AUTUMN – A time to witness returns on so many of life’s investments. It’s my favorite season!

And what a wonderful harvest LRL reaped! Our two first ever webinars are behind us. Kudos to Minnesota, Nevada, Texas and Tennessee for their excellent presentations and for the extra time and effort needed to create and present them. To give you an idea how much time is involved to create and present just one webinar, our collaboration with NCSL and Infinite in connecting LRL members nationwide and providing information to our audiences is a good four- to six-week process. This includes exchanging crucial information during numerous conference calls; shooting ideas and images back and forth via e-mails; writing and rewriting scripts; creating PowerPoint presentations; and finally meeting online and by phone for a dry run with all speakers, Infinite and NCSL staff before the live presentation, which also is done online and by phone. The question I asked myself while we discussed creating and presenting our first webinar was, "Will all legislative staff, not just LRL members, benefit from the information provided so as to foster greater understanding, educate, and ultimately do better, more capable work?" As an integral part of the legislative process and its success, we receive necessary information, make use of our knowledge and impart equally necessary information. In doing so, everyone reaps the benefits in production and success. And we certainly accomplished that!

Today’s electronic capabilities affect us in all facets of our jobs, and certainly not without complications. To be competitive, however, we have to make changes and be willing to invest in new technology. To be successful, we must find every possible way to serve legislators, legislative staff and constituents faster. As we continually examine ourselves and make decisions about how to progress and meet expectations, we accomplish these difficult tasks and build toward a solid future, while maintaining a realistic perspective. By striving to invest in reliable, accurate information and making it available for those who need it most, we continue to be well-informed, knowledgeable, valuable and successful individuals as we meet daily challenges and contribute to the success of the legislative process.
Chair’s Column (continued from page 1)

During this season, technology aside, take a moment and ask yourself, "What value do I add to the legislative environment?" Even if you think it’s a seemingly small contribution, remember that Jack’s beanstalk didn’t grow without beans! We all add value to the legislative environment in one way or another, so pat yourself on the back. Then do it again! Take another moment and ask, "What are the blessings I’ve reaped this year?" I’m always so humbled to be able to work with such dynamic and capable colleagues who add value to state legislatures and my personal life. Thank you for being excellent mentors to me and moving things along in this legislative environment as effortlessly as the wind. I hope you’ve all experienced a very productive and meaningful harvest in your professional and personal lives. And wouldn’t you know it, just in time to welcome a beautiful and white winter wonderland. Cheers!

Shelley

Core Collection Update

By Robin Cockerham, Louisiana

In 1988, LRL surveyed state legislative libraries regarding their individual collections, the goal being to develop a list of reference materials that are essential to the work of libraries serving state legislatures. This same goal stands true today. Thus, after a five-year lapse, our committee set out to review the Core Library Collection document. There are only a few cosmetic changes left to make, so I feel confident in updating you on our progress.

Our primary goal was to clean up the existing document by correcting the URLs, publisher information and availability. We also wanted to link to the listed federal documents when possible. Finally, if time permitted, we wanted to consider the presentation format.

Do keep in mind, though, that a good collection is ever-changing and this list is only a guide. This was the case with Bowker’s News Media Directory, and what we have heard repeatedly during this revision by speaking to publishers, is “that information is online and we aren’t printing it any longer”!! We hope this revision is user-friendly and will hold you make collection decisions during these tight-times.

LRL Webinars

Researching Legislative Intent and History

By Taran Ley, Illinois

The Researching Legislative History and Intent Webinar took place Oct. 27, 2010, with more than 40 participants. Three speakers summarized their states’ legislative history materials: Catherine Wusterhausen (Texas), Eddie Weeks (Tennessee) and Nan Bowers (Nevada).

