

The Minnesota Public Library Development Program

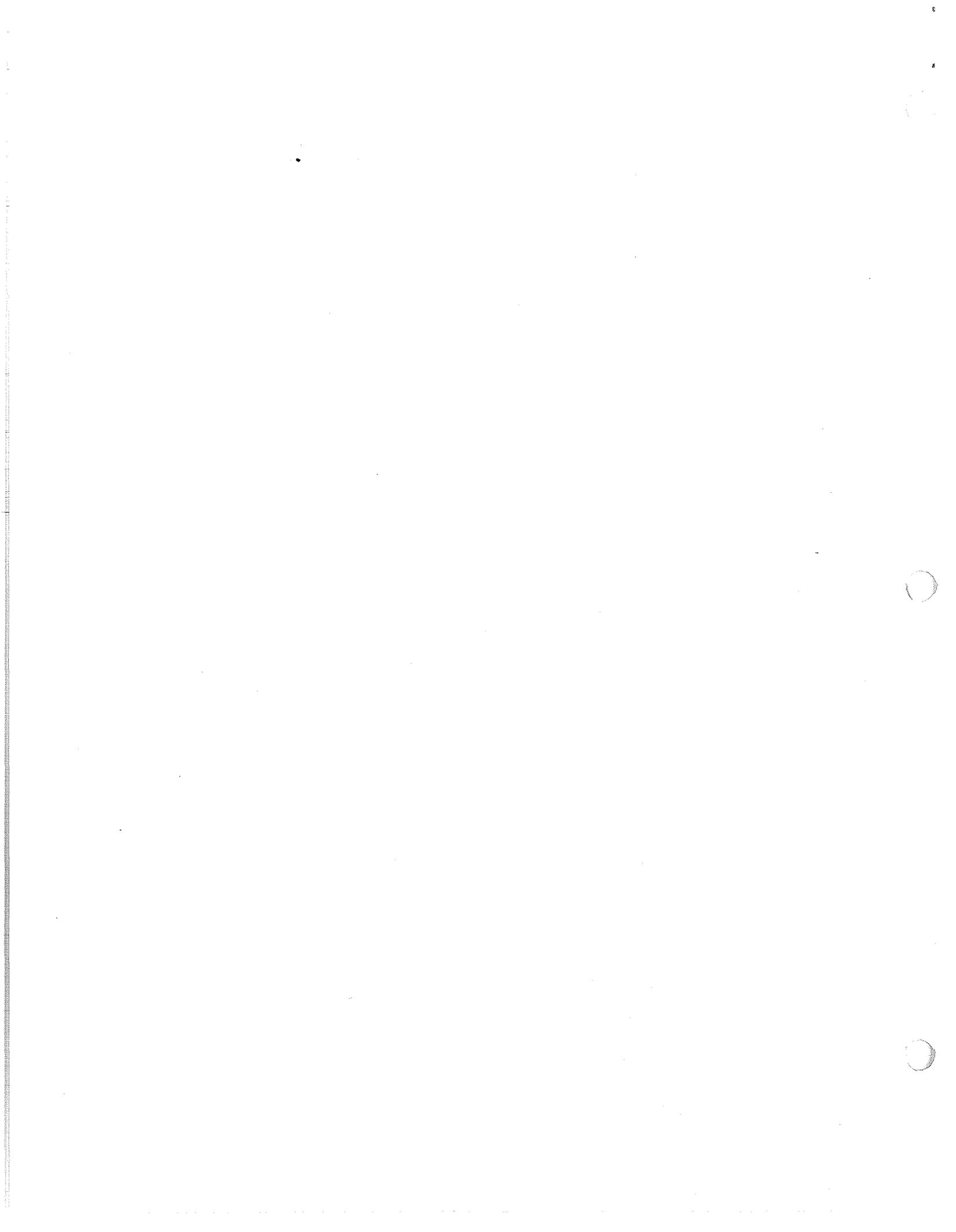
Report to
The 1991 Minnesota Legislature

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Executive Summary

Development of quality public library services for every Minnesotan is the goal of the state program for public library development. Grants are provided for operation of regional public library systems, for extending public library services into counties not having the services before, for statewide sharing of library materials, for innovative and experimental projects, for strengthening library services for persons in state institutions and for blind and physically handicapped persons, and for construction of public library buildings.

There have been significant achievements in public library development. As of January 1, 1990, everyone in Minnesota has access to public library service. This resulted from implementation of the Extension of Access legislation by the 1987 Minnesota Legislature. Use of Minnesota's public libraries continues to increase significantly, and has risen 51.5% since 1980. More than 36,000,000 items are checked out of Minnesota public libraries each year. More than 200,000 items are checked out by people using public libraries other than their home library, under the Minnesota Reciprocal Borrowing Compact.

