

## **Regional Library Systems Configuration Task Force - Preliminary Report**

March 14, 2014

This is a preliminary report summarizing the Regional Library Systems Configuration Task Force discussions.

### **Introduction**

State and federal budget cuts in past years and flat funding in recent years have prompted consideration of reducing the number of Nebraska regional library systems. Failure to secure increased funding for the current state biennium budget led to formation of a task force to develop recommendations for regional organization and funding. The task force was created as a result of discussions between Library Commission staff and regional library system directors at a meeting held on August 21, 2013.

Task force members were selected with consideration toward experience with regional programs including regional library system board members, system directors, and members of the Nebraska State Advisory Council on Libraries.

- The nine-member task force was appointed by NLC Director Rod Wagner to address the issue of shrinking resources available in support of the work of Nebraska's regional library Systems.
- Representatives from the six current Systems (two administrators, and four board or library representatives) and from the State Advisory Council on Libraries (three representatives) are members of the task force.
- The task force held its first meeting via conference call on September 20, 2013, followed by meetings on October 2, 2013 (Lexington); November 7 (Grand Island); and February 10 (Grand Island).
- The task force was asked to recommend how the current number of Systems might be reduced. The task force was given latitude to recommend a model or models different from the current one.
- The task force set a goal for making recommendations to the Library Commission during the first quarter of calendar year 2014.

Task force discussions considered the roles and benefits of regional library systems. There was acknowledgement of the value of regional system core services – consulting, training, networking, personal contact, information, etc. There was agreement that the Commission's contracts with regional library systems should be re-written to include core services and updating of contract terms reflecting current and expected future needs.

Discussion of regional library system changes included the assumption that regional library system funding would be comparable to funding for the current biennium and

with the understanding that legislative actions (state and federal) would determine future funding. Fewer regions would result in higher funding amounts for each region.

The Library Commission provided maps, data, and other information for the task force's use. John Felton, the Commission's Planning and Data Services Coordinator was especially helpful in providing these resources. Richard Miller provided additional information and coordination, along with communicating with the task force for planning and arranging meetings and documenting meeting discussions.

The task force's deliberations have resulted in the development of two options for re-configuration of Nebraska's regional library systems. These options are alternatives to the current six region structure. The task force considered a number of different configurations taking into account trade-offs for travel distances and number of libraries within a region. Task force members used, primarily, the number of public libraries within regions but were also mindful of school, academic and special libraries. Task force members expressed preferences for one or the other of the two options without consensus. There are pluses and minuses for each of the options. Further publicity and discussion of the options will reflect the implications of moving to a regional structure with fewer regions.

The task force developed regional configuration options as follows:

- 1) Re-organize Nebraska's regional library systems within four regions
- 2) Re-organize Nebraska's regional library systems within five regions

### **Actions**

A decision to move to a four or five region model, or some other model, will require actions by regional library system boards and the Library Commission. Significant considerations and actions include:

- Discussions with regional library system boards and system directors
- Development of a checklist and timeline for change implementation
- Preparation of new regional contracts
- Determination of regional configuration changes
- Provision of public information about regional configuration recommendations
- Review and revision of regional library system articles of incorporation and bylaws (including mergers and dissolution, administrative and legal actions)

### **Task Force Members**

- Francine Canfield, Baright Public Library, Ralston (representing State Advisory Council)

- Deb Carlson, Lied Scottsbluff Public Library (representing State Advisory Council)
- Jessica Chamberlain, Norfolk Public Library (representing Northeast Library System)
- John Dale, Wayne (representing State Advisory Council)
- Gail Formanack, Eastern Library System (representing Eastern Library System)
- Denise Harders, Republican Valley Library System (representing Republican Valley Library System)
- Vickie Retzlaff, Grant County Library, Hyannis (representing State Advisory Council)
- Kathy Thomsen, Lexington Public Library (representing Meridian Library System)
- Dorothy Willis, Pawnee City (representing Southeast Library System)
- Commission staff representatives: Richard Miller, Library Development Director; Rod Wagner, Library Commission Director

