

Citizen comments received via email submitted to the CLAC list serve.

I support extending the current library levy, which I understand is capped at 58 cents but is presently 25 cents. This will give us greater assurance that we can keep the library open over the long run while we plan a permanent solution. The library is critical in so many ways for our city. Most especially for the children.

Tim Wohlforth
806 S. Mountain
Ashland.

Since I will be out of town on April 23 I wanted to send a couple comments. I have been volunteering at the welcome desk on a weekly basis following the reopening of the library. I am really impressed by the numbers of people using the library on a regular basis. In addition to people reading papers and magazines, researching topics, signing books out, and so on, there is a steady stream of people attending multiple meetings and activities. People still stop by the welcome desk to express their appreciation that the library is open again. From time to time I will have someone from Josephine county stop by, ask if there is any way they can get a library card (no, there isn't), and state how difficult it is for them without a library.

I know that people are concerned about the levy; when I was making phone calls prior to the vote that passed the levy, I heard several comments to the effect that they were afraid it would not be phased out after the couple of years requested. At the same time, Ashland is a town that needs, uses, and loves its library and if the way to keep it open is to extend the local option levy, then we need to take that step and do as much education of the community as possible to maximize the odds of its passage during these economically difficult times.

Sincerely yours,
Susan Lander

I want to make it clear that there is probably nobody in Jackson county who supports libraries more than I do. Prior to the closure of our libraries, I probably would have ranked in the upper 5% of users. I am totally dedicated to do what it takes to develop an organization that will ensure the long term successful operation of our libraries.

There is, in my opinion, only one way to accomplish this, and that is through a library district with its own tax levy and governing board, completely divorced from county government. For ten years, prior to 1996, we spent about half our time in Missouri, and we were served by the Mid-Continent library district. Mid-Continent (outside of Kansas City) covers three suburban counties, with a population of about 600,000. This is a superb library district with long hours, lots of books, and many branches. What they do not do is build fancy buildings as we have here, but that's over and there is nothing we can do about it.

I own a 70 acre farm in the Mid-Continent district, and my library tax for 2007 was \$64.

One reason there has been property tax support for libraries in Missouri is that most of the city and county expenses are paid by sales taxes--so what we really need in Oregon is a sales tax that would take the pressure off property taxes. One small suburban city near our farm levies no property tax at all. Yes, I am well aware that Oregon has voted down a sales tax umpteen times, but that doesn't mean we don't need it.

I don't know whether there is the slightest chance of developing a library district in the county. Probably not. Perhaps we could look at an Ashland-Talent district, but even that seems unlikely. Before the county system was shut down, it was underfunded. The budget was about eight million, and about eleven million

was needed to do it right. An Ashland-Talent district I believe would require funding of 2 1/2 to 3 million.

What I will absolutely never support is any more money going to bulwark the present system in any way. There is no doubt in my mind that before the libraries were closed a plan had been hatched to bring in this outside company from Maryland. I believe the plan was to close the libraries, let everybody stew for a while, and then propose the present plan after everybody is desperate to reopen the libraries. This was a union breaking plan, nothing more, nothing less. I don't know whether this company can run libraries, and frankly I don't care. I haven't been in a library since they took over. Maybe they can run libraries, it is not exactly rocket science. The point is that we don't need these people, and part of our tax money is being hijacked to Maryland. After they have been here a year, the agreement can be cancelled without cause by either party, and that is what we should be working for. Those people have simply got to go.

I will support any ideas that anybody has for a library district. Given the present Jackson county government that is the only thing that will work. I will not vote or work for anything that supports the continuation of the status quo.

Sincerely,
Walt Marsh 943 Clay St. Ashland

Dear Advisory Committee,

I am writing in support of extending the library levy for the operation of the Ashland branch. I have lived in Oregon for 17 years, and Ashland for 13 of those, and in part have loved living here because of the extensive community offerings available. Raised with a love of books and a tradition of regular library visits, I believe that libraries are one of the central foundations of a free and democratic society.

While my support has never wavered, my own personal use of the library has fluctuated over the years as Internet usage became more widespread and convenient, and my life became more busy. But recently, I have been reminded in a very visceral way how essential the entire library experience is for bringing people together for information, for pleasure, and for community.

