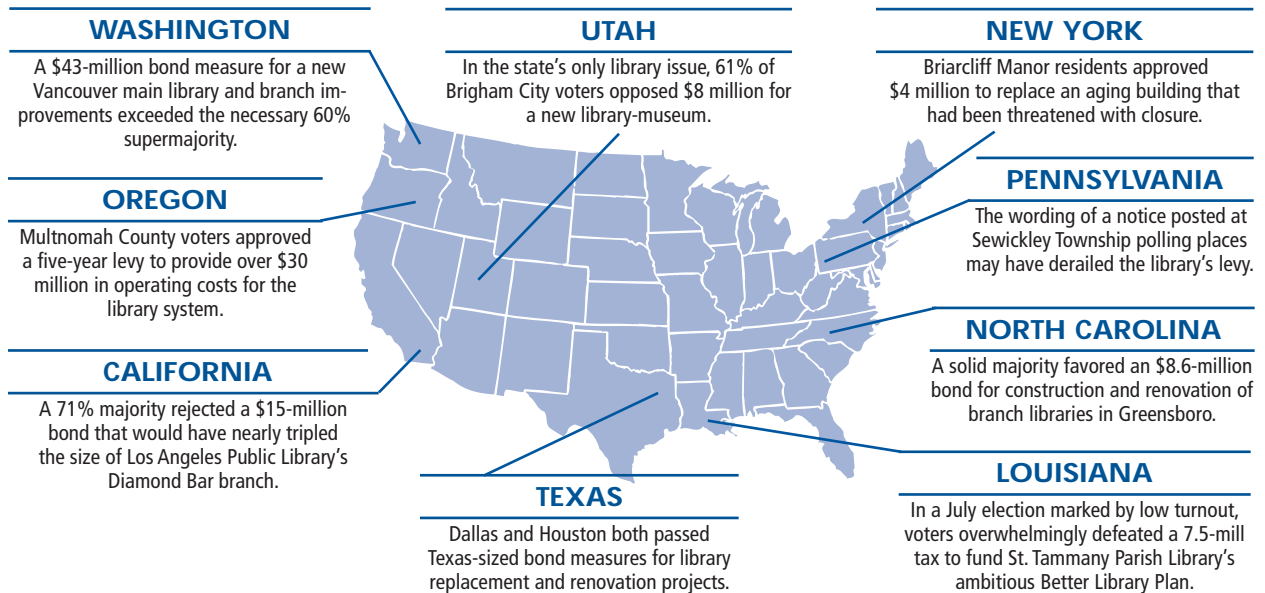


Referenda Roundup 2006

Strong Library Support Throughout Nation



On election day November 7, voters in Austin, Texas, approved a new 250,000-square-foot Central Library, while Oakland, California, residents rejected a measure to turn a vacant convention center into a new main library.

The \$90-million Austin library package, which won a 60% majority, was one of seven propositions before the city's voters, all of which passed. The new facility will include more books, programming and exhibit space, and increased parking and accessibility. Supporters said the existing John Henry Faulk Central Library has run out of space to shelve and process new materials, hindering distribution of books to branches.

Proposition 6 supporter Dave Shaw told the November 8 *Austin American-Statesman* that the library proposition "was never just about a new building. It's about enhancing the entire library system and the branches."

Although Measure N—a \$148-million bond to pay to move Oakland's main library to the closed

Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center, construct two new branches, and expand the other 18 branches—received 63.5% of the vote, it required a two-thirds majority.

Oakland Public Library Director Carmen Martinez said in the November 9 *San Jose Mercury News* that she was "numb" after the defeat, but vowed to continue efforts to upgrade branches through fundraising and to build a new branch on 81st Avenue. "We learned wonderful lessons," said Martinez. "We had a bold vision to build a library in a beautiful building but folks wanted that money to go to the neighborhoods. We know our community better."

American Libraries' state-by-state roundup of library referenda and other local ballot measures throughout the year is based on reports from state library agencies and online news sources.

ARKANSAS. A 0.33-mill library tax to fund a new roof and other improvements for the Greene County Public Library in Paragould passed by 53.8–46.2%.

In a July 11 special election, almost 69% of voters in Van Buren

supported a 16-month extension of a half-cent sales tax to fund construction of a new, 16,000-square-foot library. Funds from the extension supplement \$1.7 million from the original tax increase, which was approved in July 2005.

A 2.3-mill property tax increase to fund the Fayetteville Public Library's budget was defeated by 47–53% April 11. The library currently gets most of its funding from the city budget, and passage of the tax would have freed up city funds for other uses.

CALIFORNIA. In addition to the Oakland defeat, \$15-million bond that would have nearly tripled the size of Los Angeles Public Library's Diamond Bar branch was rejected by 71% of the voters. Measure L would have applied a special property tax on residents for more than 30 years. "Diamond Bar is very conservative. We don't want to be taxed to death," said Allen Wilson, head of Diamond Bar Citizens Against Library Tax. "We were out-campaigned 10–1, but we were not outvoted."