Texas has two online systems for performing a legislative history: The Texas Legislature Online (TLO) at http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/ and the Legislative Archive System Online (LAS) located at http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/legis/intent/. A legislative history will include information from the bill file, bill history, tape recordings of legislative discussion, and other information from the journals or newspaper clippings. Coverage varies between the two online systems, depending on the type of information you seek. Bill file information is available on TLO from 1993 to the present and LAS from 1961 to 2001. The bill file may include the text of the bill in its various forms from introduced to enrolled, plus fiscal notes, and bill analysis by committee or the Senate Research Center. The bill history lists legislative action by date. This information is available on TLO from 1989 to the present and in scanned groups of 100 on LAS from 1973 to 1989. Audio recordings of committee hearings and floor debate began in 1973; however, these tapes must be ordered from either the House or Senate media offices or listened to online through TLO from March 1999 to the present (Senate) or 2001 to the present (House). House and Senate journals are available on TLO from 1999 to the present. Newspaper clippings by bill number are available from 1995 to the present by contacting the Texas Legislative Reference Library.

Tennessee does not have transcripts of debate. The Tennessee General Assembly’s award-winning website (http://www_legislature.state.tn.us/) provides video of floor and committee meetings from 2009 to the present. Bill history and text, including fiscal notes, are also available on the system from 1995
to the present. For information before 2009, the Tennessee State Library and Archives, Legislative History Office (http://tennessee.gov/tsla/legislative.htm) has audio recordings of committee hearings from 1974 to the present and floor debate from 1955 to the present.

Nevada’s Research Library compiles select legislative histories that are available online in pdf format. You can check if the library has compiled a legislative history for your bill at http://www.leg.state.nv.us/dbtw-wpd/SimpleSearch.htm. A legislative history will include bill history, bill and amendment text, minutes and exhibits of committee hearings, and floor votes and actions from the journals from 1993 to the present. From 1985 through the 1991 sessions, only the bill history and floor votes are available online. For journal entries and committee minutes and exhibits, contact the Nevada Legislature Research Library or a library listed at http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Library/LegHistory/ResearchingLH/Compile_libraries.cfm. Committee minutes from 1965 to 1985 are on microfiche, although not consistently until 1973 for the Assembly and 1977 for the Senate.

The webinar has been archived on NCSL’s website at http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=21323.

Thanks to Shelley Day for moderating the webinar and to Catherine, Eddie and Nan for providing information on such a useful topic.

**LRL Webinars Creating Legislative Member Databases**

_By Julia Covington, North Carolina_

LRL sponsored its second webinar “Creating Legislative Member Databases” on Nov. 30, 2010. Elizabeth Lincoln (Minnesota) and Melanie Harshman (Texas) described for the more than 25 participants the approaches used by their libraries to develop databases of information about the legislators who’ve served in their states.

Interestingly, many similarities exist between the two libraries’ development of their member databases. Both libraries’ databases were launched with data from member card files. Minnesota also initially used information from a state historical society publication, W. F. Toensig’s _Minnesota Congressmen, Legislators, and Other Elected Officials: An Alphabetical Check List, 1849-1971_; and Texas initially used its Secretary of the Senate publications, _Members of the Texas Congress 1836-1845_ and _Members of the Texas Legislature 1846-1992_. Both states entered the early information into Access databases, which have now been expanded and supplemented by information from various other sources. These sources include legislative manuals, House and Senate rosters and journals, county histories, census and genealogy resources such as Heritage Quest, occupational resources such as the _Texas Bar Journal_, newspaper clippings, various resolutions, and information received directly from legislators and family members.
In 2002, Texas migrated from Access to an SQL server format, and Minnesota did the same in 2009. Currently, Texas has 5,469 legislator records and Minnesota has 5,219. Both states’ databases are at least partially available on the Web and are linked to numerous external resources. For example, the Minnesota database is linked to the legislative bills, the library’s electronic newspaper archive, and the legislative “time capsule” collection. In Texas, the member database is linked to bills, committee information, legislative reports, and the library’s electronic newspaper archive and photo archive.

The libraries also faced similar challenges in developing their member databases. For example, determining how to resolve conflicting information is one of the biggest challenges reported by both libraries. They agreed that it is essential to have a “notes” field to explain any discrepancies. Minnesota also had to decide how to treat party affiliation during non-partisan election years, some legislators’ wishes to exclude certain information, and contested elections. Texas had to decide how to handle irregular Senate terms, members who were elected but never served, special elections, party affiliation changes and Texas’ many constitutions.

