

## Best Practices for Public Libraries — Prioritizing Privacy

By John DeBacher, Public Library Administration Consultant  
Public Library Development Team

[Editor's note: Below is the first of what will be a periodic column addressing general issues facing public library directors and their boards. Whereas Trustee Corner generally addresses issues related to library policy, Best Practices will focus more on procedure and suggested guidelines for library operations. If you have issues or questions you would like addressed in this column, please contact John DeBacher at (608) 269-4477 (john.debacher@dpi.wi.gov)]

### Make Privacy a Priority

As a result of the Patriot Act at the federal level and the Parental Access to Library Records legislation at the state level, library directors and trustees have been prompted to think about patron privacy in Wisconsin libraries. Since both laws affect the rights and protections our library users receive, public library officials need to make sure privacy protection requirements are relayed to all library staff and others whose roles may bring them into contact with library records that require protection for patron privacy.

**History:** The specific provision for privacy of library records in the Wisconsin Statutes (s. 43.30) dates to 1981. The language was included in a larger bill (Act. 335) that established Wisconsin's public records law. But the concept of privacy for library borrowers goes back further. As a result of incidents in 1970, the American Library Association urged libraries to adopt policies that establish the confidentiality of library records. Milwaukee Public Library figured prominently in a May, 1970 incident when Treasury Agents requested the call slips for reference requests and searches made in the stacks for books and materials on explosives. The library initially refused, but the agents returned the next day with an opinion from the city attorney that the records were public, so the librarian supplied the records.

The Watergate scandal firmly established a movement to ensure that government operate in the open, and that the public has access to government records. But open records were in conflict with the concept of personal privacy. So, when Wisconsin public records legislation was passed in 1981 it included the creation of s. 43.30, which at that time simply read: "Records of any library which is in whole or in part supported by public funds, including the records of a public library system, indicating which of its documents or other materials have been loaned to or used by an identifiable individual may not be disclosed except to persons acting within the scope of their duties in the administration of the library or library system or persons authorized by the individual to inspect such records, or by order of a court of law."

The Patriot Act made it easier for law enforcement officials to obtain a search warrant for library records, and prevents library officials from notifying a patron whose records are the subject of a search. But a court order is still required to obtain a "Patriot Act" search warrant.

In 2003, Wisconsin Act 207 established that library records must be disclosed to "custodial parents or guardians of children under the age of 16."

### What does all this mean for Wisconsin libraries?

The right to privacy of library records is an extension of protections guaranteed in the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment. The American Library Association suggests that

"the right to privacy is the right to open inquiry without having the subject of one's interest examined or scrutinized by others. Confidentiality exists when a library is in possession of personally identifiable information about users and keeps that information private on their behalf."

Personally identifiable information includes not only paper and electronic records that link a particular user to library resources or requests for information, but also information that is provided by an individual, even verbally, so that the library staff can answer a specific question or provide information on a subject. Sections 19.62 to 19.80 of the Wisconsin public records law requires government organizations, including libraries, to develop procedures to

Please see Best Practices — on page 11

## **Best Practices — from page 10**

protect the privacy of personal information kept by the organization. Libraries and library systems (and other governmental organizations) are required to “develop rules of conduct for employees involved in collecting, maintaining, using, and providing access to personally identifiable information,” and ensure that those employees “know their duties and responsibilities relating to protecting personal privacy, including applicable state and federal laws.” (s. 19.65)

Although s. 43.30 authorizes the library to “disclose an individual’s identity to another library for the purpose of borrowing materials for the individual,” it does not authorize library staff to discuss the reading habits or movie tastes of particular patrons. Such discussions should be discouraged among employees. They may not be illegal by the letter of the law, but they are unethical by the spirit of the law. Also, library directors and staff should not reveal whether public officials, candidates for office, or others have been issued library cards.

Libraries should be careful to make sure each new employee is made aware of the confidentiality of library records. The library staff should be regularly reminded about the library’s policy on patron privacy and what procedure to follow when confidential information is requested. The best practice is to have a formal procedure established and approved by the library board. The sample privacy policy (linked below) suggests various procedures for libraries to follow when presented with different types of subpoenas and search warrants.

Because the library may need to obtain legal counsel on short notice, libraries should make sure the municipal attorney or library’s legal counsel is aware of library privacy protections.

In addition to regular library staff, libraries should be sure that custodial and maintenance staff, contracted workers, and volunteers who may come in contact with library records containing personally identifiable information are aware that confidentiality is required. Libraries may wish to stipulate in vendor contracts that employees must observe and respect confidentiality.