As a new mom with an 8-week old baby, I was approached last year by a woman who was volunteering with the new "Babies in the Library" project, and encouraged to bring my daughter, even though she wouldn't be reading for a while. I decided to attend, primarily to get out of the house in early winter. I found an instant community with this new program. I learned new nursery rhymes and was reminded of others from my own childhood that I could then share with my babe. I began reading to my child all of the time, at home, in stores, in the program itself, which I attended as often as possible. My daughter is now 20 months old and loves books and magazines and being read to, and "reading" to her dolls or the dog or just to herself. At age 1 year we got her her very own library card. She is now learning her ABCs, and is well on the path to early literacy and a love of learning in general. The children's librarians at the Ashland branch, Margie and Perri, are amazing with the children, and maintain an environment that is welcoming and learning-centric. Today, the library is a favorite destination for my daughter, a place that she associates with friendship and songs and stories.

And the same for me. Over the course of the past year and a half, in addition to what I have learned about early literacy, I have made and strengthened friendships with people who work at the library and people who attend the library programs. I've gained lots of tips from other moms that have helped me as a first time mom. I have also learned about other enrichment programs from moms attending library programs (such as Kindermusik and the environmental puppet shows at North Mountain Park). I've gone to mom's

groups and playgroups in the meeting rooms downstairs. I've checked out materials recommended to me by others. As a result, I feel much better informed and more integrated in my community.

I believe that this integration is what makes Ashland so special. Free access to information, to meeting spaces, and to dialogues about what is meaningful help bring people together, and bringing people together helps to create a better quality of life for everyone. I highly encourage the committee to recommend extending the local option levy for library operations.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Karen Carnival
900 Strawberry Lane
Ashland
488.3379

Hi to all committee members,

I support continuing our local option levy for library operation because I remember the devastating effect of having our libraries closed recently for almost a year.

I support keeping public libraries open and so they can serve the public. The pared down staff has done an excellent job to revitalize our Ashland Library and to keep it open the same number of hours. The Sunday hours have been a good innovation, giving weekend access to working adults and school children.

I have been volunteering as a book shelper every week now in the Children's Department. It surprised me to see the enormous number of books that are checked out each week by children and young people.

As happy as I am to contribute my volunteer hours to the library, I would never suggest that any number of volunteers could substitute for the skill and professional know-how of our trained librarians. I am willing to assist them, but would never claim that volunteerism could replace them. Anyone who claims that that is possible is not informed enough about the workings and complexity of a library.

Our Ashland library is the hub of our community. It provides a calm reading area, meeting spaces, computer use, reference help, music CDs, audio books, videos, and computer classes for everyone.

The sharing of the building and its information-rich contents is one of the best uses of our tax dollars, in my opinion.

Reduce, reuse, recycle - the motto of Earth day applies so well to the function of our library. The quantity of materials stashed in each home is reduced, because it can be recycled right back into the library system for another person to reuse.

Libraries are an essential public good because they give access to education to all citizens, and of all ages. They are an extension of the public school system by making continued life-long learning available to all.

I have lived in Ashland for 27 years and have appreciated the library system, and its skilled employees.

Helga Motley
231 Gresham St (yes- lucky to live just a few blocks from the library)
Ashland, OR
488-0155

I am against another property tax levy. I just read in the paper a few days ago that our property taxes will increase and services will be reduced in Ashland. For people on fixed incomes these constant increases become a real burden. On one hand you want to attract young families to the area, but with constant raising property taxes you force them to leave or consider another town. Some other means of revenue should be considered (e.g. sales tax, lottery tax, deposit tax on plastic bottles to be used for the library). The last suggestion (plastic bottle deposit) could have many benefits besides funding the library, such as less trash and harm to the environment. The other issue is how this appears to the surrounding communities. Extended hours for only our library makes us appear elitist and arrogant to the other communities.

