

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**Inter-Agency Correspondence**

**San Mateo County Law Library**

**DATE:** October 21, 2002

**BOARD MEETING DATE:** November 12, 2002

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Board of Law Library Trustees, San Mateo County

**SUBJECT:** Funding and Cost Cutting Strategies for the San Mateo County Law Library

**Recommendation**

Accept this report on cost cutting measures and revenue enhancements for the San Mateo County Law Library. The report is based on recommendations of the Committee to Review Funding and Services of the County Law Library.

**Background**

On March 26, 2002, your board directed the Committee to Review Funding and Services of the County Law Library to explore and evaluate strategies to minimize the Law Library's reliance on filing fee increases as a means of long-term funding. This report will summarize the Committee's efforts and findings.

**Discussion**

The Trustees are grateful for the opportunity to critically explore the finances, funding and operation of the San Mateo County Law Library, and have concluded that this effort has been beneficial.

The consensus of the Committee is that the fundamental issue facing the Law Library is increasing costs with decreasing revenues. County law libraries exist as an un-funded State mandate, and their funding presents a unique challenge as it is based almost entirely on a small portion of the civil court-filing fees. This funding system has become outdated in recent years due to rapidly rising costs and declining revenues from filing fees and the trend towards alternative dispute resolution in civil cases, which has led to declining revenues from filing fees.

The Committee has explored the following approaches and actions:

**Collaboration**

The Law Library constantly attempts to operate as efficiently as possible. It enhances its

collection at relatively low cost by utilizing the other resources, including public libraries of the, the California State Law Library, and membership in the Library of California.

The Law Library was recently a recipient of a \$10,000 grant from the Peninsula Community Foundation for the purpose of computer system upgrade and the installation of DSL. The Law Library provides extensive referral and linkage to legal resources available at no charge on the Internet.

The Law Library is currently in discussion with the Courts for the placement of a dedicated computer terminal to host the Courts Electronic Legal Forms System (ELF).

The Board of Law Library Trustees has agreed to participate with the Courts to study the feasibility of locating a self-represented litigation center within existing Law Library space.

### **Cost Cutting Measures**

Collection upkeep costs continue to be monitored. The budget has been maintained through subscription cancellation, staff resignations and restructuring, no salary increases and spending freezes.

### **Revenue Enhancements**

A mailing advertising the availability of the Robert L. DuRard Law Library Conference Room to court reporting services and county bar associations has resulted in a \$479 increase in rental revenue. This is also advertised periodically in the County Bar Association monthly newsletter at no cost to the Law Library.

An overdue fine system of \$1 per day, per item was implemented July 1, 2002. Revenue received as of September 30, 2002, total \$498. The used bookshelf now sells other donated fiction materials; revenues received this fiscal year total \$220.10.

Fundraising efforts continue with the *Law Library Tribute Fund Book Plate Gift* program and *Donations to the San Mateo County Law Library are Tax Deductible!* \$500 tax-deductible donations have been received to date and deposited with the Peninsula Community Foundation. A fundraising gala is being planned for Spring 2003.

### **Statewide Efforts**

The Council of California County Law Librarians ("CCCLL") was successful in defeating AB 2648 (2002), which would have created a poor precedent for counties to follow in providing support for county law libraries. The Hon. Quentin L. Kopp continues to promote revenue enhancing state legislation on behalf of county law libraries. The Northern California Association of Law Libraries ("NOCALL"), a chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries ("AALL"), is also supportive of county law libraries.

The Council of California County Law Libraries is currently applying for a \$50,000 grant to conduct a public relations campaign to increase public awareness of county law libraries. The County Law Librarian is serving as Chair of the Academic Relations Committee of NOCALL, and in addition to promoting librarianship, is raising the visibility of county law libraries. Law librarians from San Mateo, San Diego and Kern County Law Libraries will represent CCCLL and sponsor a booth at the California Library Association Annual Meeting in November 2002 to further promote county law libraries.

**Conclusion**

The San Mateo County Law Library remains committed to improving the ability of the general public to knowledgeably and successfully address their legal issues and to being part of the comprehensive local effort to assure equal justice to our citizens.

BOARD OF LAW LIBRARY TRUSTEES

By Karen M. Lutke