Local financial support for public library services, accounting for 86.1% of total support, continues to increase but the disparity is growing between funding in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and in greater Minnesota. Grant programs, using both state and Federal funds, provide more than \$8,300,000 in public library support in F.Y. 1991. The Federal Library Services and Construction Act was reauthorized and revised in 1990. While the current and previous administrations have not recommended funding for the act, Congress has restored the funding.

A Minnesota Governor's Pre-White House Conference on Library and Information Services was held September 16 and 17, 1990. It was preceded by and followed by regional and other meetings, as well as preparation of a number of special publications. Recommendations of the conference provide information valuable in planning library and information services for the future. Another long range planning process under way is the State Board of Education's Library Policy Review. This is a systematic review of all state policies for public library development, with recommendations for any changes needed.

In the future, particular attention needs to be paid to several areas. State rules for grant programs need to be revised, and a review of the rules is under way now. Statutory minimum levels of local financial support need to be raised to reduce disparity and to achieve greater equity of public library service. Needs remain for improved public library facilities in communities large and small across Minnesota. Public libraries need a source of funds for automating their operations. A method for restructuring regional public library systems into regional public library districts in those areas of the state choosing to restructure, was proposed in a 1989 report to the Legislature. That report should be reviewed for possible implementation.

I. Introduction

A. Scope of Report

This report is filed pursuant to Minn. Stat. Sec. 134.31, subd. 4. It addresses public library development and statewide interlibrary cooperation activities. A separate report, filed pursuant to Minn. Stat. Sec. 134.351, subd. 5, addresses multi-county multi-type library systems.

B. Overview of the Minnesota Public Library Development Program

The basic purpose of the Minnesota library development program is established in Minn. Stat. Sec. 134.31, subd. 1 as follows: "The state shall, as an integral part of its responsibility for public education, support the provision of library service for every citizen and the development of cooperative programs for the sharing of resources and services among all libraries." The Minnesota Department of Education is assigned responsibility for providing advice and consultant assistance for library development and for administering state appropriations and federal funds for library grant programs. Within the Department of Education, these responsibilities are performed by the Office of Library Development and Services in the School Management and Support Services Division.

The library grant program promotes, encourages and assists in the development of adequate public library services for every Minnesotan. Grants are provided for development of regional public library systems to strengthen and improve public library services, for statewide activities of interlibrary cooperation to facilitate sharing of resources and reference information, for innovative and experimental projects to improve library services, for strengthening library services in institutions of the Department of Corrections and the Department of Human Services and to the Communications Center in the Department of Jobs and Training, and for construction of public library buildings. Sources of funds for the grant program are a state appropriation and Federal Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) funds.

II. Status of Public Library Development in Minnesota

A. The Population Served

The library grant program strengthens library services available to more than four million Minnesotans, constituting over 99% of the state's population. As a result of the Extension of Access Legislation enacted in 1987 (Minn. Stat. Sec. 134.341), the twelve regional public library systems began providing countywide services in the eight counties that had not had the services before. Now, all 87 Minnesota counties have countywide public library services and participate in regional public library systems. There are 344 public library service outlets in Minnesota, organized into 136 administrative units - regional, county and city libraries. Ten city libraries serving fewer than 25,000 people have chosen to remain unaffiliated with regional public library systems.

B. Use of Public Library Services

More Minnesotans are using more public library services more often than ever. Library staff report increased requests for reference information. The number of books checked out from libraries is increasing. Public libraries offering their users new formats of materials, such as videocassettes, videodiscs, compact discs and microcomputer software, report that these items are in high demand. Some public libraries formally support literacy programs in their communities by providing space for classes and tutoring, and by providing materials for new adult readers to practice reading skills. Many public libraries have assisted unemployed persons in locating job opportunities and in providing materials to update job skills or learn new job skills.

In 1989, Minnesotans borrowed 36,938,320 items from public libraries or an average of 8.6 items per capita. This reflects an increase of 51.5% since 1980. The total reflects only materials checked out of libraries and does not reflect use of materials in the library. Although the ratio of in-library use to out-of-library use will vary from library to library and from year to year, performance studies undertaken in some Minnesota public libraries indicate a range of one in-library use for every out-of-library use to one in-library use for every three items checked out.

C. Public Library Finance

Public library service in Minnesota continues to be financed primarily from county and city funds. Public library receipts for operating purposes in 1989 totaled \$82,808,465 -- an increase of 7.25% over 1988. County and city funds, which account for 86.1% of the total, increased 8.34%. State and federal funds provided 7.6% of the total. The remaining 6.3% is miscellaneous income from sources such as grants, fines, gifts and interest.