The advantages to having a legislative member database are legion. For example, it provides an historical context for laws and political movements. It also enables library staff to handle information that’s ordinarily difficult to locate, such as lists of committee members over time or lists of representatives from a certain county over time. Even though the initial investment in time and staff resources is great, in the long run a searchable database makes it possible to quickly and easily answer complex research questions that otherwise could take forever or be impossible to answer in the time allotted.

Click on the links below to explore these databases available on the Web:

Minnesota Legislators Past & Present: http://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/  
Texas Legislators Past & Present: http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/legeLeaders/members/lrlhome.cfm

To find out more details about these state databases, listen to the webinar archived here:

http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=21324

Many thanks to Elizabeth and Melanie for giving us such an informative, interesting presentation.

State News

By LRL Regional Coordinators

From Maelv Roche, California:

In California, we have had three furlough days a month from July 2009 through October 2010—translating into a 15 percent cut in salary. We’ve had no layoffs, but vacant positions are being eliminated, and there is a hiring freeze. Our acquisitions, travel and training budgets have been cut as well. Of course, our legendary late budgets—this year broke a record of 100 days into the fiscal year—mean that we are unable to purchase anything until the budget is passed. We will have a new governor in January, so perhaps we will see some constructive changes in California’s fiscal situation.

From Molly Otto, Colorado:

Like so many states, Colorado has made major budgetary adjustments, and some state agencies have laid off or furloughed their staff. Three tax reduction measures on the recent state ballot (Amendments 60, 61 and 101) were defeated. So far, the Joint Legislative Library and the Colorado Legislative Council staff have not been subject to layoffs or furloughs. I closely monitor the library budget. I have eliminated print titles and services we no longer use and substituted print titles with electronic format when appropriate. In other news, today is phase 1 of our new member orientation. Phase 2 takes place Nov. 16-18, phase 3 is on Dec. 1 and 2, and session starts Jan. 12, 2011.

From Kristin Ford, Idaho:

In Idaho, we are weathering the recession. While we had eight furlough days last fiscal year, we have had none to date in this fiscal year. We are continuing to leave some open positions vacant in our Legislative Services Office, which has helped minimize the furlough days. The library’s paid subscriptions have shrunk to almost nil, but we have not cut back on the library services provided to legislators or the public. In this Red State, Democrats lost five seats,

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State News (continued from page 4)

leaving the House 77 percent Republican and our Senate continues to be 80 percent Republican. Oh yes, and every constitutional officer is Republican. I don’t know if that makes us the reddest state in the nation, but we’ve got to be close!

From Leslie Smith, Kentucky:

The executive branch has six furlough days, but the legislative and judicial branch will not have furloughs. As of today, we have not stopped any services to our staff.

From Robyn Cockerham, Louisiana:

After comparing many responses from the Southeast Region, it seems as though this area of the country has not taken the brutal fiscal beating that the rest of the nation has endured. The states that responded have not had any furlough days or layoffs. Thankfully, library services have not been reduced. However, most have cancelled subscriptions, reduced material budgets, and/or are leaving vacant positions unfilled.

From Nan Bowers, Nevada:

In Nevada, we take one furlough day a month. There are no staff cuts, but people who leave will not be replaced. Our acquisitions budget is down nearly 20 percent; as a result, we have cut several expensive subscriptions. Salary reductions are likely in the next budget cycle. It’s grim out there.

From Tracey Kimball, New Mexico:

New Mexico’s legislative offices are in the third year of budget reductions, with another round expected to come in the 2011 session. We have not had layoffs, direct salary reductions or furloughs, although legislative staff shared the pain of the executive workers’ 2009-2010 furloughs by losing traditional administrative leave such as early closings before holidays and several days’ respite after our 2010 session. All state employees are in the second year of a two-year temporary increase in retirement contributions which could, of course, be extended. The library has been chipping away at subscriptions and standing orders for three years as well, cutting about 12 percent of our expenses during that period by dropping titles that haven’t severely affected our services. Our budget has been flat since FY08, and we expect the usual price increase in legal materials will catch up with us this year and make it a problem for us to stay within budget and maintain our core collection. Library services are being maintained, although in some cases they are more streamlined and less customized, but the background functions such as cataloging and weeding have suffered. Several general office responsibilities have been reassigned to non-library staff. New projects are on hold.