Richard Tripoli

January 22, 2008

Dear Mayor and City Council,

I am writing to engage in a conversation with you about rising property taxes. I am a single woman, in my sixties, and retired. Before I retired, I never missed voting yes for the bond measures in our community. I believe in the causes; education, library, fire department, etc. These are all highly valued services. However, in the last election, I found myself for the very first time voting against the levies. While I was working, I always felt that I could adjust my budget, count on a salary increase from my employer, (even though a social worker does not make much) so, I voted to fund these things in our community. However, I find now that I was naive and shortsighted, since I did not stop to consider people on a fixed income. They (we) do not have that luxury. So now I need to vote against these rate increases. The reason and only reason for my no vote, is that the property owners seem to have the full responsibility for this financial issue. Now that I am a "senior" on a fixed income, I find that I really can't afford to constantly see an increase in my tax obligation each year. I am not alone in this feeling. Many of my friends my age retired or not, feel the same way. And to make matters worse, the county has become more aggressive in finding what they call "clerical errors". Many property owners were faced with huge bills this year, going back 5 years to find where a "clerical error" was made. The county can't really tell you what the error is, only that they know there is one. My property taxes were nearly doubled with an additional \$6500 for the past "errors". An attorney was unable to find any law prohibiting this kind of practice by the county assessor's office. I was told hundreds of these letters went out to Jackson County taxpayers. One friend of mine in her 70's says that she doesn't believe she can afford to keep her house any longer. Now I realize, this experience is not an every day occurrence, but you see how vulnerable fixed income seniors are with this kind of "surprise" and the constant levies to support our community needs? Then, some folks might say "but you have a valuable piece of property".....and frankly, so what! I just want live in my house and not have to wonder if I can afford it the next year. Do we really want to eliminate an economic diversity in our town? Do we want to make it so that lower and middle income, seniors and young families can't live here?

As I said before, I want the Library, educational opportunities for our youth, and all the other necessities for a healthy community. But, we need to get creative here and not continually go to the same old source. Some areas of the country are offering people volunteer services for credits against their property taxes (for seniors) in other state, seniors of a certain income level are exempt. There are many ideas out there that work for other areas. Also, what about ideas like a coffee shop in the library to partially support it? Maybe this is a good idea or not, I don't know. My point is, let's look at fair ways to support these things. I am not an economist, nor an MBA, but we have brilliant people in our community who do know about this sort of thing.. Why not create a task force to look into alternatives?

We give a lot of lip service to "affordable housing" in Ashland, but forget that all those levies make the house payments of many, more that they can afford. I realize that there are many wealthy people in

Ashland and those folks can afford to bear the increase, but many of us cannot. I have an idea that is why we have lost so many of our young families too. The cost of owning a home is simply prohibitive.

I want to stay in Ashland, and in my home that I have owned for many years. I love it. My family was some of the first settlers in the mid 1800's. I have deep roots here and will do what I can to stay. However, every year of increases makes me think that it won't be possible. Please consider other options for funding our vital city needs.

I am also sending a copy of this letter to Senator Alan Bates and Representative Peter Buckley, as I would like to encourage them to support a state sales tax to fully fund education and take some of the burden off of property owners. I am also sending a copy to Pam Vavara of the Library Council, since that issue will be coming around again soon.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. I would appreciate any feedback you might have.

Sincerely,

Karen Darling
490 Strawberry Lane
Ashland, OR 97520

541-482-2468

karend@jeffnet.org

cc; Representative Peter Buckley, Pam Vavara, Senator Alan Bates

I am delighted to have been asked to speak to the City Council tonight regarding such a very important issue. As a UC Berkley graduate with a Masters in Elementary Education I am strongly in favor of asking the voters in November to extend the current local option levy for library operations for another four years.

During the campaign to pass the current levy, I had the opportunity to reach out to a sizable number of people in our community as one of three owners of Shakespeare Books and Antiques. Of the eighty businesses in the community that I approached for donations for the library campaign only four businesses declined to offer support.

Our only library here in Ashland was closed at the time. It was devastating for me and for so many who came into my bookstore. Students who could not do their homework because their parents could not afford a computer. Elderly people in our community who are on fixed incomes searching for large print books. Our library represents an asset to the community that should be treasured. It never should have never have been closed for lack of funding.

What our library offers to our small town is an incredibly valuable community resource. When the doors were closed everyone I spoke with felt diminished.

At Shakespeare Books and Antiques we have a significant part of our store dedicated to children's books. It is very common to have parents stop by with children who have read a book at the library and want to have a copy of their own book because they want to read it over and over and over again. These are children who have developed the love of reading at our local library which has a wonderful selection of books for our children.

It is my belief that the owners of all four of the bookstores here in Ashland have always felt that a strong relationship exists between the bookstores and our community library.

As you probably know the Blue Dragon closed its doors last year. The rent was raised to almost FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS PER MONTH.

I recently visited Carmel and the first thing I looked for in the city was a bookstore. How many bookstores are currently in the city of Carmel? ZERO. The rents are so high that it is a small town of almost exclusively restaurants art galleries and high end shops.

If the City Council looks to the future and what could easily happen in our small town they might be able to picture a similar pattern. If bookstores cannot afford the high rents in downtown Ashland not even one bookstore may survive.