Although a slight 51.9–48.1% majority of Vandenberg Village voters favored Measure O, to establish a

\$22-per-year property assessment to raise \$50,000 annually for the town's Lompoc Library District branch, passage required a two-thirds majority.

School-funding tax measures that included provisions for libraries passed in Alameda County for Berkeley Unified, Marin and Sonoma Counties for Shoreline Unified, San Diego County for Palomar Community College, Santa Clara County for Campbell Union High and Foothill-DeAnza Community College, San Jose for Oak Grove School District, Santee for the Santee School District, and San Leandro for the city's high school.

Voters in Mendocino and Lake counties approved Measure W, which will provide Mendocino Community College with \$65.7 million for infrastructure improvements, including a new library.

On June 6, nearly 70% of Alameda County voters approved Measure G, a library tax that will provide \$180,000 annually to keep the main library open on Sundays and avoid further cuts to staffing and services.

On June 6, the state's voters rejected Proposition 81, which would have allowed California to borrow \$600 million in bonds for public library construction and renovation to accommodate increased population. The measure was placed on the ballot after a 2004 compromise by the legislature and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to replenish the Library Bond Act of 2000, which provided \$350 million for 45 library projects (*AL*, Aug., p. 13-16). That same day, a Del Norte County ordinance authorizing an eight-year tax to be used exclusively to extend library hours at the Crescent City, Smith River, and Klamath libraries, expand services to Gasquet/Hiouchi, purchase new books and media, promote literacy and school success,

and restore programs for adults and seniors, passed by 65.7-34.3%

COLORADO. By about 2-to-1, Fort Collins residents supported creating a library taxing district expected to raise some \$5.8 million to restore recent cuts in basic services and to construct a new southeast branch. A countywide criminal justice tax to expand the jail was roundly defeated, leading the *Fort Collins Color-*



Austin Public Library Director Brenda Branch at an election night celebration of passage of the \$90-million library package.

doan to editorialize November 8 that voters understood "that the library is a vote for prevention while a criminal justice tax could be perceived as a vote for reaction."

Garfield County voters overwhelmingly approved two library measures: One creating a county library district and imposing a 1-mill property tax to expand facilities and extend operating hours passed 9,132 to 5,579; another maintaining an existing 0.25-cent sales tax that funds the library won by 10,250 to 4,024. A similar ballot measure was defeated in 1999.

In Adams County, a 1-mill tax increase for the Rangeview Library District won by 1.5%, or just more than 250 votes. Two previous funding requests had been rejected in the last nine years. The measure, which will double the library's annual budget, will fund new buildings for two branches and additions to three others.

Durango residents approved a financing mechanism giving the city permission to bond against previously approved tax revenues to build a new public library.

A proposal for a new facility for the Basalt Regional Library District won on its second attempt. Eagle and Pitkin county voters approved a property tax hike for a new library by 1,989 to 1,100, and a related proposal to raise property taxes for operating funds won by 2,111 to 996. In 2003 voters rejected a plan that would have located the new facility elsewhere.

Berthoud voters approved by 1,118-765 a 1.9-mill library levy increase. The favorable vote carries a bonus: Berthoud resident Doc Fickel pledged an additional \$100,000 to the library—\$50,000 a year for the next two years—if the measure passed.

A statewide constitutional amendment that would have required

public school districts to spend 65% of their operating budgets on classroom spending, including librarians, books and classroom computers, lost by almost a 2-to-1 margin.

IDAHO. Bond measures to build or expand libraries in three cities failed to get the required two-thirds majority in February 7 elections: In Boise, 57% of voters favored a \$37.8-million bond to build three branches; a \$4.5-million bond measure to build a new Lewiston library drew 56% approval; and in Twin Falls, only 35% approved a \$5.2-million measure to expand the existing library.

Meridian District Library, which has seen a 244% increase in library visits between 1997 and 2005, lost a \$9.5-million bond for a new library. Although 61.7% of voters supported the measure, a two-thirds supermajority was required for passage.

Voters passed two permanent override levies on May 23, doubling

the operation and maintenance budgets of district libraries in Fremont and Benewah counties.

On August 1, a \$2.2-million bond issue to expand and remodel the American Falls District Library won by a 71% margin. In the Franklin County District, 77% of voters favored a \$129,000 two-year temporary operating levy.

ILLINOIS. Roughly half the ballot measures in the state passed. Residents voted 482–418 to approve the Atwood-Hammond Library District's first tax hike since 1994, increasing the maximum property tax rate from 25 cents to 40 cents per \$100 valuation. Other tax-rate increases passed in Forest Park and Malta Township.

Bond issues were approved for the Somonauk and Chatham Area public library districts. Residents of Minier and Little Mackinaw Township voted to establish the H. A. Peine District Library and impose a library tax. Voters also agreed to establish two new public library districts—the Reddick district in part of LaSalle County and the Earlville district in part of LaSalle, DeKalb, and Lee counties—and to annex unserved territory of the Collinsville Community School District into the Mississippi Valley Public Library district, nearly doubling the geographical area and adding about 11,000 residents to the district.

