.

The Vermont Library Association's Government Relations Committee has recently been revived after a hiatus period of several years. While we hope your community will be able to participate in hosting a library legislative breakfast this year, we're also looking for your feedback on the process for facilitating these events and the VLA's role in them. Any thoughts you can share will be useful in our planning for the coming year, when we hope to get a much earlier start on scheduling these events.

We welcome your input and help in this exciting initiative! If you have time or ideas, please contact our committee chair, **Selene Colburn**, [scolburn@uvm.edu](mailto:scolburn@uvm.edu).

**Sincerely,**

**Selene Colburn, VLA Government Relations Chair**

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## STEPS IN PLANNING A LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

- Several weeks before the event, call and meet with your neighboring librarians and trustees to plan a brief program for the week of April 7th or another time that works for your group. Share the responsibility for inviting legislators and for arrangements. Check the state General Assembly website for information about legislators and their committee assignments: <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/>
- Check on possible conflicts such as Chambers of Commerce monthly legislative breakfasts or other organizations' legislative gatherings. A legislator is your best resource for this information. If this is not a good time, ask him/her to suggest one.
- Put together display materials and sample promotional materials from all participating libraries. This is a chance to toot your horn! Show and tell the good things your library does. A story board, a Power Point slide show running continuously, or other attention-getter also works well when gathering over coffee. Comparative statistics are also useful.
- Use the materials in this packet to develop your press release, invitation, agenda, and fact sheets. Suggested talking points and questions you might be asked are also included.

If you have any questions, contact any of these members of the VLA's Government Relations Committee:

Selene Colburn (selene.colburn@uvm.edu)	656-9980
Rubi Simon (rsimon@burlingtonvt.gov)	865-7241
Jessica Allard (jallard@burlington.edu)	923-2131
Daniel DeSanto (daniel.desanto@uvm.edu)	223-3338

**The ALA Advocacy Website provides information on questions and concerns that you may want to discuss with your Legislator and Trustees. Check it out at: <http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=issues>**

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# VERMONT LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE DAY – 2014

## SUGGESTED AGENDA

**This program should last about an hour:**

1. Greet each person as they arrive. Have at least one person (a trustee?) at the door to handle coats, offer nametags, etc. Look for your legislator(s) and make sure you introduce yourself.
2. Allow everyone to mingle around the food for 10-15 min. until all/most are there and have their food. Invite everyone to take a seat or gather in one spot.
3. Program (20-30 min.):
  - a. Welcome - Trustee chair
  - b. Introductions - Depending on the size of the group, go around the room. If there are a lot of people, make sure at least legislators are introduced.
  - c. Choose a format that is likely to work in your community - some groups just gather and visit with their legislators, while others have a more formal program with short presentations planned.
  - d. Questions and answers - be prepared. See "Questions You Might Be Asked."  
Make sure you ask:
    - *What's the best way for librarians to contact you about issues as they arise?*
    - *How can we librarians better inform you about what we're doing?*
  - e. Voice your willingness to inform the public about legislative matters as well, perhaps via a legislative bulletin board or notebook.
  - f. Thank people for coming!
4. Demonstrations of various library services and tours with staff or trustees.

Reminders:

- Nametags for everyone. Include name, title (librarian, trustee, Friend, etc.)
- Handouts (fact sheets, posters, etc.) set at all places if you have tables set. If you are using a more informal arrangement, make sure each person receives a packet when arriving or leaving, whichever works best.
- **Send follow up thank you notes to all legislators who attended immediately after the event.** Contact those that couldn't come, and send handouts and an invitation to visit soon.

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# VERMONT LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE DAY – 2014

## SUGGESTED PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Library

Address

Phone number

Your name and title

Release date

**AREA LIBRARIANS TO MEET WITH LEGISLATORS**

**LOCATION**

**DATE and TIME**

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014, librarians and trustees from the towns of \_\_\_\_\_ will hold a legislative breakfast event at the \_\_\_\_\_ Library.

Local librarians and trustees will update lawmakers on the invaluable contributions that their libraries make to education, digital literacy, and economic and workforce development. In 2013, in addition to circulating [xxxxx # of] books, videos, and other resources, [Franklin] county libraries delivered services such as [insert your amazing examples here, e.g. “summer reading programs, English as a second language courses, community meeting spaces, a video editing class for kids, and sold out readings by area authors like Chris Bohjalian and Stephen Kiernan.]

Librarians are eager to work with Vermont’s legislators to work together to better inform the public of issues as they arise during the legislative session and to ensure policies and resources that allow Vermont libraries to best serve their communities.