On April 24, 2004, Act 207 amended Wisconsin Statutes Section 43.30 to require that a library that is in whole or part supported by public funds must disclose to a custodial parent or guardian of a child under age 16 any records relating to that child’s use of the library’s materials, resources or services. Libraries should update their privacy policies to reflect changes in the law and should establish procedures so that front-line circulation desk staff can know when it is appropriate to release children’s borrowing records and when a request should be referred to a person of authority.

The following links provide additional information and resources to help libraries develop policies and procedures to protect patron privacy and comply with public records laws. Questions about the application of these laws may be directed to your municipal or county attorney, your district attorney, or the Wisconsin Attorney General.

Frequently Asked Questions about compliance with the new Parental Access to Library Records law:  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/ab169faqs.html>

Frequently Asked Questions about Libraries and Wisconsin’s Public Records Law:  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/publicrec.html>

Sample privacy policy:  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/doc/privacypolicy.doc>

Privacy resource page:  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/privacy.html>

ALA’s “Confidentiality and Coping with Law Enforcement Inquiries: Guidelines for the Library and its Staff”  
<http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/oif/ifissues/guidelineslibrary.pdf>

ALA’s Intellectual Freedom resources “Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.”  
<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/privacy.>✿

## ***Best Practices for Public Libraries -- Communication is Key***

***A clear understanding of staff, director, and board relationship is essential for effective public library operation.***

**By John DeBacher**, Public Library Administration Consultant  
Public Library Development Team

Wisconsin is fortunate to have library law that establishes the duties and authority of the library board and the library director. But library directors and their boards should be careful not to let a string of uneventful board meetings lead to a sense of complacency. Smooth sailing can sometimes lead to assumptions about the library's direction. The library can too easily run aground on the shoals of misunderstanding if constant communication is not maintained to keep the library on its course.

### *Guidelines for the Library Board*

The library board must balance its duty to oversee ongoing library operations with its long-term responsibility of charting the library's future course. Within that context, library policies must be developed and reviewed to maintain relevance and currency. To carry out this leadership role effectively, the board should be concerned with the library's administration, but must not become mired in the minutia of day-to-day operations.

The trustees should recognize that the library director is responsible to direct the activities of the staff and carry out the library program. The trustees should avoid the temptation to assign or direct the duties of individual staff, or to interfere in the staff hiring process except to approve job descriptions and establish personnel policies. If trustees hear complaints about the performance of library staff, they should take those concerns to the library director. Staff complaints should be directed to the library director; however, the board should have a grievance procedure in place for staff concerns that have exhausted the internal appeals process. The board should expect regular reports of human resource problems and concerns from the library director.

### *Library Director Awareness*

Library directors should be sensitive to the fact that the library operates in the social and political context of the community and that the library board may have social or work relationships with library staff members. Since the trustees are often active library users, the board will have

regular interaction with the library staff. The director should keep the board apprised of the library staff and the relationship of those positions to the library program. The director should make opportunities for the library board to become acquainted with the staff and aware of their strengths and ongoing professional development. While directors should be sensitive to the relationship the trustees have in the community and the political climate, they must insist upon established channels for communication, with the director as the conduit for communications about library operations between the library board and the staff.

### *Library Staff Expectations*

Clear job descriptions, regular staff meetings with employee participation, and ongoing supervision and direction keep library staff members actively involved and aware of their roles and responsibilities. A staff manual that is regularly reviewed and updated by the library board and consistently implemented by the director provides a framework to effectively address problems as they arise. The library's personnel policies should also allow for a grievance process that goes beyond the library director and should include provisions to obtain staff input on hours, work provisions, and duties. The library board may wish to explore means to obtain input from the staff for the director's performance evaluation, but only as a part of a comprehensive review process. Finally, library staff members should have opportunity for ongoing training, education, and, whenever possible, options for career advancement.

Through effective communication and considerate understanding of the individual roles, the library board, the director, and the staff can all operate effectively to develop and provide quality service to the community. Maintaining the communication can sustain an atmosphere that fosters continued development to meet future needs and permits all to share in the accomplishments.

