



The Packet

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Newsletter of the Mississippi Library Commission

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IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL CONNECT TO IT

In the Mississippi Library Commission's (MLC's) 2016 budget request hearing before the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, Executive Director Susan Cassagne proposed a plan to build a statewide, fiber optic broadband network, ultimately with managed Wi-Fi for each public library throughout the state. The fiber network, with necessary funding, will provide a minimum of 20 megabits per second (Mbps) of bandwidth to each library building. Speed would be increased, depending on the size of the library and usage demands.

What does this mean?

This would ensure that every Mississippian would have sufficient broadband and direct access in their community to digital educational, economic, and health resources. Currently, public libraries operate with a mean download speed (the number of Mbps a connection is allowed to travel from a website to the network), of 7.3 Mbps, which is far below the United States' 57.4 Mbps average. To put this in perspective, most home internet access packages have a minimum download speed of at least 6 Mbps intended for use with only a handful of devices. However, the smallest libraries may be supporting more than a half dozen devices at any one time with as little as .06 Mbps.

In comparison, neighboring states far surpass Mississippi's speed: Louisiana has 44.7 and Alabama has 30.4 Mbps – both significantly exceed Mississippi's 7.3 speed. The statewide network would mean an average increase from .06 Mbps download speed to approximately 63 Mbps for Mississippi.

Why a statewide broadband network?

Mississippi libraries are constantly working to meet the needs of their customers in various areas. Today's needs include local economic development, jobs, education and online classes, digital literacy and technology. The MAGNOLIA databases require bandwidth, and LearningExpress Library online tutorials and practice tests require bandwidth. Imagine the frustration of spending time completing a job application online, only to lose all your data when the session times out because of slow bandwidth! Or, trying to complete college applications and student aid forms – again, losing your data when the session crashes. Many schools are issuing hand-held devices to students,

many of whom live in areas that do not have internet access. Knowing that their local public library not only has internet, but has ENOUGH speed for their devices, and their classmates' devices –


consider the possibilities!

E-Rate – What makes this possible?

Schools and libraries participate in the E-Rate program, which allows for discounted rates for broadband, based on student counts in each community's public school district in which the library's main branch is located. The forms required in the E-Rate program must be completed within certain time frames. Prior to the statewide network, each individual public library system was required to complete the forms. The funded statewide network would allow MLC to file the necessary forms for all public library systems on the state network, freeing staff time in local library systems.

Libraries need more bandwidth.

Mississippi Librarians Speak Out:



"Online classes use more bandwidth than my library can provide. Patrons can't access them from our computers."

"Virtual classes include streaming videos and PowerPoint presentations by the professor. The bandwidth must be sufficient to allow for continual viewing and listening for an extended period of time. If the speed is insufficient then the connection will be dropped, making it impossible to attend because it takes too long to reconnect and re-enter the class."

"Children have to wait too long for the internet to come up in order to complete school projects. These children have limited transportation to our library and waiting on the internet creates unfinished projects for school."

"Local students in my area are required to practice so many hours on an interactive learning website called i-Ready. Because of slow connections, it takes more time for a page to load than for students to answer the question!"

"This morning, a patron was on the computer trying to fill out a job application for 49 minutes. The computer was very, very slow. Because she wasn't able to answer the questions in a timely manner, the application shut down and she had to start all over again. This happens to patrons all the time."

