

Ideas for planning your MLA reception...

Key Attendees (other than your MLA(s) of course... [Think strategically!]):

- Library Board
 - Board Chair where possible (difficult in regional libraries with multiple receptions)
 - Regional board trustees
 - Local government appointee(s) to Library Board
- Local Government officials
 - Mayor and Councillors
 - Regional District directors
 - Key local government staff
- Library Staff
- Friends of the Library members
- Library Federation staff
- Library partners and funders
 - community organizations which fund or support library projects
 - teacher-librarians, teachers, school district personnel
 - college and/or local university personnel
- Key library users
 - Be strategic – invite key users of specific services your library provides (e.g. Parents in Babytime programs; seniors who use the library; students who serve on Youth Advisory Boards or who use homework resources at the library, local business owners, etc.) Don't forget to include children, teens and babies!
- Local media!!!

Brief your supporters:

Make sure that those invited as supporters of the library are briefed ahead of time on the purpose of the MLA receptions:

- review the key messages
- keep the message positive – acknowledge provincial support to libraries and brainstorm how best to show the impact of provincial funding in your community.

Plan your agenda [Time available from MLA's is typically short]

- Formal Program
 - MC -Library Board Chair/regional library trustee
 - Sets the tone – Thank You to the Province
 - Importance of Provincial Funding to your community – Mayor/Regional District Chair/Director
 - Library User
 - Focus on one service that the Province funds and talk personally about impact of that investment locally.

- Informal Program
 - Refreshments
 - Demonstrations
 - set up two or three stations in the library with displays or demonstrations of projects funded by provincial grants (see examples below)
 - leave time for “one-on-one” lobbying by local politicians, library partners, library users

Examples of programs to highlight:

- Online Resources funded by the Province:
 - Have knowledgeable staff ready to demonstrate one of the online databases funded by the Province and talk about how these resources support Provincial Government objectives
 - health resources – people diagnosed with medical conditions need trusted information about their condition as well as treatment. Libraries provide access to trusted and accurate information.
 - homework help – have local students show the politicians how they use online resources to be successful in their studies
 - business resources – “Libraries will get you through times with no money better than money will get you through times with no libraries.” – demonstrate how online resources/public internet access assist small business owners or individuals with financial planning.
- If you are a Project Sitka member or have already migrated to the Evergreen platform, make sure you demo the system, indicating the advantages to both library staff and most important, library users.
- If your library participates in Library-to-Go, show how your “library without walls” extends services virtually through a download collection available 24/7.
- Children’s Programming
 - Summer Reading Program – this will be the perfect time to display this year’s Summer Reading Club materials and outline your library’s plans to Follow the Reader...
 - Teen Reading Club – demonstrate that the library is on the cutting edge of web social networking and how you’re using that tool to interest teens in your community in sharing a love of reading and writing with their peers across Canada.
 - Books for Babies – have a Books for BC Babies bag ready and stuffed with information about your libraries resources for parents and babies. Have the children’s librarian and a new parent talk to the MLA about the program and its impact on emerging literacy skills.

- Library Federations
 - Demonstrate how your library is benefitting from library planning at the regional level through your participation in a library federation
 - cost efficiencies – better pricing for bulk purchases, federation licensing of online resources
 - service efficiencies – shared collections, faster and cost effective delivery between libraries
 - new programs/collections – regional author visits, special format collections...

During the event:

- Take lots and lots of pictures and make them available to provincial and local politicians after the event [clear permissions ahead of time with those attending]
- Make note of any MLA questions or concerns and address them in follow-up correspondence.

After the event:

- Follow up in writing with MLA(s)
 - briefly repeat key messages
- Thank your supporters [you might be needing their assistance again]