January 24, 2015

On behalf of the Florida Library Association, thank you for your support of Florida libraries. As the 2015 regular session nears, I urge your support for library programs that are essential to Floridians.

Floridians are benefiting more from their libraries than ever as libraries innovate. Today’s libraries are community hubs that provide services electronically, support digital literacy and job seekers, provide places for civic engagement and safe places for teens, and help very young children prepare for success in school while helping parents learn to be their child’s first teachers.

Here is information about some of our priorities; additional information is provided in the attached 2015 Legislative Platform.

**State Aid to Public Libraries** – Last session, the Legislature with the Governor’s support increased State Aid to Public Libraries by $5.1 million, from $22.3 million to $27.4, and we thank you for that. We urge you to continue building on that to get back to the $33.4 million appropriated in the early 2000s.

**Multi-Type Library Cooperatives** – Thanks to the Legislature and Governor Scott for increasing 2014-15 Library Cooperative Grant Program funding by $500,000, from $1.5 million to $2 million. We ask that you continue that support for cost-effective cooperation among all types of libraries and training for library staff.

**Public Library Construction** – Four public libraries have submitted construction grant applications totaling $2 million ($500,000 each, which is the statutory maximum for grants administered by the Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services). We urge you to support all of these projects.

**State College and University Libraries** – High quality information resources are vital to the success of Florida college and university students. Funding for electronic resources through the Complete Florida Plus Program—particularly those needed to support STEM programs—and a shared next-generation integrated library system will enable Florida academic libraries to continue providing this essential component of academic success.

Libraries are playing critical roles in helping Floridians with digital literacy and preparing themselves for success in our rapidly changing world and economy. We appreciate the work you are doing to position Florida for the future, and are proud to support you in that effort.

Sincerely,

Linda McCarthy
President
Florida Library Association