

Keeping Library Funding Stable in Troubled Times

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Background

- September 2009: The Saga Begins
 - Troy Library to reduce operations for 2010-11
 - \$1.4 million budget cut and Saturday closure
 - If city millage fails, Troy Library will close 6/30/11
- February 2010: election for city-wide millage
 - Fails 2-1
 - No one believed that the library would close

Effects

- The library's operating budget was reduced from \$3.6 million to \$2.2 million (Troy = 80,980 population)
- The library's collection budget was reduced from \$775,000 to \$425,000
- The library closed on Saturdays
- In June 2010, 26 library employees were laid off
 - 6 full-time librarians
 - 20 part-time staff members
 - 4 open positions were not filled
- In total, the library lost 30% of its staff
 - 100 employees to 70
 - 13 full-time staff to 6/ 87 part-time staff to 64 part-time staff

Friends of the Library millage campaign

- “Citizens to Save Troy Library” formed
- Campaigned through Summer 2010 to November election
- Defeated by less than 400 votes
- 3 similar, yet bogus proposals
- Misinformation (4 props x 2 mils each = 8 mils)
- Voter apathy “will there be another election?
Because I would vote this time!”

Troy City Council

- Revisited the city's budget in February 2011 to see if there was any money to be found to save the library (no).
- Library's last day of service established:
 - Sunday, May 1, 2011.
- On April 18, City council decides to revisit the issue one more time.
 - As a result, the Troy Public Library does not close on May 1.

Special Election

- The City Council decides, on May 16, to hold a special election on Tuesday, August 2, 2011.
- Dedicated library millage/.7 mils for 5 years
 - This funds a 6 day operation for TPL
- If the election fails, the library will close Friday, August 5, 2011.

Just when I thought it couldn't get
any weirder...



Good news!

- The millage passed 59% to 41%
- The library's budget is about \$3 million
- Staff: 6 full-time, 66 part-time (2010 level)
- Collection budget increased to \$660,000
- The library has to REBUILD, RENEW, REINVENT
- Strategic planning
- Next millage: November 2015

Life at the Troy Public Library



**Don't let this happen
in your community!**

Know Your Community— how could this happen in TROY??

- Know demographics/perception of wealth
- Is there a strong anti-tax presence in your community?
- Who is your competition for funding?
- Can everyone who uses the library vote?
- Who ***really*** uses your library? (1.5 mill circ)
- Numbers/statistics DO NOT mean the library has community support (HAPLR, etc)

Know who is NOT using your library—and why not

- “Why should I support the library when everything is on the Internet?” “I buy all my books, why do I need a library?” “I download all my books on to my Nook/Kindle” —what do you say to that?
- Target non-users—what don’t they know about you?
- Know the economic value the library brings to the community
- Understand how your library adds to the quality of life in your community (interesting correlation w/business and crime)
- Be able to discuss with legislators how the library helps people do business and use government (tax forms, etc)

Know library law & educate-- before you need to

- How your library uses government funds
- Public Library funding
- Why can't the library sustain itself by charging fees for everything?
- Why can't you merge with another library?
- **Why can't volunteers run the library?**
- **Why can't you charge residents for library cards?**

Talk to Your Community

- Library Directors—Leave Your Office!!!!
 - Staff members—walk the floor!
- EVERYONE—staff, trustees, Friends—is an ambassador for the library.
- Let the community get to know you.
 - The personal touch WORKS.
 - Be Library CHEERLEADERS!

Strategic Planning 2012

- Community Survey & Focus Groups
- People support the library—but they don't know everything the library offers
 - Books, dvds, computers, story times
 - Traditional understanding of library service
 - 40% of regular users did not know that librarians were there to answer questions.

Strategic Planning 2012

- People want more, more, more technology
 - Pre-loaded eReaders, eBooks, more classes
- People want the library to come to them
 - Email newsletter as opposed to checking website
 - Personalized newsletter w/ events of interest
- Relationships make the difference
 - 87% of users who interacted with library staff reported they were “extremely satisfied” with TPL

NEVER, EVER, BE COMPLACENT

- Libraries are NOT the only game in town any more
 - Netflix
 - OnDemand
 - Kindle, Nook, etc
 - “Reference is Dead”
- “I think we’re OK for right now!”-library director
- Do you really want to find out you aren’t when it is too late to do anything about it?
- **Prove the library’s value every day**

If this happens to you...

- Communication is key
 - Talking points for staff
 - Talking points for community
 - Consistent answers
- “I don’t know but I will find out and get back to you.”—and then do it.
- Professionalism—always.
- Try not to take it personally.
- Take care of yourself—have a support system.
- Call me! 😊

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