Best Practices is an occasional column addressing general issues facing public library directors and their boards. If you have issues or ideas for future columns, please contact John DeBacher at (608) 267-9225 or [john.debacher@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:john.debacher@dpi.wi.gov). ☀

## ***Best Practices for Public Libraries -- Communication is Key, Part 2***

### ***Sharing information with local and regional organizations contributes to an effective library operation.***

**By John DeBacher**, Public Library Administration Consultant  
Public Library Development Team

In the last issue, this column discussed the importance of establishing appropriate levels of communication between the library board, the director, and the staff (<http://dpi.wi.gov/channel/pdf/chn4104.pdf#page=6>). This issue explores the importance of establishing and maintaining communication outside the library with the municipal governing body and local administration, with civic, service, and social groups, and with the broader library community.

Good communication flows two ways, informing others about the library's services, programs and financial needs, as well as allowing the library to learn about the needs of the community, collaborative opportunities, and competing interests. However, the board and director must achieve a level of communication that will strengthen the library's position and promote its services without adversely affecting the day-to-day operation and administration of the library.

While it is necessary to protect and ensure the library's administrative autonomy, the library cannot be operated in isolation from the rest of municipal government. Attending meetings of the municipal board or council with some regularity not only keeps local government aware of the library and its services, but also helps keep the library apprised of upcoming projects that may impact the library, compete for funding, or require additional resources or a service response from the library.

Occasionally the librarian or a board member should report to the municipality about new services and programs or regional news and system services. While this can be done under a general agenda item such as "Reports of Committees and Departments," it may be more advantageous to request that the report come earlier on the agenda, under appearances, to bring more focus to the report. And once a year the library should present a more formal annual report on the library's activities. Such periodic appearances will help keep the library in a positive light with the local board or council, instead of appearing only during the annual budget process to request funding.

Since the library receives funding from the county, occasional reports to the county board meeting by the

director or a board member can also be effective to assure a positive relationship and help to promote services. When meetings of local government are televised on the local cable channel, there is an added benefit of promoting the library and its services to a larger audience, some of whom may not be regular users of the library. In addition, the report may spark interest with reporters attending the meeting who may then provide additional coverage.

The village, city, or county administrator may also hold regular meetings of department heads, and the library board should make it possible for the director to attend. Such meetings can promote congenial relationships that may benefit the library through better assistance with maintenance and repairs or more effective emergency response. The librarian can learn of planned public works projects that might limit access to the library, regional events that may affect library use or impact parking, or new services and programs that the library should know about. The director may also find opportunities to collaborate on projects with the recreation department, senior services, or public safety. Finally, the municipality may offer or have access to safety, management, or human resources workshops and training appropriate to the library. Often these can qualify for continuing education credit for certification purposes, so the librarian may want to obtain prior approval from the system continuing education validator.

Finally, the library director should be able to maintain appropriate levels of interaction with the other librarians in the county, system, state and, when possible, nationally. Although more and more communication is being conducted online and through email, face-to-face meetings are still common for library system meetings, and meetings to plan county library service plans or budgets. The library board should, whenever possible, accommodate the director's attendance with staffing coverage and reimbursement of travel expenses. Active attendance at meetings for members of a shared integrated library system (ILS) allows the library an opportunity to participate in decisions and become aware of new features and training opportunities. Furthermore, membership and participation in professional associations, such as the Wisconsin Library

*Please see Best Practices — on page 7*

## **Best Practices — from page 6**

Association, allows the library director to establish and maintain professional ties with colleagues throughout the state. The benefits of participation and attendance at annual conferences can be well worth the cost of membership since the conferences are eligible for continuing education credit toward the director's certification requirements, and the value of learning through networking is immeasurable.

While meetings and committees outside the library can be effective and productive, the operation of the library and its service to the public is paramount. The library board and the director must work together to establish an agreed-upon level of participation and interaction that is

appropriate for the library. For, while there are many opportunities for the librarian to communicate with outside organizations and agencies, it is the work at the library, providing information services to the community, that serves as the basis for all such communication.

Questions about library administration may be addressed to your library system staff or to Walter Burkhalter, [walter.burkhalter@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:walter.burkhalter@dpi.wi.gov) (608) 266-7270.

Questions about library certification requirements should be directed to the Continuing Education validator at the library system or to Terrie Howe, [teresa.howe@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:teresa.howe@dpi.wi.gov) (608) 266-2413. ☀

## Best Practices for Public Libraries—Plan to Plan

### *Resolve to Plan in the New Year*

**By John DeBacher**, Public Library Administration Consultant  
Public Library Development Team

There are many good and noble resolutions you, as a public library trustee or director, could pledge for the New Year. Set measurable (and achievable) goals for the director or staff. Review sections of the policy manual you've been avoiding. Write some grants for new technology. Offer more training opportunities to staff. But one New Year's resolution, if carefully crafted and carried out, might help you to carry out them all: develop (or revise) your library's strategic plan this year!