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# VERMONT LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE DAY – 2014

## SUGGESTED INVITATION

Library name  
Address  
Date

Name  
Address

Dear (Senator or Representative) \_\_\_\_\_,

You are invited to a breakfast at the \_\_\_\_\_ Library, (location)  
\_\_\_\_\_, on Monday, April 7th, 2014, at 8:30 am.

We're eager to let you know about the important work libraries are doing in your community to foster early childhood and digital literacy, to further economic development, and to provide lifelong public services to Vermonters of all backgrounds.

We look forward to learning how we can help you continue to keep Vermonters informed about legislative issues and concerns that affect them. We are also happy to answer any questions you may have about Vermont libraries or current legislative issues relating to libraries.

Librarians and trustees statewide will be offering this opportunity to learn how we can work together. We hope you will be able to attend and share your views with us.

Sincerely,

Please RSVP to \_\_\_\_\_ (name)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (phone no.)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (e-mail)

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# VERMONT LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE DAY – 2014

## SAMPLE FACT SHEET

### [YOUR] Public Library 2014 Fact Sheet

Did you know that...?

- 1,346 residents are registered to use the library as of January, 2014, and, in an average week, more than 800 people come to the library.
- 36,953 items were checked out last year - books, books-on-tape, DVDs, and music.
- The library sponsored 207 programs, with a total attendance of 2,605. These include storyhours, plant swaps, book discussions, travel talks, historical programs, our own “Antiques Roadshow,” and more.
- The library provides free meeting space for tutoring, Scouts, Alcoholics Anonymous, and other groups.
- More than 150 people a week use library computers to do use word processing, the Vermont Online Library and the Internet each day to find information on jobs, health, taxes, and more.
- The library co-sponsors programs with the Historical Society and the Recreation Department, and provides outreach at the Senior Center, as well as at day care centers and summer park programs.
- The Library borrowed 505 books via Interlibrary Loan from all over Vermont.
- The library costs local taxpayers \$13.05 per capita. The library is supported primarily by local taxes, supplemented by the support of the Friends of the Library and through local fundraising.
- The library is locally governed by an elected Board of Trustees. The Library is a department of the town. The town maintains the building, and provides benefits for library employees.

**Comment [BA1]:** Was this a real number at the time? How will librarians get this info?

**Comment [SC2]:** Not sure if this is a real # or not, but it should be pretty easy to produce with a city's financial officer: library budget that comes from taxes divided by number of taxpayers, right?

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# VERMONT LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE DAY – 2014

## SUGGESTIONS & TALKING POINTS

1. Legislators receive a lot of mail every day. It might be a good idea to call your legislator to invite him/her to the breakfast and then follow up with a written invitation.
2. Have a handout of your library's statistics. If a statistic is going to make your library look bad, don't include it. Legislators want to know about your successes.
3. Have trustees, Friends of the Library or patrons present. It is effective to have non-employees of the library advocating for your institution and you.
4. Show access and connectedness to other agencies that deal with adult and children's literacy issues. Vermont legislators are looking at ways to increase funding and support for early childhood education. Talk about your ongoing support for and collaboration with to state and local education organizations, from schools to adult basic education programs. Talk up your summer reading program! The IMLS-funded 2010 Dominican study found that students who participated in public libraries' summer reading program had better reading skills at the beginning of the next school year and at the end of third grade and scored higher on standardized tests.
5. If your library is a community center, talk about groups that meet there. Demonstrate your success at reaching out to those who won't necessarily walk through the door of the library. Does your library have a bookmobile, or reach out directly to special populations such as seniors or New Americans?
6. Inform legislators about ways that your library contributes to economic and workforce development. Do you teach workshops for job seekers, support small business owners in their research and professional development, or host apprentice programs? Do you facilitate makerspace style events that help kids and adults learn new skills and technologies?
7. Technology is an important issue. Many residents only access to the Internet may be through library services. Talk about how your library is bridging the digital divide and offering a wide array of high-quality information available via the Internet, such as that on the Vermont Online Library.

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# VERMONT LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE DAY – 2014

## QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT BE ASKED

### **Q. What are you asking for?**

A. Make a list of specific topics/ideas for your area or library. Examples include:

- Funding for...
- Support for...
- Local initiatives ...