Failed tax-rate increases were reported in Divernon Township, Kewanee, Orland Hills, and Midlothian. Sugar Grove failed for a fourth time to pass such a measure, including an unsuccessful attempt March 21. In Bement, the library came up nine votes short, failing to pass a tax hike by 287 to 396.

In the March 21 primary, tax measures passed for the Bensenville Community Public Library District, Cherry Valley Public Library District, Cortland Community Library, Crete Public Library District, Elkhart Public Library District, Hinsdale Public Library, Matson Public Library in Princeton, McCook Public Library, Town and Country Library in Elburn, and Westmont Public

Library. They failed for Kewanee, Sugar Grove, and Winfield public libraries. Bond measures were rejected for Bellwood Public Library and Oswego Library District.

Public libraries were established in Farm Ridge, Freedom and Wallace townships, and a new Maryville Community Library District was created.

Three annexations to the Tri-Quincy Area Public Library District all failed, as did ones to the Robert W. Rowe and Warren-Newport public library districts. However, annexations to the Arcola, North Suburban, St. Elmo, Robinson, and Westville public library districts were approved.

INDIANA. In March, Crete residents supported a rise in the library tax, projected to raise \$350,000 annually, by 53–47%. Three previous referenda had failed; passage of this one will allow the library to operate on Fridays.

KANSAS. By 609 to 498, voters in Rose Hill passed an initiative to establish a public library—the community library had previously been part of the school district's elementary media center—and authorize a levy up to four mills. Haysville residents approved by 1,180 to 1,139 a \$3.9 million bond issue to construct a new library that will double the present library's size and help anchor the town's historic district. Both communities have seen substantial population growth in the last decade, and residents say they see a need for larger community gathering places.

By 1,532–622, McPherson residents approved a sales tax to fund expansion and renovation of the library August 1.

In a September 12 special election, 80% of Bonner Springs voters approved a 0.25% sales tax to pay for the \$3.5 million bond for constructing a new library.

On February 28, Basehor residents authorized the library to raise property taxes by 0.787 mill to pay for a new building. The expected \$2.99 million will fund site preparation,

construction, furniture, fixtures, and professional fees.

LOUISIANA. A 7.5-mill tax to fund the St. Tammany Parish Library's ambitious Better Library Plan met an overwhelming 73% defeat in a July 17 election marked by low turnout: Only 7% of registered voters participated. The plan aimed to rebuild and renovate the system in the wake of Hurricane Katrina by building two new regional libraries and nine new community libraries, and renovating two other facilities. "As an organization stretched to capacity prior to the storm, we are accustomed to economizing and will continue to do so," said Library Director Jan Butler.

MASSACHUSETTS. A \$250,000 override of the tax-limiting Proposition 2½ to construct a new roof on the Rockland Memorial Library was defeated by around 1,000 votes.

At an October 23 town meeting, Medway residents rejected an \$8,000 funding request for the library that had been pared down from \$138,000. The library had sought the money to retain an existing waiver from the state to maintain its certification, making it eligible for state aid and reciprocal borrowing. In light of the town's fiscal crisis, the library board subsequently voted not to seek additional funds at the next town meeting December 4, although they said they would not be opposed if the Board of Selectmen made such a request on its own.

At a September 7 town meeting, North Easton residents not only rejected a request from the Ames Free Library for an additional \$1.8 million to renovate its historic building, but they rescinded \$5 million in funds approved in 1996. The move will require the library to return \$1.2 million spent for architectural fees and site preparation and a state grant of \$1.9 million, since the state set an end-of-September deadline to begin the project.

By just six votes, residents of Bourne rejected a \$4.75-million debt exclusion for expansion and renovation of the Jonathan Bourne Public

Library August 9, 1,647 to 1,641.

July 18 Whately voters approved a \$160,000 Proposition 2½ override that included \$30,000 to keep the town library open.

Some 52% of voters rejected a May 16 tax-increase proposal to keep the Wellesley Free Library's historic Fells and Hills branches open. The branches were closed on June 30.

At their annual town meeting May 1, Athol residents defeated 85–54 a request for funds for the library to purchase a building it had hoped to renovate for offices and special programs. The same request also appeared on a May 22 special election ballot for a Proposition 2½ override, where it was again defeated.

MICHIGAN. Millage increases passed for the Almont District Library, Benzie Shores District Library, Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library in St. Joseph, Monroe

County's Summerfield-Petersburg Branch Library, Pigeon District Library, Pontiac Public Library, Ray Township Library, and Saugatuck-Douglas District Library. Tax measures failed for the Bad Axe Area District Library, Dryden Township Library, Lapeer District Library, and Ruth Hughes Library District.

On August 8, voters approved tax renewals for Benzie Shores District Library's Crystal Lake branch, Bridgeport Public Library, Capital Area District Library, Charlotte District Library, Delta Township District Library, Gladwin County Library District, Hesperia Community Library, Holly Township Library, Independence Township Library, Oakland Township Library, Peter White Public Library, Rawson Memorial Library, St. Clair County Library, Saline District Library, Springfield Township Library, Sturgis Public Library, White Lake

Township Library, and Ypsilanti Public Library.

