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Three Iowa libraries win special levys, several more alter library boards

Middletown, Pocahontas and Coon Rapids voters approved special library levys in their communities on November 3. Several other communities voted for changes in the make up of their library boards.

The special library levy (also called the 27 cent levy) is a potential source of additional funding for public libraries allowed by the Code of Iowa, 384.12 (21). The Code allows cities (including cities without their own public library) to levy an additional tax of up to \$0.27 per \$1,000 assessed property valuation for support of a public library. A petition and referendum is required to pass the levy. The levy question may be put on the ballot in regular city elections, held in odd numbered years. The next opportunity to have it on the ballot is November 2011, followed by 2013, 2015, etc. For information about the levy go to <http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/funding-info/sp-levy>.

There was a split decision on a ballot initiative establishing the library levy for the cities of Middletown and Danville. Middletown voters approved the tax levy, offsetting the cost to contract with the Burlington Public Library. Danville's initiative did not pass. Residents in both communities have been unable to access library services due to their city councils' refusal to pay service fees imposed by the Burlington Public Library board.

In the 2010-11 fiscal year, Burlington library services will cost Middletown \$2,944 and Danville \$7,736, which is the final year of a five-year phased-in payment schedule, according to the Burlington *Hawk Eye*.

Lola DeWall, Pocahontas Public Library Director, said their library levy passed by 142 to 17. She noted that the city did not put an ending date on the levy so it will not have to be voted on again. The amount they'll receive won't be known until late November.

Coon Rapids taxpayers will generate about \$6,000 a year when their library levy goes into effect. The vote passed 308 to 118.

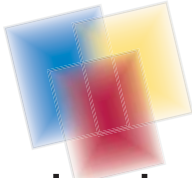
Ames Public Library had two propositions on the ballot. The first changed the term of office of trustees from six years (no reappointment permitted) to a three year term with eligibility for a second consecutive term. The second change delegates the hiring of employees and purchasing of materials to the librarian under board policies, using the language suggested in the State Library's "Iowa Library Trustee's Handbook." Formerly the wording stated that the trustees hired/fired all staff and purchased everything.

According to the Iowa Code, section 392.5, "A proposal to alter the composition, manner of selection, or charge of a library board, or to replace it with an alternate form of administrative agency, is subject to the approval of the voters of the city." Therefore, to change the number of board members, add a board member such as a rural resident or change the authority of the board (such as taking away or adding a responsibility), the proposed change needs to be voted on by city residents. The city council and/or the library board cannot, by themselves, make these types of changes to the library ordinance.

Other cities that voted for changes on their library boards were Sigourney (reduced number of trustees, term appointments and composition of board members), Central City (reduced the number of trustees and their terms of service), Rake (reduced number of board members), New Virginia (allows rural individuals to serve on the board), Marion (established term limits for board members), West Liberty (set term limits for board members), and Blainstown (added rural members to library board and restricts board members to no more than two consecutive terms).

Anyone who has further information about library-related ballot initiatives from November 3, 2009 should contact [Sandy Dixon, State Library](#).





Hundreds “Make a Splash” at summer reading workshops

More than 485 public library staff attended this year’s summer reading workshops, “Make a Splash at Your Library, READ!” for children and “Make Waves at Your Library” for teens.

Workshop presenters were Karen Randleman, State Library, Brenda Hall, teen specialist at Des Moines Public Library, and Judy Proksa, head of children’s services at the West Des Moines Public Library.

This year’s four-hour program combined both children’s and teen’s workshops.

“We decided to experiment with this year’s presentations because most children’s librarians in Iowa are also the teen librarians,” said Randleman. “The summer reading themes of both groups are compatible and program age is really on a continuum with no specific cutoff. Programs that work for teens may be adapted to ‘tweens’ and programs for younger kids may be good venues for teen volunteers.”

Marty Stahl, Kothe Memorial Library in Parkersburg, wrote “I just want to say thanks to Karen, Brenda and Judy, as well as Carol [Simmons, State Library] and any others from behind the scenes for making this another great summer reading workshop. You do a fantastic job helping us prepare for the summer. We appreciate all that you do for us!”

The photos were taken at the Denison workshop.



From left, Brenda Hall, Karen Randleman and Judy Proksa



