



ohio library council

Promoting our libraries. Inventing our future.

## **PUBLIC LIBRARIES PROVIDING EVERYDAY SERVICES FOR ALL OHIOANS!**

Ohio's public libraries will see a five percent reduction in funding beginning in January 2006 based on the 2006-2007 biennium state budget released by Gov. Bob Taft on February 10. This cut comes on top of the 8.3% reduction in funds Ohio's public libraries have experienced over the past three years.

Ohioans rely on public libraries for a variety of services and resources. Ohio's 251 public libraries:

- Serve over 8 million patrons. More than 70% of Ohioans are registered borrowers of at least one public library.
- Answer more than 19 million reference questions at the library each year. Through the new 24-hour, online reference service, KnowItNow 24 x 7, librarians answer 10,000 questions each month totaling 55,000 since September 2004 in addition to the reference information they provide at each of their libraries.
- Provide access to 7,800 public computers bridging the digital divide for Ohioans who do not have computer and Internet access at home or at work. In households earning less than \$30,000 per year, 80% make a public library their first choice when accessing the Internet.
- Circulate 200 million items each year. If the average purchase price of a book or item is \$25, public libraries save Ohioans almost \$50 billion annually. This is the equivalent of the State of Ohio's entire \$51.3 billion biennial budget. Based on circulation alone, Ohio's public libraries provide a high return on investment saving Ohioans \$1.00 for every 10¢ used to fund public libraries through the state income tax.

Public libraries are asking the legislature to consider the following:

- A continuation of the current level of public library funding, instead of the 5% reduction proposed in Governor Taft's biennium budget.
- Establishment of a legislative and local government committee to develop a stable, reliable and permanent funding source that allows for some growth for libraries and local governments.
- Development of a trigger mechanism in the budget that would allow for the redistribution of any unanticipated growth in state revenue to be shared with the local government funds.