August ballot measures failed for Almont District Library, Bay County Library System, Crockery Township Library, Dryden Township Library, Harbor Beach Area Library, Lapeer District Library, Lyon Township Public Library, Monroe County's Summerfield-Petersburg Branch Library, North Branch Township Public Library, Ruth Hughes Memorial Library District, and Suttons Bay-Bingham District Library.

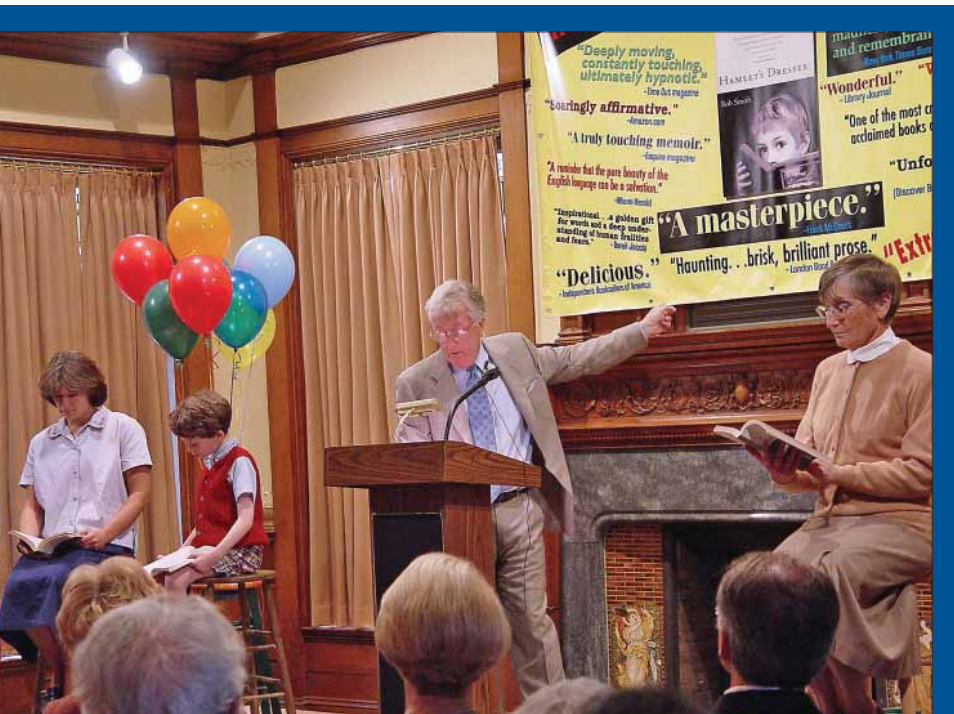
Voters overwhelmingly rejected a second attempt at a millage increase to fund a new facility for the White Cloud Community Library May 2. The same day two requests from the Howell Carnegie Library also lost: a \$13.8-million bond issue for a building expansion and a 0.3051-mill tax increase to raise \$761,482 for operating costs. However, Moore Public Library in Lexington passed a 10-year, 0.6-mill tax increase that had failed twice since 2004.

In March, a 1-mill tax-increase request for the Northeast Ottawa District Library was rejected by a nearly 2-to-1 margin.

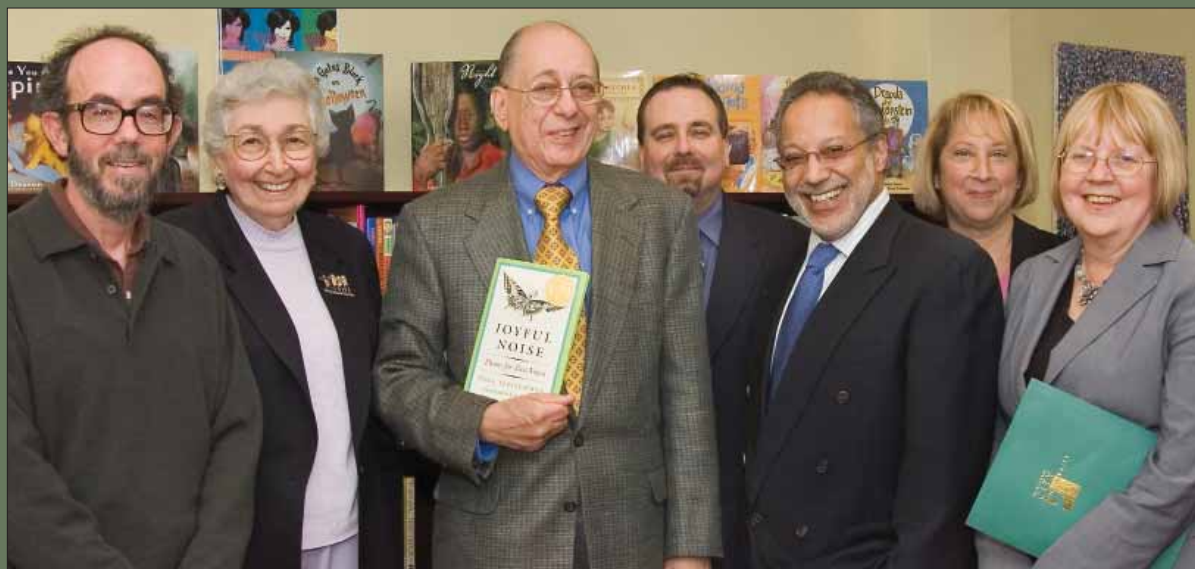
MISSOURI. Although exactly 57% of voters in the Marion C. Early School District in southwest Missouri favored a \$2.4-million bond issue that would have funded seven new classrooms, a library, and a cafeteria, the measure, which required 57.14% approval, fell just three votes short.