Our store is located down an alley and we are told day after day that it is the red wagons filled with books that leads people into our store. In the event that small bookstores like The Tree House, the Book Exchange and Shakespeare Books and Antiques vanish from downtown, the presence of a library will take on an even greater importance.

I thank you for your time and sincerely hope that the City Council will do everything in it's power to keep our library open with a schedule at a minimum of forty hours because it will be my personal mission to do the same.

Jul: Honore
4/23/02

Why LIBRARIES

more power

Information Access

Research clearly shows that education is the best ticket out of poverty (Gans, 1995; Holleb, 1972).

However, people who are struggling in the depths of poverty are the least likely to increase their literacy skills and obtain a college education (US Department of Commerce, 1999).

Equal access - No one should be denied information because he or she cannot afford the cost of a book, a periodical, a web site or access to information in any format. Because libraries bring free access to all, they also bring opportunity to all.

Subject-matter access - free expression, and the corollary right to hear/read the expression of others. It is a core value of the library profession to actively defend the right of library users to seek information, no matter what the topic, and it's provided in a professional and non-judgmental manner.

Computer Access: For a majority of library patrons who use computers, it is the only access to the internet available to them. This enables access to information. For children and teens especially, this provides an early leveling of the playing field for those who cannot afford technology in their homes. On a more frivolous level (but I think still very important) it allows them to have IM and Facebook accounts - imagine having to explain to your middle school classmates that you can't afford to have internet at your house, so you don't have a MySpace page.

Homework Help: Many libraries have specific programs with teachers and online chat available to assist students with homework, and even those without programs have librarians willing and able to help students find the right information sources they need. For students who don't have parent involvement or internet at home, this is an invaluable resource.

CONCERN that

Literacy: More teens who can read are choosing not to read outside of school, leading to lower scores on tests (not just reading tests).

Libraries offer teens a place to find books that they WANT to read, on any subject.

Every Child Ready to Read program that focuses on encouraging parents to model reading behavior to their children.

Stats about children who have fewer books in their home and/or visit the library less start off preschool behind their classmates, and then students who start preschool with lower reading levels will most likely stay behind permanently.

Summer Reading: For both kids and teens, there's a new push for summer reading because it's been proven that kids who participate in summer reading return to school w/ higher reading levels than students who don't.

We can fund a dog park

High Speed Internet but NO ACCESS

April 23, 2008

Public Testimony
Citizens' Library Advisory Committee

I do not want to see another interruption in the library service in Ashland. Our entire community was focused on this important issue last year to the exclusion of other equally important civic problems.

I know that creating the structure to ensure permanent funding for Ashland's Library is a complex and difficult task. The Advisory Committee members volunteered and were appointed to make recommendations to the community and the City Council. They have spent their time and energy over many months to become the experts on how to continue to provide this essential service to our community. Having participated on community commissions myself, I have some appreciation for the efforts they have made. I personally know several members of the committee and value their opinions, know their sense of service and desire to serve the best interest of our community.

They have invited the community to participate along the way and today are making a recommendation to extend the library levy for an additional four years.

I agree with their recommendation. If they believe it will take four more years to reach a satisfactory permanent solution to this complex problem then I support that recommendation.

Respectfully,

Regina Ayars
199 Hillcrest Street
Ashland

50081211
I received the fundamentals of my education in school, but that was not enough. My real education, the superstructure, the details, the true architecture, I got out of the public library. For an impoverished child whose family could not afford to buy books, the library was the open door to wonder and achievement, and I can never be sufficiently grateful that I had the wit to charge through that door and make the most of it. Now, when I read constantly about the way in which library funds are being cut and cut, I can only think that the door is closing and that American society has found one more way to destroy itself.

— *I, Asimov*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Isaac ASIMOV

There is not such a cradle of democracy upon the earth as the Free Public Library, this republic of letters, where neither rank, office, nor wealth receives the slightest consideration.

— Andrew CARNEGIE

"I am excited about what's happening in my hometown and in libraries across the country. But I worry about whether our society will support public libraries so they can sustain this critical community service. In my view, investing in public libraries is an investment in the nation's future."

Bill Gates

"Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation."

■ Walter Cronkite

The richest person in the world - in fact - all the riches in the world - couldn't provide you with anything like the endless, incredible loot available at your local library. You can measure the awareness, the breadth and the wisdom of a civilization, a nation, a people by the priority given to preserving these repositories of all that we are, all that we were, or will be.