Notes . . . from the desk of the Executive Director

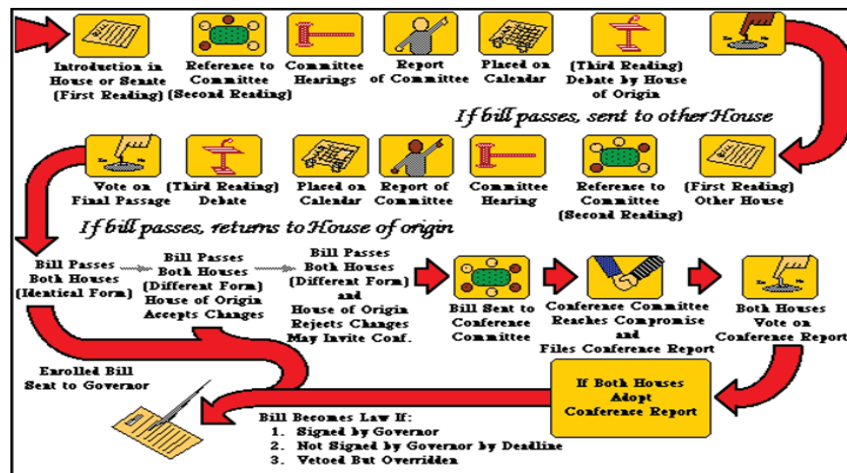
March 2015

We are in the midst of my second Legislative Session as Executive Director, and I find the legislative process itself to be quite interesting. Mississippi's Official & Statistical Register – the *Blue Book* – contains a wealth of information about our state. A new edition is published by the Secretary of State every four years, following the statewide election. Every public library should have a copy – and it is available on the Secretary of State's web site at <http://www.sos.ms.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.



Susan S. Cassagne
Executive Director

The details of the process of “How a Bill Becomes a Law” are included in chapter six, House. If you have never read about it, please do so! There does seem to be a great deal of repetition in the process, but I believe that is to make certain each bill is carefully reviewed, and more carefully reviewed, and completely understood and proofed before it ever becomes LAW. This graphic is from the Legislature's web site at <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/htms/billlaw.htm>.



The Library Commission's FY2016 Appropriations Bill is HB1538. I feel it is a good start, as it does include the funding for our Statewide Fiber Broadband Network plan – and we are very thankful for that – but it does have some issues we are planning to address with our legislators! If all goes as we hope, this will begin a new era in communication. Within two years, every public library in the state will be able to offer broadband sufficient to meet the needs of its community!

Susan

Susan S. Cassagne
Executive Director

Comments and suggestions are welcomed.

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ANNUAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION DAY HELD AT MLC

The Mississippi Library Commission (MLC) recently held its annual staff development and employee recognition day. David L. Hayes of Hayes Enterprises was the facilitator for the day's activities which focused on *Effective Teamwork in the Changing Workplace*.

The day generally consisted of a budget briefing from the executive director, the presentation of employee service awards, lunch and training.

Everyone introduced themselves and shared their teamwork challenge. Challenges ranged from a lack of communication to managing different personalities to the preference of working individually. The reading of the objectives and a brief discussion of behavior styles followed with an exercise that involved staff interaction.

With instructions from Mr. Hayes, the day's activities advanced with group discussions, staff interactions and questions and comments.

Lunch was served, staff service awards were presented, bureau directors gave their updates and the second half of the session began.

Assigned to groups of three, staff prepared for the "Trust Walk." The walk consisted of three people, a leader, a follower and an assistant. The leader and the assistant gave directions but could not touch or speak to the blindfolded follower. The follower had to trust the other team members to safely direct him/her. Each member of the team took turns being the leader, assistant and the follower.



Pictured are: Karolynn Bell (blindfolded) as she took directions from Margaret Smitherman (background) during the "Trust Walk".

For the final activity, staff was once again placed into groups, this time it was for the "Tower of Peace." They were architects who had to design, build and describe their "Tower of Peace." While the designs were somewhat eccentric, the descriptions were even more vivid.

Here's how a staff member summed up the day, "When you build a sense of teamwork among staff members, productivity increases. Overall, MLC's staff training day was motivating and fulfilling."

CHECK OUT MLC'S NEW NONFICTION AREA!

The staff of Library Services at the Mississippi Library Commission conducted a massive weeding and shifting project of the nonfiction section in 2014. The goal was to make it more user-friendly for both staff and patrons, to allow additional space for newer titles, and to give the State Documents collection room to grow. The nonfiction collection used to be one continuous block, which often confused patrons looking for sections similar to ones at their public libraries. With this in mind, we now house the following sections in the nonfiction area:

- Children and Young Adults
- Graphic Novels
- Spanish-Language
- Children Spanish-Language
- Audio/Visual
- Biographies



We also wanted a clearer way of defining "subjects of interest" in the general nonfiction collection for browsing patrons. Magnetic label holders were dispersed throughout the collection for Dewey Decimal subject areas such as Library Science,

Political Science, Languages, and more.