Property-tax increases for the Joplin and Webb City public libraries won comfortable victories in August 8 elections. The Joplin measure, a 10-cent levy increase that voters approved 2,548 to 1,767, will increase the budget for materials by \$50,000 and allow the addition of Sunday hours and evening hours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Residents favored the rise in Webb City's levy from 20 cents to 29 cents by a 504–344 margin. Director Sue Oliveira said the library had doubled in size with a renovation project that was completed last year,



TO READ, PERCHANCE TO DREAM. Author Bob Smith, at the podium, joins actors (from left) Catherine Gallagher, Tommy Nelson, and Davina Porter in a reading from Smith's book *Hamlet's Dresser*, chosen for Stratford (Conn.) Public Library's first "One Book, One Stratford" communitywide reading event. Launched September 9, the program zeroed in on Smith's acclaimed memoir about his Stratford upbringing and his career with the American Shakespeare Festival. The event was cosponsored by the book's publisher, Simon and Schuster.



UNIVERSITY OPENS CENTER FOR YOUTHLIT. New Jersey City University dedicated the M. Jerry Weiss Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature October 5, in honor of the professor emeritus (third from left), a pioneer in the field of whole language. Celebrating

with him are (from left): author and event speaker Paul Fleischman; Helen Weiss, the honoree's wife; professor Allan De Fina; NJCU President Carlos Hernandez; and faculty members Fran Levin and Joanne Z. Bruno.

but it was still operating on a budget designed for 1982, the last time the levy increased.

Voters in Dixon—the only city in Pulaski County with its own library—rejected a proposal to merge with the county library system. The proposal lost April 4 by only four votes.

MONTANA. Voters passed by 64% a funding request for Hearst Free Library of three additional mills to add hours and boost the collection.

On June 6 Missoula County voters granted the library a \$995,000 levy in perpetuity. While the 5-mill permissive levy that serves as the library's base funding grows each year by a percentage of the cost-of-living increase, voters must approve any action to bring the new levy up to the current dollar value.

NEW HAMPSHIRE. North Hampton residents voted 544–304 to establish a Library Capital Reserve Fund with \$50,000 raised from taxation and \$50,000 from the library trustees' invested funds.

An \$8.5-million library expansion project was shot down by Merrimack voters April 11. It was among three

major spending proposals that tax-watchdog group Merrimack Cares had urged voters to reject, all of which were defeated.

At a standing-room-only town meeting March 14, Mont Vernon residents overwhelmingly rejected a \$2.3-million proposal to move the historic Daland Memorial Library building to a nearby cornfield, where there would be room for a major expansion. The 317–125 vote was the fourth time since 1999 that a library construction measure failed. That same night, Atkinson residents turned down a library project by 25 votes.

NEW JERSEY. A nonbinding referendum asking Randolph residents to support building a new \$12.4-million library lost by a vote of 4,247 to 2,859. Officials said they were unlikely to submit another such vote for at least five years.

NEW MEXICO. Statewide voters approved Bond Question C, which will generate up to \$9.09 million in funding for libraries across New Mexico.

NEW YORK. In Briarcliff Manor, residents approved a \$4-million plan for a new village library to replace

an old building that had been threatened with closure by county and state library officials. Voters passed increased budgets for libraries in Chemung County, Glens Falls, Newark, Newfield, Peekskill, Philipstown, Stanfordville, and Trumansburg; East Greenbush residents approved their library budget in September.

In Nassau, a library tax that would supply \$79,500 in library funding was approved 546 to 337.

Poughkeepsie residents appeared to have favored a \$14.5-million plan for expansion of the Adriaance Memorial Library, although 500 absentee ballots remained to be counted.

East Fishkill residents voted to establish a public library district.

By 407 to 266, Voorheesville voters approved a proposal to purchase 5.6 acres behind the library to allow either expansion of the old library or construction of a new one. The \$150,000 price tag includes \$100,000 for the land and \$50,000 to develop a plan.

Residents in five library districts in Ulster County—Rosendale, Saugerties, Ulster, West Hurley, and Woodstock—approved budget pro-

posals by wide margins September 5. However, in May Rosendale voters had defeated by 375–266 a plan to purchase buildings and property adjacent to the library for expansion and parking.

In another May election, Hannibal voters agreed to a request by the library for \$35,000 in annual funding to be collected through the school district's annual tax bill.