Planning can seem like a daunting task to take on. Library trustees may be uncomfortable charting a direction for the service they do not operate on a day-to-day basis. Library directors may worry that goals will be adopted for which there will be no funding. Staff may have concerns that their duties will shift markedly or that their position will be eliminated. The governing body might have concerns that the library will chart off into unsustainable waters. And the public may worry that the library will abandon services they have come to expect. But if all parties are involved in the process, the results should be satisfying to all.

Planning provides a number of benefits to the library and its community, including

- Confirmation and articulation of the library's purpose
- Analysis of use, needs, and resources
- Establishing a framework for priorities and decision-making
- Identification of opportunities and problems
- Consideration of the community's needs in the development of the library's program
- Tangible evidence that the library is managed effectively
- Qualification for additional outside funding sources

Each library board needs to determine the appropriate level of complexity for the library's planning process. Such factors as the size of the community, the local planning resources available, the length of time since the last planning process, and other identified needs may

affect the process. This brief article cannot substitute for planning resources, literature or consultants to lead you to effective results, but directors and board members can determine what is needed and then take appropriate action to get there. A good planning process is analogous to a successful banquet recipe: the necessary resources, tools, and ingredients must be assembled; the appropriate cook selected; sufficient time allocated for mixing and cooking; then assemble the community to enjoy the results.

If your library has a strategic plan that is regularly reviewed, adapted, and implemented, then the process may be fairly simple and straight-forward. You might collect input from the community to determine if the library's mission and vision is still appropriate, and adapt the plan to newly perceived needs. If the library has not developed a plan in some time, then a more comprehensive process may be in store.

#### *PLA's New Planning for Results*

In 2001, the Public Library Association published *The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach*, by Sandra Nelson (Chicago: ALA, 2001). The book presents a comprehensive planning process for public libraries, with appropriate steps, timeframes, and necessary work-forms to achieve results. The method encourages the use of a committee and facilitator and outlines a five-month process that involves assembling participants and information, determining the library's service responses, establishing goals and objectives, developing the final plan, informing the community, and putting it all into action.

The selection of an appropriate facilitator is an important consideration, and the right choice will depend on local circumstances. While it is tempting to hire a library planning professional to conduct the process, the cost can be prohibitive. Sometimes a community leader or local official has the skills to conduct the process, but if they do not, the outcome may be misdirected or poorly developed. While a library professional can bring certain knowledge of the field to the discussion, sometimes a facilitator

*Please see Best Practices — on page 11*



---

## Best Practices — *from page 10*

who is not from the field can ask clarifying questions that help to provoke thought, challenge assumptions, or direct the flow of discussion. If you do not have budget to hire a professional, you may be able to recruit an experienced facilitator for little or no expense from your local businesses or schools. Your regional technical college may offer a quality assurance program or specialists to assist businesses and non-profits in the area.

However you decide to go about your strategic planning, make it happen! Be sure to make the process inclusive of library staff, local officials, community members, and the business community. Be prepared to provide the necessary resources and information. Plan your planning so that the participants know how much involvement and responsibilities they will have. Once the plan is completed,

promote it, execute it, re-allocate resources as necessary, measure and review results, and make appropriate adjustments, but not unilaterally. A good planning process includes a plan for evaluation and review. Good luck!

For more information consult Trustee Essential 11: Planning for the Library's Future <http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/te11.html>, and the *Wisconsin Public Library Standards*, <http://dpi.wi.gov/pld/standard.html>.

Best Practices is an occasional column addressing general issues facing public library directors and their boards. If you have issues or ideas for future columns, please contact John DeBacher at 608-267-9225 or [john.debacher@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:john.debacher@dpi.wi.gov). ☺

## Best Practices: Building Issues

### *Being proactive about building needs saves money and prevents headaches*

**By John DeBacher, Consultant**  
Public Library Administration  
Public Library Development Team

The ounce of prevention that's worth a pound of cure that was prescribed by Ben Franklin applies to library buildings as well. While tight budgets and staff reductions may make it tempting to dispense with regular building checks and maintenance, the outcome is likely to be more expensive. Some routine practices can prevent failure of vital equipment; others help to maintain a safe and efficient operation, and may prevent accidents or possible fines when building or safety codes are overlooked.

