



# Reaching New Heights

*Libraries serving Wyoming*

---

WLA Conference • 2009

September 30-October 3

LARAMIE, WYOMING

2009 Conference Update for WLA Executive Board  
September 2009  
Maggie Farrell, Chair, 2009 Conference

The Conference Committee has been hard developing an outstanding conference. We are very pleased to host the conference in Laramie and hope that our members find the programs to meet their professional development needs, visit with vendors to learn about new products, and have time to network with colleagues.

Attendance for the conference is quite strong at an estimated 273 attendees. The meal events are lower than previous years but given the economy, this is not unusual and our meal events are break even so this will not impact the conference budget. We have 43 vendors attending which is quite good and compares favorably with previous years. Our final budget numbers are estimated at this time but we anticipate a \$10,000 profit for the conference. This will really help the association with goals for the coming year but as other conference committees have noted, our profit margins are declining due to rising conference costs. The association will need to continue to balance costs with excellence in programs and facilities in order to meet professional development needs for members who have limited funding to attend conferences. A notable development this year was the significant donations by WLA members, libraries, and corporations. This assisted in offsetting costs but it is unrealistic to expect vendors to exhibit and sponsor so future committees will also need to balance costs from a vendor perspective.

The 2009 Conference Committee is the first committee to prepare a conference under the new structure. The Committee had many volunteers – this demonstrates the strong support of the Laramie library community in hosting the conference. The association will need to figure out ways to encourage members to work on the conference committees for Casper and Cheyenne. The real work of the committee does not need to be done by residents of the hosting city. While knowledge of the conference center is beneficial for room planning and local arrangements, it is not necessary for the majority of the conference committee members to live in the hosting community. We encourage broad geographical representation in addition to type of library in future composition of the conference committees.

The conference planning handbook is out of date with the current structure of the conference and I am willing to work on revising the handbook to match current practice. It is possible to streamline the conference committee and some committees can be merged to be more efficient. This might help in attracting additional volunteers. The conference committee did prove that early appointments of the conference chair and other key committee members really aids in the planning of the conference. I strongly encourage the WLA Board to appoint the 2011 and 2012 Conference Chairs as soon as possible. Having the core of the conference committee outline the conference 18 – 24 months ahead of the conference assists in securing keynote speakers, framing the conference, working with the current conference committee to orient to the work ahead of them, and provides for a smooth transition from one year to the next.

I want to acknowledge the hard work of the conference committee. They all pitched in with creativity, enthusiasm, and a genuine desire to develop a conference that meets the needs of the association. Thank you also goes to the Program Committee, chaired by Jamie Markus, who did an outstanding job of soliciting and selecting programs. The Conference Committee focused on the structure of the conference but the Program Committee provided the content. A great partnership. I also want to thank Laura Grott for her outstanding work on the conference. Laura knows how to manage a conference and she was patient in answering my many questions usually at 9:00 pm. We are fortunate to have her expertise in developing our conferences.

A final budget will be presented to the Board later in 2009 along with final statistics. An evaluation of the conference will be completed by the middle of November and shared with the 2010 Conference Committee.

#### WLA 2009 Conference Committees

##### Steering Committee

Maggie Farrell, Chair  
Jeannine Collins, Member at Large (2010) and Co-Chair, Local Arrangements  
Susan Wynne, Member at Large (2009)  
Susan Simpson, Chair, Communications and PR  
Ruth Hitchcock, Co-Chair, Local Arrangements  
Jamie Markus, Chair, Program Committee and Continuing Education  
Laura Grott, Chair, Exhibits  
Richard Landreth, Chair, 2010 Conference

##### Program Committee

Jamie Markus, WLA Vice President, Chair  
Mary Ann Harlow, Academic and Special Library Section  
Janet Tharp, Children/Young Adult Section  
Trish Palluck, Paraprofessional/Support Staff Section  
Betsy Moore, Public Libraries/Trustee Section  
Barb Osborne, School Library/Media Section

##### Communications and PR

Susan Simpson, Chair  
Marjorie Daley  
Lori Phillips

Local Arrangements Co-Chairs: Ruth Hitchcock and Jeannine Collins

Meeting Rooms - Equipment and Technology  
Larry Schmidt, Chair

Hospitality, Transportation, Packets and Gifts  
Debbie McCarthy, Chair  
Brenda Barton  
Betsy Moore

Meals and Catering  
Paul Heimer, Chair  
Nancy Baumann

Evaluation and Monitoring  
Kathy Marquis, Chair  
Cheryl Goldenstein  
Jamie Markus  
Erin Wilkins

Corporate Contributions and Gifts  
Sandy Barstow, Chair  
Mary Ann Harlow  
Jenny Garcia

Awards Committee  
Mary Rhoads, Chair