Tompkins County voters rejected a library tax by 65–35% February 7; as a result, the library eliminated Sunday hours.

NORTH CAROLINA. Greensboro voters approved a \$8.6-million bond for construction and renovation of branch libraries, 33,595 to 19,273. However, by a 1,884–1,723 vote, Alleghany County residents narrowly rejected a \$2-million bond to build a new public library.

NORTH DAKOTA. Mandan City and Morton County voted to consolidate their libraries.

OHIO. Two libraries in Lake County faced different results: Voters in Morley Library's service area approved a 1-mill, five-year replacement levy, while Mentor Public Library was unsuccessful in its request for a 1.1-mill, 10-year levy.

By a lopsided 2,565–865 margin, Orrville residents overwhelmingly passed a 0.75-mill renewal. Massillon residents okayed a 1.9-mill, five-year levy, and a 0.4-mill, five-year levy for the Bettsville Public Library passed 329–170. A new levy to fund Hancock County's three public libraries passed narrowly.

In May 2 elections, funding measures for Avon Lake, Blanchester, Bluffton, Lorain, and Warren–Trumbull County public libraries all passed, while voters in Aurora, Cuyahoga Falls, Defiance, and Pataskala met defeat.

OREGON. Multnomah County voters approved a five-year levy to provide over \$30 million in operating costs for the library system. Measure 26–81, which garnered 59% of the vote, will take effect July 1, 2008, replacing a levy that passed five years ago. It will cover some 55% of the library's operating costs.

"This vote is a great affirmation of the value our community places on library services," said Library Advisory Board Chair Alice Meyer. "In tough economic times, libraries matter more than ever." Director of Libraries Molly Raphael added, "Multnomah County voters have

said 'yes' to maintaining library funding and we look forward to providing the level of services that our customers want and expect. Great communities have great libraries, and Multnomah County voters have reaffirmed their commitment to this ideal." Passage of tax requests under the state's Measure 47 requires a 50% voter turnout in most elections, even if the majority of voters approve.

By 55%, Washington County residents approved a four-year, \$29.5-million library levy. Library supporters, who had unsuccessfully proposed levies twice since 2002, said educating voters was the key to the measure's passage. "I think that they realized that it's efficient and it's not a huge amount," said Pat Biggs, board president of People for Libraries, a political action committee formed to pass the levy.

A \$19.97-million general obligation bond in Lebanon passed with almost 58% of the vote. Among the projects funded by the bond is a new library expected to be more than three times the size of the current facility.

Eugene renewed its four-year operating levy by a thin 52–48% margin.

FACILITIES FEATURE CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS



After a 22-month renovation and expansion, El Paso (Tex.) Public Library's main library reopened in October. The \$9.6-million restoration added 45,000 square feet to the library and included a new auditorium, literacy and technology center, and separate children's and teen sections.

Every year, *American Libraries'* April issue spotlights new, expanded, and remodeled library buildings. This major feature includes some of the best in new library designs, and successful restorations of libraries of all types and sizes. The editors invite librarians, architects, and interior designers to share their treasures with *AL's* readers.

The 2006 facilities feature included 32 projects. Unfortunately, not all submissions can be featured. For consideration, send color prints, 35mm slides, or 300-dpi digital images on a CD, along with a submission form (available at www.ala.org/ala/online/submittinal/facilitiessubmissionform2007.pdf) and any additional promotional and descriptive material to Greg Landgraf, *American Libraries*, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

The deadline is February 1, 2007. Sources will be credited and materials returned on request.



RAISING THE ROOF. Eleven months after Hurricane Wilma ripped the roof off the Palm Beach County (Fla.) Library System's Loula V. York branch in Pahokee, library mascot Dewey joins some young friends at the September 30 reopening celebration and fish fry. The storm hit only two weeks before the library was to close for renovations. Building costs, originally estimated at \$508,000, rose to over \$1 million with another \$80,277 needed to replace the water-damaged collection. But the reopening was a success—over 200 people attended, a record 369 items were circulated, and 29 new library cards were issued.

Merle Bottge, chair of the renewal campaign, said the results showed that this might be the library's final effort to pass a levy. "I don't think the voters said, 'We don't want the library,'" she said. "But maybe the operating levy is not the way to fund the library on an ongoing basis."

Levies for Baker County Library and Sweet Home Library that had failed to draw a 50% voter turnout in May succeeded in November. Funding measures failed with less than 50% of the vote in Oregon City, Siuslaw, and Wilsonville. Only 41% of Jackson County voters favored a five-year library operations local option levy. The library sought the measure after learning that the county might lose a federal timber tax subsidy next year; the levy would have been collected only if the subsidy ended. Commissioner Dave Gilmour said if the levy failed and the federal funds stop, all 15 of the county's libraries could close their doors.

Residents chose to form library districts in Malheur and Wasco counties; both issues had failed to attract the necessary level of voter participation in May. Formation of the Dalles-Wasco County Library District met a majority of both ballots and turnout, but a library district formation attempt drew less than 50% in Josephine County.