Come and visit us the next time you're in town and let us know what you think!



PHOTOGRAPHER, BANZA BUILDER OPENS COMMISSION'S 2015 EXHIBITS

The 2015 exhibitions of the Mississippi Library Commission opened with a two-month exhibit featuring works by photographer Jack Catlette and Banza builder and player Jason Smith. The exhibit opened Monday, January 5, and continues through Tuesday, March 3, 2015. An opening reception was held Thursday, January 15, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Library Commission. Thirty-two art lovers and well wishers attended the reception during which time they spoke with the artists, visited with other guests and viewed the exhibit. Some even purchased pieces of artwork.

Photographer Jack Catlette is a lifelong resident of the Mississippi Delta and has always had a love for its history, people, landscapes, architecture and wildlife. Catlette's interest in photography and painting began as a child; his father was an artist and a farmer and his mother was the family photographer, as well as a pianist. Initially, Catlette's training consisted of the books he read about photography and instructions from his high school English teacher who was also the school photographer. He later enrolled in Delta State University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education. "I have a love for the arts because of my parents and am very grateful for them," Catlette said.



Jason Smith has played in the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra for the past nine years. He began his banjo adventures as a high school student in 1988 in Jackson, Mississippi. He learned basic three-finger Scruggs style banjo from an accomplished local player, Jerry "Banjo" Brooks and then had the good fortune of meeting Scott Didlake, who had just perfected his art of building banzas.



"Before Scott's death from ALS, he taught me to build banzas. I strive to continue and preserve these wonderful gifts," Smith said.

The Plein Air Artists of Mississippi (PAAM) will launch a two-month exhibition entitled, "Plein Air 2 Studio" at the Mississippi Library Commission beginning Thursday, March 5, and continuing through Thursday, April 29. An opening reception is set for Thursday, March 19, at the Mississippi Library Commission. The exhibit and the reception are free and open to the general public.

MLC WINS STATEWIDE FITNESS CHALLENGE

Ten members of the Mississippi Library Commission (MLC) staff participated in and completed the "Stepp'n in the Sipp," an eight week statewide fitness campaign for state employees. Launched by the State Employee Wellness Program (SEWP) and the Mississippi State Department of Health, the aim of the 2014 campaign was to boost physical activity levels, encourage employees to walk 10,000 steps each day, and promote healthy eating habits. Each week via email, participants were sent education information that included behavior changing best practices with condition management facts.

MLC won first place with the highest step average of 8,695 steps per team member! Team members included: Tiffany Barner, Vera Coleman, Veronica Dunning, Joy Garretson, Robin Hedrick, Eahmon Jamison, Jennifer Nabzdyk, Lawrence Smith, Michelle Townsend and Shellie Zeigler. Congratulations to Tiffany Barner who won first place with the highest step average of 30,232 steps during the challenge.

The Department of Rehabilitation Services placed second in the challenge with an average of 8,064 steps per day and the Department of Human Services rounded out the top three with participants averaging 7,019 steps per day. A total of 128 state employees participated in the challenge.



Pictured, from left to right, are the winners of the Statewide Fall Fitness Challenge: Lawrence Smith, Shellie Zeigler, Joy Garretson, Tiffany Barner, Robin Hedrick, Vera Coleman and Eahmon Jamison. Front row, left to right: Jennifer Nabzdyk and Veronica Dunning. Not pictured is Michelle Townsend.

NEWS FROM FRIENDS OF MISSISSIPPI LIBRARIES

On January 7, 2015, the State Friends of Mississippi Libraries, Inc. held its first meeting for 2015. This would mark the first meeting held by the State Friends Board in over two years. The recent departure of tenured Treasurer Freda Hartness sparked the appointment of new officers. The newly elected officers hail from two different library systems. President Anne Freeze and Secretary Josie Shumake both come to the State Friends from the Friends of Columbus Lowndes Public Library System. The position of Treasurer has been filled by long time Treasurer of the Friends of Jackson Hinds Library System, Richard Turner.

