

# WYOMING LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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## WYOMING LEGISLATURE CREATES ENDOWMENT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Cheyenne, Wyo.** – The Wyoming State Legislature continued its commitment to Wyoming libraries when the House of Representatives voted 60-0 to pass the Public Library Endowment Challenge Program.

The bill, which had already passed the state Senate, provides an endowment of \$9.1 million to the foundations of the state's 23 public libraries.

The bill was sponsored by Sen. Hank Coe (R – Park), Sen. Kit Jennings (R – Natrona), Sen. Mike Massie (D – Albany), Sen. John Schiffer (R – Sheridan/Johnson) and Rep. Rosie Berger (R – Sheridan).

“Wyoming’s library consortium is probably the most integrated system in the nation,” said Berger. “The tier system developed in this bill offers a level playing field for all county libraries to develop long-term fund-raising opportunities. This is a terrific moment for our local libraries which serve as a cornerstone of learning and recreation for all ages.”

County Library foundations can receive up to \$295,652 by raising matching funds according to a tier system based on county valuation. Nine counties, including Albany, Big Horn, Crook, Goshen, Hot Springs, Niobrara, Platte, Weston and Washakie, will receive three dollars for every dollar raised locally. Eight - Carbon, Converse, Johnson, Laramie, Lincoln, Park, Sheridan and Uinta - will receive two dollars in state match. The remaining counties must match the state money dollar for dollar.

“This endowment is necessary for the future of Wyoming’s libraries infrastructure, and it looks like we’ve come a long way this session to establish that future,” said Coe.

Funds earned as interest from this endowment can be used by the library's foundations for any purpose: collection development, programming, equipment, staffing, and beyond.

“As a director of a small library, I am very grateful for this opportunity to continue working to secure not only the future of our own library, but also libraries throughout Wyoming,” said Deb Sturman, director of the Niobrara County Library

This act becomes effective July 1, 2008.

In the 2006 legislative session, academic and public libraries were awarded \$10 million for library materials, of which \$2.9 million was divided among the 23 public libraries.

For more information about the Wyoming Library Association, visit [wyla.org](http://wyla.org) or contact WLA President Brian Greene at 307.777.6339.