From Susan Gilley, Oklahoma:

The Oklahoma Legislative Library has not experienced direct cuts, nor have there been layoffs or furloughs in our agency. However, maintaining the status quo has not been true for our parent agency as a whole. In other areas of the state library, (e.g., U.S. Documents, State Documents, Archives and Law) budgets have been slashed and/or vacant positions remain unfilled. These actions have affected the LR Library. Since we share space, duties and the collection with the Law Library, we especially share their pain. Neither our LR collection budget nor our services has been reduced in the past couple of years, but our shared collection with Law continues to be impacted by a cut of $16,300 in FY 2003 that has never been restored. Consequently, changes have occurred in service priorities and the collection format. A recent reduction in staffing levels may force us to reduce service in the near future. Right now, we’re in a state of transition. LR continues to operate “short,” since one librarian and one library tech position have remained unfilled since 1999 and 2004, respectively. Law has a support position that has remained unfilled since 2003, plus a recent librarian vacancy that must remain unfilled until August 2013. (This prolonged vacancy results from a state retirement incentive prohibiting agencies from re-hiring for three years.) One primary shared duty with Law is to staff the public assistance desk for nine hours daily. Currently, our combined staff consists of one LR librarian, 1.5 Law librarians, one shared library technician, and the library administrator. The library tech can provide backup or relief, but does not routinely sit at the desk. So, with 3.5 people, we can operate easily... on days when no one is absent, sick, attending meetings or performing other duties.

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State News (continued from page 5)

From Susan Zavacky, Pennsylvania:

As with most offices in Pennsylvania state government, my office has seen sizable state budget line item reductions in the past several years. I have not requested any new library items in several years. This library is a one-person operation, so there has not been talk of layoffs. We’ve not been forced to reduce services, but as subscriptions and services have come up for renewal, I have evaluated usefulness versus money spent. The result has been a smattering of small cuts here and there that seem to be adding up. Most have been for the hard copy of other state statutes, rules of court and their advance services. Many periodicals have also been cut.

I really have no formal game plan when it comes to "managing the library" during this financially difficult time. I will continue to evaluate things, especially as subscriptions and contracts come due. I’ve never been told by office administration keep the Library budget to "$........." It might be a measure of the "success" of my "managing" that no one has come to me complaining that I discontinued something!

From Shelley Day, Utah:

Like many of you, I’m pinching pennies at work and at home. By attrition, I lost one library staffer several years ago. In addition, our office (which houses all legislative drafting attorneys, policy analysts and support staff) lost by attrition four FTE (attorney, analyst, secretary, IT staffer) and four PTE (law clerks and research assistants), and our office budget dropped by almost 11 percent over the last two fiscal years. Although not forced to cancel or reduced services, I’ve reduced the purchase of books except for those used regularly or already on standing order. We’ve saved thousands of dollars over the past several years with this one change alone (mostly due to ordering fewer copies of the Utah Code Unannotated and reducing the Utah Code Annotated to only three copies). Our office also has reduced printing costs by providing hard copy of some publications to legislators only and providing PDF or XML versions online that are captured and archived by the State Library and/or Archives. We stopped printing The Legislative Interim Report and replaced it with an online customizable report to fit a user’s specific needs. I’ve also reallocated priorities and time spent on specific responsibilities in order to continue valued services to legislators, staff, and constituents here in our research library.

From Marian Rogers, Wisconsin:

Wisconsin has experienced no layoffs, but one vacant librarian position will not be filled right way. Furloughs were mandated for all Wisconsin state employees, July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2011. A total of 128 furlough hours are required (64 in each of the 2 fiscal years). No services have been reduced, but some tasks just take a bit longer. To save on expenses, the library prints publications from the web or obtains them for free whenever possible.

LSCC Overview

By Tim Rice, Illinois, NCSL Staff Chair

Greetings, colleagues and friends! The 2010-2011 NCSL conference year is off to a great start. Since the Legislative Summit in Louisville, five staff sections have held professional development seminars, another major cross-staff section webinar has taken place, and numerous other related activities have occurred, such as the LRL webinars in October and November.

