

For Immediate Release: November 4, 2009

81% of Public Library Levies Approved

Columbus - Voters in many communities around Ohio yesterday showed their support for public libraries with the passage of 30 local levies (one subject to recount) to provide financial support for their libraries' programs and services to help ease the projected 20-25% losses in state funding through the next two years.

Throughout the state, a total of 37 levy issues and one bond issue appeared on local ballots. This was the highest number of library levy issues that have ever appeared in a single election in the state. Ohioans approved an unprecedented 81% of the public library levies on local ballots.

Public libraries around the state found it necessary to pursue local levies to offset the declining state funding for libraries. Most libraries in the state are now operating at the same level of funding they received in 1997.

The decreases in funding have come at a time when public libraries are experiencing unprecedented increases in usage as a result of the continued downturn in the economy. More and more people are turning to their library as a resource to find information about available employment, access computers to complete job application or apply for unemployment benefits, learn how to start their own business, and educate themselves to increase their job opportunities.

Ohio's public libraries are the best libraries in the country. For many years this success has been the result of a strong partnership between the state and local libraries. This partnership has enabled Ohio libraries to provide all Ohio citizens equal access to valuable library resources and services in all areas of Ohio. Tough economic times in Ohio have required tough decisions in the state budget, Ohio libraries appreciate the General Assembly working to try and continue that partnership.

The complete list of public library ballot issue results (unofficial) is available on the OLC Web site (www.olc.org).

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