

Playing Politics
OLA
February 4, 2006



Friends of the
Haliburton County
Public Library

Where is Haliburton?



Demographics

Haliburton County:

- 3 hours northeast of Toronto, in the highlands of central Ontario
- 4025 sq km, about the size of PEI
- Permanent population 15,085/Season population over 70,000
- Median age is 48.1, vs. 37.2 in Ontario
- Family income is \$52,055, vs. \$66,500 in Ontario.

Local Politics

Two tier local government shares responsibility for 7 branches of the Public Library:

- Haliburton County - Staff, Program, Holdings
- Four Townships - Buildings & Maintenance
- Library Board
 - 4 Township Councilors + 3 Citizens + Chief Librarian

Community Assets

- Growing population of early retirees, eager to volunteer, great interest in quality of life, including public libraries
- Strong loyalty to local branches
- Dedicated citizens on the library board
- Supportive local papers, radio

Community Challenges

- Small permanent population, local tax base
- Library issues off radar, shrinking budgets
- 8 Scattered Branches - vital to small villages and settlements but hard to finance
- Buildings at capacity, poorly maintained
- Split political responsibility

ABC's of Playing Politics

- Analyze Community Assets and Challenges
- Build a membership base, indicating strength
- Choose Issues that you can WIN
 - Immediate
 - Specific
 - Realizable
- Develop partnerships with groups in the cultural, health, social, economic sectors
- Enhance relationships with local media

Strategy - Phase One

- Analyzed assets and challenges in the specific context & timetable - focused on planning and budgeting
- Membership drive, recruited members from each Township
- Established partnerships to enhance credibility
- Built media support through innovative story/photo opportunities
- Forged alliance with Library Board, especially citizen members

Strategy - Phase Two

- Cooperated with Library Board's Strategic Planning, with a view towards County and Township budgets
- Encouraged attendance at key informant meetings with SOLS consultant
- Prepared Advocacy Paper, based on Strategic Plan, to identify "winnable" issues
- Submitted Advocacy Paper to County and Township Budget process

Winnable Benchmarks

Advocacy Paper: Haliburton vs. Provincial Benchmarks

➤ Average Building Size

Hal. 6952 sq ft

Benchmark 17,500

-60%

➤ Collection Size

Hal. 27,664

Benchmark 50,240

-45%

➤ Open Hours

Hal. 111.5

Benchmark 142

-21%

Winnable Timetable

Advocacy Paper: Recommend Reasonable Timetable to reach All Benchmarks by 2010

- County Increase Budget for Staff, Holdings, Program to \$20 per capita
- Townships Prepare Capital Plans to improve branches & create Citizen Committees to help
- Target Negotiation with Townships in rotation

Victories

- Profile of Library enhanced with politicians
- Community support brings grants to Friends for new programming, including promotion and Writers-in-Residence
- Holdings increased from 27,664 to 33,000, up 19.3%
- Negotiations underway to increase size on one of the major branches

Friends 2006

- Over 300 members
- 5000 Brochures funded by HCDC
- Writers-in-Residence Program in 2 branches
- Lunch & Learn features Local Heroes
- Partnerships bring books to the system
 - Health for Life
 - Trails and Tours
 - Family Services

Playing Politics in Ontario

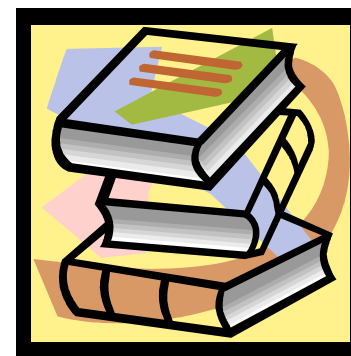
Issues:

- Libraries "off the radar" for Provincial Government
- Proposed cuts to Library Service consultants hurt small libraries
- Proposed cuts to Inter-Library Subsidies hurt rural residents, create "bumps" in playing field
- Friends need to learn their "ABC's"!!!

Provincial Advocacy

- Advocacy focused on “level playing field” for rural/urban libraries
- Letters in Toronto Star, Globe & Mail, and local papers on rural/urban theme
- Letters to Minister of Culture, Premier
- Articles in local papers stir interest from MPP, MP
- Ministry “adjusts” cut-backs

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