In May, Tualatin voters approved the use of general fund money to expand the library building. Because construction costs have risen to nearly \$9 million since residents passed a \$4.2-million bond in 2004 to finance the facility, the city will use urban renewal funds to cover the shortfall.

PENNSYLVANIA. The board president of Sewickley Township Public Library voiced fears that the 43–57% defeat of the library's levy may have been a result of the wording of an official explanation of the referendum that was posted at all six of the township's polling places.

Barbara McMillan said the disputed sentence—"In addition, however, the Sewickley Township Supervisors will have the authority to increase the tax rate for the library tax without having to obtain voter approval of another ballot question"—was underlined at several of the polling places visited by library board members, adding that the posted explanation was pointed out by poll workers.

"There is some question about the validity of the results," said McMillan, although she noted in the November 9 *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* that it would require a unanimous vote for the library board to bring the matter before county officials. A similar measure was defeated by a 9% margin May 16.

By a vote of 574 to 722, Salem Township residents once again turned down a five-year annual tax to help pay for a newly expanded library that opened November 1. The town had rejected a similar referendum in 2004, although it was approved in adjoining Lake Township.

SOUTH CAROLINA. Oconee County voters rejected a 1-cent sales tax that would have funded 39 projects, including a new library in Seneca that would have received \$8.5 million. The measure passed in Seneca, 1,530 to 1,422, but was soundly defeated in two other communities.

TEXAS. In addition to the success of the \$90-million Austin referendum, libraries throughout the state fared well November 7. By a whopping 82% margin Dallas voters approved Proposition 4, which provides \$46.2 million for major maintenance, construction of one new branch, and renovation of the central library and two branches. The city has authorized over \$100 million for libraries in just three years: A \$55-million bond measure passed in 2003.

Houston residents passed Proposition E, a \$37-million bond package for library replacement and renovation projects.

In Irving, the passage of Proposition 4 will provide \$18.2 million for

Filter-Savvy Students Barred from Most of Web

As of October 20, students of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District headquartered in Palmer, Alaska, are no longer able to retrieve websites on classroom or media-center computers unless the site ends in a .gov or .edu domain name, or is a database whose content is licensed by the district, or the district has approved an educator's request that the site be unblocked. The action came in response to an October report that the top five websites visited by students during school hours between September 25 and October 6 were "noninstructional and noneducational," District Public Information Officer Traci Crotteau told *American Libraries*.

"What is blocked today is accessed tomorrow through a different door," Chief School Administrator Bob Doyle wrote in an October 10 letter to district department directors, school principals, and librarians. "The Management Information Services (MIS) Department has tried hard to provide adequate access to the internet and to maintain a safe environment for students," he went on to say, but is losing the battle "due to the fact the district has many industrious and computer-savvy students."

Asserting that the district is "liable if students get hurt and for what they're seeing," Crotteau said the crackdown was necessary because "we cannot possibly monitor 16,000 students." She explained that in just 10 school days of online sessions, the third-most-visited URL was geckoproxy.com, which enables students to sidestep the SurfControl filter installed to comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act. Although the filter had been set to block 12 subject categories, other sites frequented by students were dedicated to online shopping, sexually explicit images, and chat-room access, she said.

At an October 18 school-board meeting, MIS director Marie Burton told dissenting teens who attended that she would work with them in

making the policy more workable. "What still worries me is that [the filtering] is happening at all," high-school senior Blake Kinsey said in the October 20 *Anchorage Daily News*. "It's narrowing my mind, my ability to think outside the box. I would think that's what we'd want all our students to do."

Arkansas Trustees Reconsider *Basic Instinct*

A concerned patron of the Rogers (Ark.) Public Library has asked the board to remove the director's cut of the 1992 box-office hit *Basic Instinct* from the collection.

At an October 17 meeting, Nieves Egelkraut likened the movie about a police detective's sexual involvement with a murder suspect to pornography, the *Benton County Daily Record* reported October 18. She also expressed fear that teenagers would borrow it, although RPL Director Judy Casey explained that library policy enables parents to bar their minor children from checking out movies.

Egelkraut is one of 22 people to borrow the film since it was donated to the library in December. "This is one of the movies I'd be hard-pressed not to add," said reference librarian Robert Finch, who manages the video collection. Finch explained to trustees that *Basic Instinct* was nominated for two Academy Awards, stars award-winning actors, and received a three-star recommendation in *Leonard Maltin's 2007 Movie Guide*. Trustee Sean Keith noted that the cover of the movie box states that the unrated director's cut contains scenes "too hot to be shown" in the theatrical release.

While the board considers the film, it has been withdrawn from circulation and placed on reserve

for staff and trustees. Casey said she would offer several options for labeling the movie at the November 21 board meeting.

Colorado Mom Objects to Eroticism Article

A Colorado mother of three has filed a complaint with the Rangeview Library District objecting to an article in the Spanish-language magazine *Muy Interesante*.

Claudia Speak said her attention was caught by a provocative cover on display in the adult magazine section at the district's Brighton branch, showing a woman biting into a banana. Although Speak is unable to read Spanish, she found pictures inside "of pornographic nature which included two couples engaging in sex, total frontal nudity of males and females, gay men in a sexual pose, a cartoon depicting oral sex, three nude women on stage in sexual pose . . . and more," she wrote in a letter to the *Brighton Standard Blade*.