### **Q. Why do we even need libraries anymore? Isn't everything on the internet?**

A. The internet isn't free. You have to own a computer, pay for access, and know how to navigate websites. Libraries were created to freely provide access to information to everyone with trained staff to help you. Libraries are more than the books sitting on our shelves. We offer a *free* suite of services that engage our communities with lifelong learning. From early literacy story times to teen gaming clubs; maker-spaces to English language classes; or genealogy research to job training – libraries serve our communities in ways no other public service can. We need libraries more than ever. During this struggling economy, libraries act as cultural, social, and intellectual centers to ensure that our communities continue to thrive and grow.

*"As the economy continues to struggle, many libraries are transforming into job centers."*

*"The public library is often the heart of the community—bringing people together in a way no other community organization can."*

*"Many studies support the idea that dollars spent on libraries provide solid economic returns to the community."*

<http://geekthelibrary.org/geek-the-library/index.html>

*"Small and rural libraries continue to provide substantial electronic and digital resources for patrons through access to e-books and publicly accessible computer terminals."*

*"Although per capita revenue has decreased over the past three years, visitation and circulation have increased for both small and rural libraries."*

[http://www.ims.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/Brief2013\\_05.pdf](http://www.ims.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/Brief2013_05.pdf)

*"95% of Americans ages 16 and older agree that the materials and resources available at public libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed."*



<http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/12/11/libraries-in-communities/>

**Q. What is interlibrary loan and why is it important?**

A. Interlibrary loan (ILL) is one of the most important services provided by libraries. Essentially, it is resource sharing. If you are looking for a book and your library doesn't have it, you can use your library to borrow the book if it's owned by another library. ILL saves libraries money by increasing resource sharing and reducing unnecessary collection development. Vermont currently has an inefficient interlibrary loan system. The Vermont Automated Library System (VALS) is outdated and needs new software to provide a more streamlined experience for library patrons. Most Vermont libraries also rely on the U.S. Postal Service to transport all interlibrary loan requests. As budgets shrink, and postal costs go up – this is an unnecessary expense on individual libraries. Vermont needs a statewide interlibrary loan courier service that would ensure timely delivery of resources, and reduce the overall cost of ILL expense. Updating VALS and providing a courier service are statewide issues that require state-level funding.

**Q. What about the bills in the legislature to permit serving alcohol in libraries?**

A. See attached H.0385 VLA Talking Points

**Q. What is the Vermont Department of Libraries?**

A. The mission of the Department of Libraries (VTLib) is to collect, organize, and disseminate information and library materials in a variety of formats to the three branches of State government, libraries statewide, the general public, and Vermonters with special needs; to support and strengthen local libraries; to foster new means for statewide cooperation and resource sharing among all types of libraries; and to increase public awareness of libraries and their services and to act as an advocate on their behalf.

For more information go to: <http://libraries.vermont.gov/>

**Q. What is the Vermont Library Association?**

A. The Vermont Library Association a professional organization for librarians, library staff, and trustees. It is also a state chapter of the American Library Association. The Vermont Library Association is an educational organization committed to the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and librarianship in the State of Vermont.

For more information go to: <http://www.vermontlibraries.org/>

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### ***ALA OFFICE FOR LIBRARY ADVOCACY (OLA)***

<http://www.ala.org/offices/ola>

CONGRESSIONAL TOOLKIT

<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/files/advleg/advocacyuniversity/advclearinghouse/ALA%20Congressional%20Tour%20Toolkit.pdf>

PLANNING LEGISLATIVE SCHEDULE WORKSHEET

[http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/advleg/advocacyuniversity/advclearinghouse/10-planning\\_legislative\\_schedule\\_worksheet.pdf](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/advleg/advocacyuniversity/advclearinghouse/10-planning_legislative_schedule_worksheet.pdf)

ALA'S QUOTABLE FACTS 2012

[http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/QF2012\\_annotatedFINAL\\_2.pdf](http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/QF2012_annotatedFINAL_2.pdf)

### ***The State of Small and Rural Libraries in the United States***

[http://www.ims.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/Brief2013\\_05.pdf](http://www.ims.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/Brief2013_05.pdf)

### ***Pew Internet and American Life Project***

HOW AMERICANS VALUE PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES REPORT

<http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/12/11/libraries-in-communities/>

### ***Geek the Library***

<http://geekthelibrary.org/geek-the-library/index.html>

### ***The Dominican Study: Public Library Summer Reading Programs Close the Reading Gap***

[http://gslis.dom.edu/sites/default/files/documents/IMLS\\_finalReport.pdf](http://gslis.dom.edu/sites/default/files/documents/IMLS_finalReport.pdf)