One of my primary responsibilities this year is to chair the Legislative Staff Coordinating Committee (LSCC). For those unfamiliar with LSCC, it consists of the NCSL chair, vice chair, and immediate past chair, the 16 at-large legislative staff members of the NCSL Executive Committee, the two top officers of each staff section, the overall standing committee officers, and four discretionary appointees of the staff chair. The purposes of LSCC are “... to oversee the legislative staff division of NCSL, to coordinate the work of the ten staff sections of NCSL, to promote professional development of legislative staff, and to review and evaluate NCSL services to legislative staff. LSCC serves in an advisory capacity to the NCSL Executive Committee.” LSCC held its first meeting of the year Oct. 15-16 in Denver. We normally meet in conjunction...
Two other ongoing work groups have specific purposes. All staff section officers belong to the Staff Section Officers Work Group, providing them an opportunity to discuss common challenges and solutions and address concerns specific to staff sections. The Strategic Planning Work Group, formed and led by the NCSL staff vice chair (Michael Adams), is focused on planning for the next conference year as well as longer-term for LSCC.

The various election results around the country continue to bring changes and challenges to the legislature. As legislative staff, we will rise to meet them, because that is what we do. In the midst of those efforts, remember the resources that are available to you.

Certainly, NCSL is one of those resources. Their staff offer information and support and are always ready to help however possible. NCSL also provides the framework for the networks we have as legislative staff, most notably in our staff sections. These connections allow us to communicate across the boundaries that might easily confine us, sharing our hard-earned wisdom and experience in this unique environment with each other for the common good. Visit http://www.ncsl.org.

It is my privilege to serve you as your NCSL staff chair this year. If you have thoughts, comments, questions, about any of this or anything else pertaining to legislative staff and NCSL, please let me know. The year is off and running, and I look forward to seeing how it develops.

Shelley Day and Mary Camp at the LSCC Meeting in Phoenix, Ariz.
The NCSL Bill Information Service (BIS) provides access to the full text of legislation in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Congress for the current session. Summaries of Puerto Rico legislation also are available. Users can search for legislation by bill number, author, sponsor, location and full text.

At the end of 2010, State Net began providing links to state statutes accessible from the bill text. The code links direct users to the relevant section of existing code. To date, code links are available in 18 states—Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota and Rhode Island—and Congress. State Net will continue to add states throughout 2011, until code links are available for all states.

To access the existing statutory text, just click on the blue symbol, , which is located next to the statutory reference in the bill text.

### NCSL Publications

**Reports:**
- Transportation Series: School Bus Safety—Teigen (WEB)
- Transportation Series: Automated Enforcement—Teigen (WEB)
- Education Committee Position Paper 2010—National Caucus of Native American State Legislators/Davis (WEB)
- Confronting the Threats to Public Health from Climate Change—Farquhar/Shinkle (WEB)
- Improving College Completion—Gathering Information: Tips for Legislators—Bautsch (WEB)
- Analyzing State Sentencing, Corrections and Reentry Laws—Lawrence (WEB)
- Mason's Manual—Erickson
- A Look at Maryland’s Early Childhood Data Systems—Stedron
- Improving College Completion—Action Steps for Legislators—Bautsch (WEB)

**LegisBriefs:**

**October 2010**
- Primary Health Care in the Age of Reform—Vol. 18, No. 38
- Coordinating Transportation Services—Vol. 18, No. 39
- Health Disparities and the Affordable Care Act—Vol. 18, No. 40
- State Identify Lobbyists—Vol. 18, No. 41
- Health Costs: A New Look at Payment Reform Options—Vol. 18, No. 42
- National Emergency Grants for On-the-Job Training—Vol. 18, No. 43

**November/December 2010**
- Employee Misclassification—Vol. 18, No. 44
- A Second Chance: Offender Reentry Policy—Vol. 18, No. 45
- How States Can Improve College Readiness—Vol. 18, No. 46
- Childhood Immunizations—Vol. 18, No. 47
- State Ombudsman Offices Improve Agency Responsiveness—Vol. 18, No. 48
- Measuring Chemical in Humans: State Bio-monitoring Policies—Vol. 18, No. 49