Per capita receipts from local sources increased from \$16.49 in 1988 to \$16.79 in 1989. With some exceptions, local support tends to be highest in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. Excluding these counties, average local support per capita in 1989 was \$10.03. Clearly, there is a general need for substantially increased financial support for Minnesota public libraries.

Operating expenditures of Minnesota public libraries in 1989 totaled \$80,316,425. Expenditures for personnel were 66.2% of total expenditures while expenditures for materials were 15.7% and the remaining 18.1% was expended for all other operating costs such as utilities, insurance, supplies, equipment, rent and communications.

Detailed data on public library service is published annually in the spring issue of Minnesota Libraries.

D. Operation of Grant Programs

Minn. Stat. Sec. 134.32 establishes five types of grants in the public library development program. These grants are:

1. Establishment Grants to regional public library systems for addition of counties previously without countywide library service [expires July 1, 1991];
2. Regional Library Basic System Support Grants to assist in the ongoing operation of the twelve regional public library systems;
3. Special Grants for innovative and experimental projects of library service;
4. Grants for interlibrary sharing of resources and materials; and
5. Grants to improve library services at institutions of the Department of Human Services and the Department of Corrections, and for library service for the blind and physically handicapped.

In addition, Minn. Stat. Sec. 134.32, subd. 7, authorizes grants for construction or remodeling of library facilities from any state and federal funds specifically appropriated for this purpose.

Special Grants included the operation of bookmobile service by Lake Agassiz Regional Library on the White Earth Indian Reservation (through FY 1989) and the provision of consultant assistance for planning, acquiring, installing and operating automated systems in public libraries.

Since F.Y. 1985, Congress has appropriated construction funds under provisions of Title II of the Library Services and Construction Act. The State Board of Education recently awarded grants for projects in Duluth, Dakota County (Apple Valley), Hinckley and Hector. Additional construction grants will be awarded during F.Y. 1991.

Federal funds also support operation of the Public Library Access Network (PLANET). Requests for library materials that cannot be supplied within the regional public library systems are transmitted to the PLANET office at the St. Paul Public Library. Collections of the St. Paul Public Library, other public libraries in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, the James Jerome Hill Reference Library and libraries of the private colleges are searched. Items located are loaned to library users throughout the state.

In F.Y. 1990 and F.Y. 1991, state funds were used to support public library access to services of the Minnesota Interlibrary Telecommunications Exchange (MINITEX). MINITEX services include delivery of items requested from the University of Minnesota libraries and other Twin Cities libraries, inclusion in the Minnesota Union List of Serials database, and back-up reference service.

State law empowers the State Board of Education to make grants from available state and Federal funds. Expended funds for grant programs

during F.Y. 1990 and estimated expenditures for F.Y. 1991 are detailed as follows:

	State*	F.Y. 1990		Total
		Federal LSCA Title I**	Federal LSCA Title II**	
Establishment Grants		\$ 171,969		\$ 171,969
Regional Library Basic System Support	\$5,626,000	1,000,000		6,626,000
Special Purpose Grants		123,982		123,982
Institution Library Service and Blind and Physically Handicapped		55,912		55,912
Interlibrary Sharing Grants	320,000	210,000		530,000
Public Library Construction			\$ 142,267	142,267
Total	\$5,946,000	\$1,561,863	\$142,267	\$7,650,130

	State*	F.Y. 1991		Total
		Federal LSCA Title I**	Federal LSCA Title II**	
Establishment Grants		\$ 77,299		\$ 77,299
Regional Library Basic System Support	\$5,768,000	1,000,000		6,626,000
Special Purpose Grants		123,982		123,982
Institution Library Service and Blind and Physically Handicapped		55,912		55,912
Interlibrary Sharing Grants	350,000	236,000		586,000
Public Library Construction			\$700,000***	700,000
Total	\$6,118,000	\$1,493,193	\$700,000	\$8,311,193

*All state funds shown are entitlements. Since F.Y. 1983, grant payments from state funds have been made on an 85/15 payment schedule, with 85% of the grant funds paid during the fiscal year and the remaining 15% of grant funds paid after the first quarter of the following fiscal year.

**All federal amounts shown are encumbrances based on allotment information provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

***Estimated total of public library construction grants to be awarded in the spring of 1991.

E. Extension and Revision of Federal Library Services and Construction Act

Congress has amended and extended the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) in 1990. Amendments to LSCA establish several new priorities for use of funds, adding new titles.