Facility issues worth a regular review can be roughly split into three categories. The first encompasses the physical plant and its maintenance. The second relates to safety and emergency concerns. And the third area focuses on the public image of the library. The detail and complexity of the periodic reviews of the building depends on the size of the library, the systems installed in the building, and the staff or financial resources available. But in all libraries, periodic building reviews enable issues to be identified and addressed before repairs become more costly. In the case of building safety, early correction of issues can prevent unfortunate accidents or costly lawsuits. And, ultimately, the library building will be more pleasant and serviceable to the community.

#### **The Physical Plant**

Library directors, especially new ones, can be surprised and overwhelmed by the complexity of modern library buildings. Even older buildings can have electrical, ventilation or plumbing systems that can challenge even an expert's skills. The director should first locate or compile

an inventory of equipment and determine what periodic checks may be required. If the building has recently been built or renovated, documentation for any new fixtures, equipment and systems may have been compiled and provided by the contractor. If you are concerned that some essential maintenance issues may not be apparent, the city engineer or building inspector may be able to help identify issues to be included in the review plan. The library board or employees, past or present, may also be able to provide details or insights. If all else fails, request that the library board approve enlisting an engineering firm to review the building, inventory the equipment, and help develop a maintenance plan.

Because the issues and needs of the library building may not differ from other municipal buildings, the library board or director should first check to see if the library can dovetail with the municipality's maintenance plan. Your city, town, or village may have maintenance or public works employees who can conduct routine maintenance such as changing filters, checking boilers, and lubricating air handlers either for no charge, at a reasonable fixed rate, or on a cost-recovery basis. The municipal support might even extend to basic plumbing and electrical repairs. In other cases, the public works department may be willing assist in contracting for necessary service checks and repairs. Be sure that the library board is aware of any resulting agreements and how charges, if any, are to be assessed. In some cases, the costs or availability of direct municipal support may be such that the library is better off contracting with a private firm for maintenance or repairs.

*Please see Best — on page 7*

## Best — from page 6

Some components of the building that might require periodic checks or maintenance include:

- Heating Ventilating and Air Conditioning. HVAC systems can be as simple as a boiler and windows that open, or incredibly complex with overlapping systems and controls that may be integrated into a computerized control system. But even a simple boiler may require semi-annual checks and water conditioning. Other systems can require lubrication, belt checking, cleaning, or balancing. Humidity control systems may require periodic checks of drain lines or cleaning to remove deposits. Outside or rooftop condensing units should be checked and cleaned. Ignoring routine maintenance of a component can lead to failure and repairs or physical damage that far exceeds the cost of maintenance, whereas periodic maintenance can improve efficiency and extend the life of the system components.
  - Check the roof to ensure its integrity and utility. Flat roofs may require clearing of scuppers or central drains. Ignoring clogged gutters and downspouts can lead to interior flooding or damage. Be cognizant of the seed activity of trees in the area to protect against clogging of drains or equipment.
  - Elevators and lifts require annual state safety inspections, but periodic (quarterly or monthly) lubrication and inspections by an elevator contractor can prevent failures and lead to a state inspection without incident. Be sure your elevator maintenance firm has adequate access to parts and supplies; you do not need to contract with the original vendor (and can save by obtaining competitive bids), but the technician must be familiar with your equipment and controls.
  - Check other aspects of the building's exterior envelope. Windows and door seals, caulking and weather-stripping
- should be checked and repaired for energy efficiency and to prevent mold or other moisture damage. Exterior light sensors may require cleaning. Cracked or leaking gas-filled windows should be replaced to maintain their insulation value. Shrubbery or trees may need to be trimmed to prevent interference with the building or roof. While rarely required, brick buildings should be checked periodically for tuck pointing or other mortar repair. Check for erosion or deterioration of the foundation.
- Computers that centrally control or operate systems, such as surveillance or HVAC systems, may themselves need to be maintained, upgraded or replaced. Internet connections or data lines for fire alarm or security monitoring should be properly maintained. Failing to renew a monitoring contract could expose the library to unnecessary risks.
  - Regular sealing and restriping of the library's parking lot or driveway can extend its life. The municipality may be able to include the library's asphalt surfaces in its street maintenance program. Similarly the sidewalks should be regularly checked for cracks or heaving segments, and repaired as necessary.

## Safety Systems and Emergency Procedures

Some building safety issues require periodic walk-throughs to ensure a safe environment; others involve alarm or other systems that may require periodic maintenance.