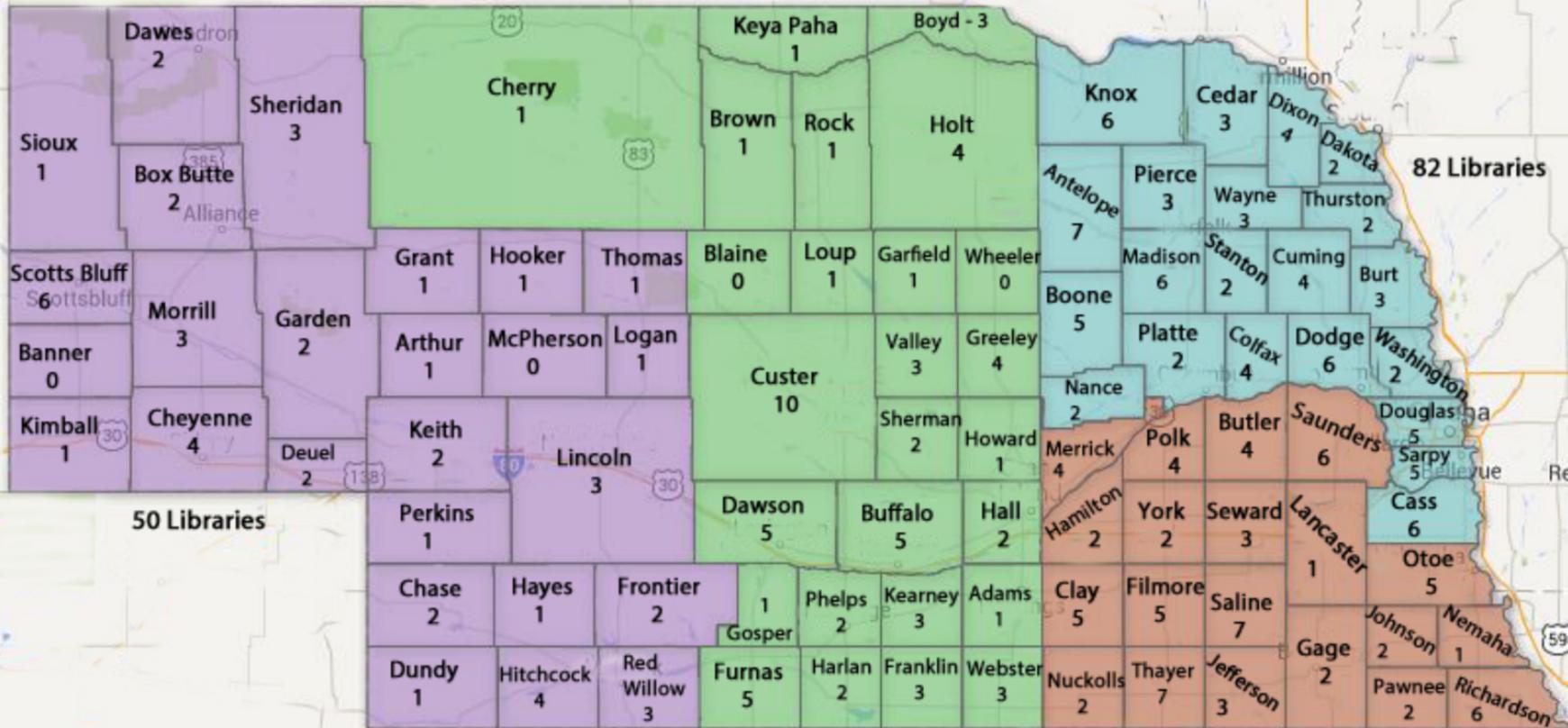
Rod Wagner  
Director, Nebraska Library Commission

## Resources used by Regional Library System Task Force

- Materials from the past concerning Library Systems
  - Questions and Answers about Library Systems
  - Nebraska Regional Library System Timeline
  - Regional Library System Budget Issues – Past Decade+
  - Long-form agreement between the Nebraska Library Commission and Northeast Library System
  - “Your Invitation to Participate in the Panhandle Library Network ‘System Demonstration’”
  - Nebraska Regional Library System – Future Scenarios [Rod]
  - Nebraska Regional Library Systems’ Contracts and Funding FY 2013 – 14 [Rod]
- Nebraska map of current six regional library systems
- Nebraska Regional System with Public Libraries (with different colored pins showing sizes of service populations)
- List of number of each type of library (academic, community college, institutional, public , school, special) in each System
- List of number of each type of library (academic, community college, institutional, public , school, special) in each county
- List of number of accredited, unaccredited and total public libraries in each system, and % of accredited libraries in each system
- Excel file of Nebraska Counties: Population, Area and Regional Library System – 2010 Census population; 2012 population estimate; % change from 2010 to 2012; land area in square miles; identification of System
- Number of counties that gained/lost population between 2010 and 2012
- Excel file of Nebraska Regional Library Systems with Population and Land Area – Arranged by System area, lists county, 2010 Census population; 2012 population estimate; % change from 2010 to 2012 in each county; % change from 2010 to 2012 in each System; land area in square miles in each System
- Selected pages from *VISION 2032: Mapping Nebraska’s Future*, Nebraska Long-Range Transportation Plan from the Nebraska Department of Roads. Maps included:
  - Total Vehicle Average Daily Traffic – 2010 Volume
  - Truck Average Daily Traffic – 2010 Volume
  - Forecast of Nebraska Population Change 2005 to 2030
  - Nebraska Population Change: Percentage by County 1990 to 2005
  - Forecast of Nebraska Population Change 2005 to 2030
- Nebraska Broadband Mapping Project maps showing statewide information:
  - [Internet] Provider Coverage: Cable, Fiber, Mobile Wireless, DSL, Fixed Wireless
  - [Internet] Provider Coverage: Cable, Fiber, DSL
  - [Internet] Provider Coverage: Community Anchor Institutions (Library, School (K-12), University/College)
- Nebraska County Map showing number of public libraries in each county (with public libraries serving as a proxy for all types of libraries)

- Nebraska maps divided into 4 and 5 sections geographically and showing how many public libraries would be in each section
  - Maps produced by the group for discussion:
    - 4 Systems – Option 1
    - 4 Systems – Option 2
    - 4 Systems – Option 3
    - 4 Systems – Option 4
    - 5 Systems – Option 1
    - 5 Systems – Option 2
  - Nebraska map showing square miles and number of public libraries in each county
  - List showing number of public, academic, school, and total libraries in each county
- Analysis by Task Force member John Dale of the two 5-System options displaying the variance from the average in each proposed area when the number of public libraries is multiplied by the square miles

# 4 System Configuration



50 Libraries

65 Libraries

82 Libraries

73 Libraries

# 5 System Configuration