In addition to the appointment of new officers, the State Friends organization will be looking to amend their current bylaws and to increase their advocacy outreach. Changes to the bylaws will hopefully result in an increase in funds brought into the State Friends. These funds will then be used to create possible grant opportunities to public libraries in Mississippi with active local Friend's chapters.

For 2015, the State Friends of Mississippi Libraries, Inc. will continue their support of Letters about Literature and an annual author's event. The author's event will take place at the Mississippi Library Association Annual Conference in Natchez, MS. This event hosts the presentation of two awards as well. The Chapter One Award is given to an exemplary local friend's chapter, as well as the Ruby Assaf Presidential Award, which honors an outstanding volunteer in the State Friends of Mississippi Libraries, Inc. or a local chapter. We are looking forward to a productive year and to seeing you all in Natchez this October!

HOMETOWN TEAMS

A Request for Proposals

The Mississippi Humanities Council invites applications for the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit, *Hometown Teams – How Sports Shape America*. Developed for rural audiences and small museums, libraries, community centers and other non-profit organizations with limited access to traveling exhibits, *Hometown Teams* addresses sports and the integral part they play in the life of towns across America ranging from the athletes themselves, to marching bands and pep squads to fans in the stands to the community-wide interest, support and pride that they instill.



H o m e t o w n Teams will tour Mississippi from March through December of 2016. The exhibit is composed of seven free-standing

display modules featuring text, images, audio and video and actual sports artifacts, and requires a minimum of 8.5 feet overhead and 800 square feet of floor space. Additional information is available at the Smithsonian Institution's website: www.museumonmainstreet.org.

The exhibit will be made available to a limited number of host sites across the state for a period of 4 to 6 weeks each. Sites will be chosen based on geographic location, strength of proposed ideas for complimentary local exhibits and programming, physical display space, and ability to raise matching funds. The exhibit requires no rental fee. Financial assistance is available and professional and technical support are provided.

So, what is your community's sports story? How does it relate to the story of sports and community in America? For information on how to apply as a host site for *Hometown Teams* please contact the Mississippi Humanities Council at 601-432-6752. **Proposals are due by Friday, April 17, 2015.**

MLC NEWS

The Mississippi Library Commission welcomes two new staff members:



Jody Perkins

Collection Management Director



Megan Rodriguez

Collection Management Librarian

Best Wishes . . .

The Library Commission extends best wishes to the following staff members who recently left the agency: Shivon Hess and Casandra Noel.

Mississippi Library Commission
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CALENDAR

MARCH 2015

- ARTISTS** – PLEIN AIR PAINTERS OF MISSISSIPPI
- 2 WORKSHOP – *TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY* – MLC
- 19 WORKSHOP – *SUMMER LIBRARY PROGRAMS* – GRENADA
- 19 ARTISTS RECEPTION – MLC
- 24 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING – MLC

APRIL 2015

- ARTISTS** – PLEIN AIR PAINTERS OF MISSISSIPPI
- 23 WORKSHOP – *FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTORS*
- 23-24 PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTORS MEETING
- 27 CONFEDERATE MEMORIAL DAY – **STATE HOLIDAY – AGENCY CLOSED**

MAY 2015

- ARTISTS** – STEVE MOPPERT/ML READ AND THE BEACH HOUSE STUDIO
- 12 WORKSHOP – *TOWN HALL MEETING* – WAYNESBORO
- 13 WORKSHOP – *TOWN HALL MEETING* – COLUMBUS
- 14 WORKSHOP – *TOWN HALL MEETING* – CLEVELAND
- 19 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING – MLC
- 20 WORKSHOP – *TOWN HALL MEETING* – MLC
- 26 **MEMORIAL DAY – STATE HOLIDAY – AGENCY CLOSED**



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