Malcolm Forbes

Dear City Council,
As an artist & business
owner, employee of
SOV SBOC, I urge
you to extend current
local option levy
for the library requested
amount needed.

I listen to local
CDs on my drive to
Medford SBOC office.
I love the convenience of
online County Book
reserve. I really
value our Ashland
library and the County
System.

Thank you for
taking good care of library
services with needed
levy —

Rothie L. Painter
P.O. Box 765
Ashland, OR 97520
painter@sov.edu

Our Ashland library supports a
community dedicated to literacy
for all ages. Our youngest children
have been delighted with the
reopening of the library. We need to continue
funding at all levels.

Kathy Bruce-Mee

I love the wobblees
storytime - a perfect
time for fun,
socialization, & bonding.

Really a special
time for me & my
youngest of 3 kids,
one of our only
one-on-one playtimes
during the week.
We ♥ Margie!

Tina Springer
Tina Springer

We love the
book time for
babies + toddlers.

It is enriching
for both child +
parent. Please
keep these
programs going!

We support our
library 100%.

- The Williams

Connecting with
Community (National/
State events is
great idea -

ie. the
Libraries

Reduce

Reuse

Recycle

EARTH DAY

display current up

McAmmond

4-23-08 after interview:
M. Clara Ammond

Additional new and/or
improved from before
closure.

① Computer classes
+ Welcome Desk person
who "talks them up"
(ie. advertising)

② Books by Mail

③ The display
on both floors -

A) eye catching

B) decorative (ie tulips
on current
1st floor)

C) In more places
than before

④ the shelving of reserve material
is more efficient
than before

I like the auto checkout

tho' it would be better
if both units worked
consistently

Having Welcome Desk or
staff persons free to
educate me helped -
Now I can do it myself.

I am a person who would like
to contribute both voluntarily
and financially. I have
I do not have a large sum of
money but I like simplicity.
I am moving away.

We participate weekly in the
Babies in the Library & visit the
Library at least 2x a week.

We would love to see this & other
programs continue.

In looking at [unclear] library brochure advertising the
hours of all the libraries in
the valley, Ashland library
stands out for its availability,
and I especially appreciate
the weekend hours. Please
keep it open!

Ingrid Larsen
1157 Iowa St.

Librarians are
an essential part
of the community.

The library is
a place where
families can
get together & not
have to spend \$.
Keep the library
open.

C.C. Hampton
1/1/22

Libraries need long-term funding, and you can't have good libraries without paying for them.

I'm happy to pay a property tax levy (or any kind of tax levy) to keep our libraries open.

Betsy Gentry

We love our library time! My son and I are here at least twice a week. We completely enjoy Babies, Wobblers in the library! Our son has just thrived with Words and books. Thank you, Margie, for running a great program.

-Janie Rosenthal

The idea of a town like Ashland without a library is unthinkable.

The obvious support from all factions of the community makes it clear that the city should offer full support, too.

Cyndee Wallace

We must never let our libraries close again! Some how we must find away to keep the door open with out making home owners bear the brunt. I love the library and use it often. However I am afraid my rent will increase if taxes go any higher on properties in Ashland. I was appalled we allow libraries to lock their door to the public. Why couldn't we decrease the hours, use the building for public even.

I am grate ful to the property owners of Ashland to vote in abill to help fund the library. But I fear it is not a solution. Now that I know closing the library is a possibility, I realize how vital this library is to the community. Please find a feasible solution. Thank you, Anna M. Low, Patron 4/2

NO TO MORE
LEVIES
+
PROPERTY TAXES

I love the library
and am here weekly.

I know the library
cannot be free, but

I have seen my property

tax go up and up

as my little home's

"value" decreases.

Please don't add

to an already heavy

property tax burden.

Economize in other ways!

Thanks.

We obtained negative publicity nationally when our library
closed. We had articulate, heart-felt witnessing about what
happened to our city when our library closed. We must
not face that again, that very negative modeling of values
for our children. Please, please plan ahead for having
permanent funding for Ashland Public Library.
Patricia Allister

Dear fellow citizens,

In my opinion, the current level of operation is adequate.

If we can continue at this level without charging more than 30¢ per \$1000 assessed value on property tax, I'm in favor of extending the levy 2 years at a time. Thank you.

William Thomson

It's worth
every penny
to our family,
Keep the levy!

Yes, we think the opening day
for library operations should be
extended. The Island voters
have made it clear that they
want their Island library
open, and with adequate hours.
We love and appreciate our library.

Alan Bradley.