Title I, Library Services, continues to emphasize extending library services to persons lacking such service, strengthening public library services where they are inadequate, improving library services for persons in state correctional facilities and welfare institutions and improving library services for blind and physically handicapped persons. New emphasis is given for programs that serve the elderly, programs designed to combat illiteracy, programs that assist public libraries to serve as community information referral centers, and programs that increase services and access to services through effective use of technology. Other new priorities include model library literacy centers, intergenerational library programs, mobile library services and programs to licensed or certified child-care providers or child-care centers.

LSCA Title II continues as Public Library Construction, allocating funds to the states for grants for construction of new public library buildings, for remodeling to make public libraries accessible to the physically disabled, and for remodeling to make public library buildings more energy efficient. These funds can now also be used for technology enhancement.

LSCA Title III, Interlibrary Cooperation and Resource Sharing, provides funds for planning and operating cooperative programs involving academic, public, school and special libraries. New priorities under Title III include developing and implementing a statewide preservation cooperation plan.

The remaining titles are administered directly by the U.S. Department of Education, not by state library agencies. Title IV, Library Services for Indian Tribes, provides grants to Indian tribes to establish, operate or contract for library services. Title V, Foreign Language Materials Acquisition, allows state library agencies and public libraries to apply for grants of up to \$15,000 to acquire foreign language materials. Title VI, Library Literacy Programs, allows state library agencies and public libraries to apply for grants of up to \$25,000 to support development of literacy services in libraries and to promote cooperation among providers of literacy services. Minnesota libraries receiving these grants in F.Y. 1989-1990 were the Duluth Public Library (2), Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center (2) and the St. Paul Public Library. Title VII authorizes the U. S. Department of Education to carry out a program of evaluation and assessment of programs authorized under the act. Title VIII allows local public libraries to apply for funds for support of family learning centers.

The present federal administration has requested no funding for LSCA. However, each year Congress has restored funds at least to the level of the previous year. For F.Y. 1990, LSCA was funded at a level slightly

higher than F.Y. 1989 and has been increased slightly for F.Y. 1991. Despite the difficulties of uncertainty in funding, LSCA remains an important program for public library development and multitype library cooperation in Minnesota.

F. Minnesota Library Reciprocal Borrowing Compact

A milestone in public library service was reached on July 1, 1986, when an agreement among all Minnesota public libraries participating in the state program agreed to honor library cards from all other participating public libraries. This agreement, the Minnesota Library Reciprocal Borrowing Compact, means that over 99 percent of Minnesota's population may use any one of over 300 public library buildings and 28 bookmobiles, from Caledonia to Hallock, from Luverne to Grand Marais.

This was a pilot program for two years, from July 1, 1986, through June 30, 1988. During the pilot period, use of the compact was monitored through quarterly reports. Procedures were changed as necessary to keep the program operating as smoothly as possible. An evaluation was performed to determine whether or not action is needed by the Minnesota Legislature to continue the program on an ongoing basis. The results of the evaluation indicated a high level of approval and satisfaction with the program on a cooperative basis and all participants have agreed to continue participating indefinitely. In 1989, over 200,000 items were loaned to non-residents under this program.

G. Extension of Access

The 1987 Legislature enacted Minn. Stat. Sec. 134.341 which provides that all Minnesotans shall have access to public library service by requiring that all counties provide financial support for public library services and participate in the regional public library system for their area, effective in 1990. Office of Library Development and Services staff and the staff of the affected regional public library systems worked with the eight counties which have become new participants to plan for implementation. All counties now are funding public library service and participate in a regional public library system.

H. Minnesota Governor's Pre-White House Conference on Library and Information Services

The Minnesota Governor's Pre-White House Conference on Library and Information Services is a two year process that is providing significant information and recommendations for long range planning for services in the decade ahead. These state efforts are linked to a national White House Conference on Library and Information Services to be held in Washington, D.C. July 9 - 13, 1991.

Components of the Minnesota process have included:

- a. Research on significant issues affecting Minnesotans now and in the future, and identification of library and information roles in dealing with those issues;

- b. Regional meetings to identify issues of particular interest in specific areas of the state, including identification of individuals and groups that need to be involved in addressing the issues;
- c. Identification and description of alternative scenarios for library and information services in the future;
- d. Preparation of background and issue papers;
- e. The statewide meeting at which 160 delegates (representing the general public, elected and appointed government officials, supporters of library and information services, and library and information services personnel) discussed issues and developed almost 100 resolutions proposing action for strengthening and improving library and information services;
- f. Preparation of reports on outcomes of the conference process; and
- g. Regional follow-up meetings to begin addressing implementation of the conference resolutions.

A written report of the conference will be available in December, 1990, from the Office of Library Development and Services.

