

# EDITORIAL

Webster defines budgeting as a plan or schedule adjusting expenses during a certain period to the estimated or fixed income for that period. For the past eight years, Indiana public libraries have existed with fixed incomes. Despite the lobbying efforts of the American Library Association and ILA/ILTA this situation will probably remain the same for the next few years. There won't be a change in federal or state attitudes toward the funding problems of public libraries until the taxpayer's revolt is replaced by a users' revolt.

What can public libraries do in the meantime? Make sure that we utilize our resources, both human and fiscal, to the best of our ability. We must examine some of the traditional library services and policies as to their cost effectiveness. It may not be good fiscal policy to send a bookmobile on a thirty mile round-trip just so that we can say a certain rural township is receiving library service. Maybe we can no longer justify buying books that don't circulate for the sake of a balanced collection. Maybe public libraries can no longer afford to continue buying 16mm films to support public school "curriculums." Maybe service would not be too diluted if we started replacing some of the professional librarians with para-professionals.

Next, libraries could consider charging fees for certain services to generate additional income. Patrons may be willing to pay \$1.00 to place a reserve or get an interlibrary loan for a book the library

could not afford to buy. They may not even object to paying \$1.00 per child for a story hour. Daily fines on overdue materials could be doubled for additional income.

When fees and service reach a certain level, maybe then we would have a user revolt. Maybe we would have politicians saying, "We have a mandate to bring back "free" public libraries and restore the level of service to what it was in 1980."

Of course, all this could be avoided if the current legislature would provide public libraries and other units of local government, with an alternative means of funding. For example, a local option income tax, without a property tax relief fund, taxing business as well as individuals, would go a long way towards solving public library funding problems for years to come. It would also restore local control over local government.

Indiana libraries receive approximately 82% of their funding from the unpopular, insensitive to economic conditions, and discriminatory property tax. A local option income tax, described above, would not replace property tax, but it would supplement and relieve the burden currently supported by property tax and thus provide a means for additional income for Indiana libraries.

The following articles fit well into this issue's theme. Robert Logsdon and Laura Johnson lead off with a sound article presenting the historical aspects of Indiana's tax funds for libraries. Stella Bentley's article is an excellent example of the technical decisions which must be made in the budgeting and planning process. And finally, Art Meyer gives us an alternative to funding which many librarians have never viewed before. All help us understand the library budgeting process and problems within Indiana.

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