- Fire alarm, sprinkler, and security systems may include interrelated components that require periodic safety checks to comply with local or state building codes. Smoke alarms must be tested and certified. Also, fire extinguishers should be checked regularly and periodically recharged. Your city or village may be willing to

*Please see Best — on page 8*



## Best — from page 7

include the library building in their testing or maintenance contracts. A walk through for fire safety may prevent a citation from the fire marshal. Your fire department may be able to assist identifying issues and review your fire safety and evacuation procedures.

- Check security and emergency lighting systems, whether outdoors, in areas where safety may be a concern, or inside, where batteries and bulbs on emergency backup lights may require replacement.
- Exits should be checked regularly to make sure that signs are in place and emergency lights are functioning, that doors are not blocked, and that locks are working properly. Doors equipped with alarms to prevent use except in emergencies may need to be checked. Alarms may have batteries that require replacement.
- First aid kits should be checked and refreshed periodically, in addition to disaster supplies. The library's emergency plan should be reviewed annually with the board and staff, and copies kept at predetermined places.
- Evacuation procedures should be reviewed and practiced at least annually. Tornado Awareness and Fire Safety weeks offer good opportunities to coordinate tests with municipal or county agencies. Review operation of fire extinguishers, defibrillators, or other emergency equipment with staff.
- Be sure that cleaning supplies (chemicals) are stored and labeled properly, with Material Safety Data Sheets available when appropriate.
- The city or village risk management (insurance) provider may provide training or free safety reviews and ergonomic checks of work areas. By addressing safety issues proactively, the insurer's exposure to claims is thereby reduced.
- Maintain a registry of keys issued; re-core locks as necessary to ensure building security. Check that file drawers or cabinets with sensitive or protected information are kept locked.

If you contract with a private company or service for periodic maintenance or safety checks, they might urge you to include full parts and labor coverage for repairs in the contract. Be aware that such contracts are a financial benefit to the vendor, and that, as equipment ages, the costs of such all-inclusive coverage may become unnecessarily expensive. The library board could instead consider establishing a reserve fund for repairs, replenishing the reserve each year as it is depleted. Or the municipality may agree to provide funding for unanticipated expensive repairs (such as the complete failure of a major air conditioning unit) from a central contingency fund, rather than by annual appropriations to the library's own equipment repair fund. Local circumstances dictate the most prudent action.

### The Library's Image

The public does tell a book by its cover, and the public perception of the library is also colored by the initial visual impression. When conducting a walkthrough of the building for new board members, employees, or public officials, solicit their impressions of the library's organization and appeal—their fresh outlook may identify issues in the building that have blended into the background for you. Directional signs that once made perfect sense to the library staff may now be confusing to the newcomer. What is the general appearance of the shelving, displays and bulletin boards? Does the library have the outward appearance of organization and efficiency, with enough eye-appeal mixed in? The library should appear neither harshly institutional nor unnecessarily whimsical.

- Check periodically that signs are simple, straightforward, and readable from typical vantage points. Review shelf headings and classification indicators to ensure they still correlate to the collection. Consider a peer review to identify areas of the collection that could be more logically or clearly arranged.

*Please see Best — on page 9*

*Please see Evolution—on page 11*

## **Best — from page 8**

- Conduct cleaning at off-hours or at times of minimal library use. Work out an appropriate schedule with your employee or contractor for light, regular cleaning as well as periodic thorough dusting and cleaning.
- Regular cleaning of carpets not only improves appearance but can extend the life of the carpet pile.
- Be sure to review the library for ADA accessibility issues. Watch that furnishings, shelving or carts have not encroached upon required aisle widths, or that the expansion of the collection has not placed materials in unintentionally inaccessible locations.
- Consider the outside appearance of the library as well. The exterior should appear inviting and welcoming. Make sure signs are clear and library hours readable from the street. Event signs should be simple and clear.

- Work with your board and municipality to develop a reasonable landscape program to provide an attractive and vital appearance. Local garden clubs, service organizations, or dedicated Friends of the Library members might be willing to help with annual cleanups, installations, or mulching.

By developing and implementing regular, periodic reviews and maintenance of the library facility, the building will operate more economically, efficiently, and continue to serve and delight library users for years to come.

Questions about library administration may be addressed to your library system staff or to John DeBacher at [john.debacher@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:john.debacher@dpi.wi.gov) or (608) 267-9225. ☀