I. Library Policy Review

As a part of its responsibility for the overall oversight of the library development program, the State Board of Education in 1989 appointed a task force to review all public library policy in law, rule and all other policy documents. The task force is representative of the Advisory Council to the Office of Library Development and Services, the Association of Minnesota Counties, the Council of Cooperating Libraries, the Council of Regional Public Library System Administrators, the League of Minnesota Cities, the Minnesota Library Association and the Minnesota Library Trustee Association. The task force is charged with reviewing policy and making recommendations to the State Board of Education for changes needed, new initiatives or alternative policy statements. The task force has been meeting throughout 1990 and is expected to conclude its activities by the end of F.Y. 1991.

III. Future Consideration

A. Rules for Library Grant Programs

In addition to statutory provisions, library grant programs are governed by Rules of the State Board of Education in Minnesota Rules Sec. 3530.0200-3530.2644. These rules are being reviewed for proposed revisions.

B. Minimum Levels of Local Support

The 1978 Minnesota Legislature changed the method for determining minimum levels of local support for public library services from a mill rate on current assessed property valuation to dollar amounts equivalent to .3 mills on the adjusted valuation from the second preceding year during the

first year of a county's participation in the grant program, and .4 mills during the second and succeeding years of the county's participation. This is now .41% of the adjusted tax capacity from the second preceding year because of the changes in the tax laws and terminology. A "cap" of 10% protects counties when tax capacities were increasing at rates greater than 10% per year from being required to increase more than 10% from one year to the next.

To meet the needs of those counties having high tax capacities and sparse populations, the 1979 Legislature adjusted the minimum level of local support requirement to allow counties to provide the amount based on tax capacity or a minimum per capita amount, whichever is less. The per capita amount was established as \$3 in 1980 and has increased since then at one-half of the rate of increase in tax capacity. For 1991, the minimum per capita amount is \$3.76.

A study committee working with staff of the Office of Library Development and Services has identified widely varying tax rates for local public library service as a major concern, resulting in inequity of service. One way of addressing the problem is to increase the minimum level of local financial support. In the biennial budget process, staff of the Office of Library Development and Services has followed the recommendation developed by the Council of Regional Public Library System Administrators and has submitted a proposal to increase the minimum to .82% of adjusted tax capacity or \$7.52 per capita, whichever is less.

C. Public Library Construction

A grant program is needed to stimulate improvement of public library buildings. Of over 330 public library buildings in Minnesota, only 150 were built as public libraries. Of these, 34% were built between 1899 and 1919, and 46% were built before 1960. These older buildings tend to be inaccessible to the physically handicapped, wasteful of energy, inadequate in space, inefficient for operation, and unsuited to the installation of new technology.

In only about half of the state's public library buildings can a person in a wheelchair enter the building and approach the circulation desk unassisted. In even fewer public libraries have rest rooms been remodeled for use by the physically disabled. There are over 160 public library buildings of less than 2,500 square feet, thus not meeting the minimum size for public library buildings established in state goals.

Recent experience with Public Library Construction grants from federal funds has also verified the need for a state-funded construction grant program. Potential applicant cities and counties indicate a need for a matching grant program from state and federal funds to assist them in providing badly needed improvements in existing physical facilities as well as new public library buildings.

D. Public Library Automation

Over the past decade, automation systems for library operations have been developed and improved to the point that they have become extremely valuable and almost necessary in enabling libraries to perform many of their operations more efficiently and more effectively. These systems allow the libraries to offer more and better service to their clients. One of the most important services which the computer enables is the development of data bases which allow staff and clients of one library to know the library materials holdings of another library, thereby facilitating the sharing of these expensive resources among the users of other libraries.

As these developments have been occurring, many libraries in Minnesota have been engaging in planning and implementation activities, costing substantial investments in time and scarce dollars. However, few libraries have been able to secure or accumulate the substantial funding needed to purchase the hardware and software which is needed to operate the automated systems. Substantial amounts of additional funding are needed to implement automation including funding for major capital expenditures to acquire this hardware and software.

E. Regional Public Library Districts

The 1988 Legislature called for the Department of Education to make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature about the organization, financing and formation of regional public library districts. The study was completed and forwarded to the Governor and the Legislature in 1989. It included a series of recommendations for the enactment of enabling legislation which would allow any regional public library system which chose to do so to take appropriate steps to convert itself to a regional public library district with an appointed/elected Board which would have the power to equitably tax the property within the district for support of the library services. This voluntary restructuring could result in strengthened public library services in areas choosing to restructure. Copies of the study report are available from the Office of Library Development and Services.

MINNESOTA REGIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS: 1990