The article, titled "El extraordinario poder del erotismo" ("The Extraordinary Power of Eroticism"), explores sexuality between men and women, as well as between humans and other species, the *Standard Blade* reported October 17.

Brighton Branch Manager Alex Villagran told the newspaper a three-person library committee would recommend to the library director whether the subscription should be cancelled, but that removing the issue in question is not an option. "That would be censoring," Villagran said.

Speak opposes canceling the subscription, but wants the eroticism article kept out of children's hands, explaining that she doesn't feel that would constitute censorship. "I think discretion is a better word." —B.G.



land and construction of two branch libraries, completion of another branch now under construction, and renovation of existing branches. In addition, a \$25-million measure included \$1.5 million for RFID technology in the library.

Sachse residents voted 2,353–1,284 for Proposition 5, allowing for \$615,000 for library construction, furnishing, and improvements. Elroy voters approved a sales tax to pay for the new East Travis Gateway Library District.

In a May 13 election, voters funded new libraries in Fort Bend County, McKinney, and Schertz. However, residents in Keller defeated a bond proposition for a new \$7.6-million central library.

UTAH. In the state's only library issue, 61% of Brigham City voters opposed an \$8-million bond to build a new library-museum.

VIRGINIA. A \$42.5-million bond issue for the library to build two new facilities was one of three bond referendums that passed in Prince William County, although the library's 70% approval was the smallest margin of the three measures.

WASHINGTON. Lynnwood voters okayed a proposal to join the Sno-Isle Library District. Although homeowners' taxes will rise, annexing into the system will save the city \$1.1 million that it pays Sno-Isle in annual fees.

An \$8.1-million Arlington library bond to build a new facility four times the size of the current one fell

short of the 60% supermajority it needed to pass.

Although results had not been certified, the Castle Rock Library levy appeared to have achieved its needed 60% supermajority: In mid-November, it had a 61.3% approval rate.

Vancouver residents approved a \$43-million bond measure September 19 to fund a new main library as well as a new eastside facility and technology improvements at the Vancouver mall branch. The 63% favorable vote exceeded the necessary supermajority. Two major gifts—a \$5-million pledge from an anonymous donor and a \$2-million tract of land for the main library site—were contingent upon passage.

Previous bond issues in March 2004 and November 2005 narrowly missed obtaining supermajorities amid controversy over the library's internet filtering policies, which only required filters for minors and included a parental opt-out provision. In February the board adopted a more stringent approach that requires filters on all library computers.

Pierce County voters reauthorized and increased the library's levy rate in September by a 54.7% margin; the extra funds will mean increased hours and more materials and public-access computers.

On May 16, Richland residents passed a \$17.25-million bond to increase the size of the library; the 63% approval rate met the required supermajority.

An annexation measure calling for Yakima to join the Yakima Valley Regional Library District passed with 58% approval April 25.

WEST VIRGINIA. A tax levy for the Putnam County Library System failed to meet the 60% majority needed for passage. The 8,644–6,049 vote total amounted to just 58.8% in favor. The measure was also on the ballot in May, when it garnered 57%. In 1990 the levy failed by less than 2%. Library Director Jackie Chaney said that instead of trying again to pass the levy, library officials will likely redirect their efforts toward getting the state legislature to lower the percentage needed for such measures to pass.

The 62% approval rate for a four-year renewal of Hancock County's levy to fund the county's three public libraries barely met the supermajority. Glenville residents also passed a levy to fund the library by 1,139–521.

In May, Marion County voters renewed three levies that have been in existence since 1988, including one to fund the library system at an increased level.

WYOMING. By 55–45%, voters okayed \$5.9 million for an expansion project for Fremont County Library System's headquarters, and in a 58–42% vote, Park County residents approved a 1-cent capital facilities sales tax to raise \$13.2 million, \$2.2 million of which will go toward relocating the library to the Park County Complex, including remodeling and improvements. —G.F.

D.C., Chicago Libraries Add Hours

Public libraries in Washington, D.C., and Chicago are extending their hours of operation, thanks to additional FY2007 funding.

The District of Columbia Public Library opened its central Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library and all 17 full-service neighborhood branches on Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m. starting October 15. "Whether it's families or individual residents, we're going to be attracting groups

of people who wouldn't normally have time to come to the library during the week," said DCPL Chief Librarian Ginnie Cooper in a press release. "This is going to enable us to serve many, many more people who have information needs but perhaps did not have time to get their needs met." The city's FY2007 budget included \$790,000 for staffing costs to provide Sunday hours, as well as \$210,000 for materials and supplies.

DCPL also eliminated the age and handwriting requirements for children to obtain a library card. In addition, it recently began offering wireless access at all of its libraries, including four bookmobiles that are temporarily providing services to neighborhoods whose branches have been closed since December 2004 for remodeling.

Citing a significant increase in downtown population, Chicago Pub-