

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Maine LSTA Focus Group Report**

Four focus group discussions were held in locations around the State of Maine between October 10<sup>th</sup> and October 13<sup>th</sup>. A total of seventeen people participated in the sessions, which were held in Portland, Augusta, Bangor, and Caribou. Each discussion ended with “final say,” which was the participants’ opportunity to summarize what they thought had been most important in the discussion or to bring up new topics related to LSTA in Maine. A report from each session follows the executive summary.

#### **Executive Summary:**

Librarians in the smaller libraries and in the more remote parts of the state feel isolated and are looking for more opportunities to connect with the state library and their colleagues.

Participants believe the ILL system needs examination as new technologies have been grafted on to an obsolete structure.

Libraries appreciate the enormous progress made in Maine during the past decade to develop computerization and connectivity. Those efforts are viewed as reaching out to the underserved. This remains a priority.

Minerva participants feel insecure about the program’s ability to operate effectively into the future.

There is interest in fostering more partnerships both with the business community and other libraries.

There are not enough convenient and relevant CE opportunities.

MARVEL is marvelous and provides access to a wide range of databases that would otherwise not be available.

LSTA is a mystery to most.

Participants want more consultant services although they realize that the state library is working hard to deliver excellent service with a reduced staff.

## PORTLAND

October 10, 2006

### Present:

Lynn Bivens, Walker Memorial Library, Westbrook (Pop: 16,051)

Inese Gruber, Windham Public Library, Windham (Pop: 15,506)

Steve Nichols, West Buxton Public Library Trustee, Buxton  
(Pop: 10,000)

Leslie Rounds, Dyer Library/Saco Museum, Saco (Pop: 16,822)

Jay Scherma, Thomas Memorial Library, Cape Elizabeth (Pop: 8,854)

Attendees came from about a 20 mile radius around Portland (Pop: 64,249), which is on the southern coast of Maine. This meeting, compared to other meetings, had representation from the libraries serving larger populations.

**Summary:** There was lots of discussion about Minerva and its rapid growth. There are questions about whether there is adequate staff to maintain the operation, whether the moratorium on growth was appropriate, whether the state should contribute more, and whether the technology is what it should be.

\*Outreach is being addressed through technology and connectivity expanding access for everyone.

\*Participants appreciate the work the state has done to encourage and facilitate resource sharing and networking. "A big change from 10 years ago."

\*The group discussed the structure of ILL and whether the Area Resource Centers (ARC) were still supportable given the technology now in use. With the resource sharing tools now available along with van delivery, it might be time for some net lender reimbursement program. It is also time to re-examine how the whole system operates.

\*CE is viewed as important but inadequate to the needs.

\*Nurturing various partnerships is seen as a priority for the future.

\*There is a realization that the state is being asked to do more with less and a feeling that the state library is under-staffed.

**1) LSTA GOALS-Overall, how do you think Maine is doing working toward the LSTA goals? In which areas do you believe libraries in the State are doing well? In which do you believe Maine is lagging behind?**

**Services & Resources; Electronic Networks; Linkages; Partnerships; Diversity/Disabilities/Literacy; Underserved**

Compared to Maryland, Maine is not well funded. Aging buildings and collections

with poorly paid staff. However, staff are enthusiastic and dedicated.

The partnerships that have been established ad hoc among libraries work well. Groups of libraries meet together in an informal fashion, no structure. For example, Yapping Yorkies, Loose Librarians. These were self-generated groups; however, state consultants encourage them. Part of the challenge is the large geography of the state.

Maine is as large as the other NE states combined. We can get to Quebec quicker than NYC. Most of the state's efforts in the past 11 years have been put into the electronic network. Most of our eggs are in that basket. Maine's thrust was to build the Maine State Library Network. Automation supported through Minerva, Maine Cat, URSUS and SOLAR. Much of continuing education has fallen to the three district librarians. A more formal way to bring up paraprofessionals would be helpful. Districts have periodic workshops. Many of us would like to see more. Literacy partnership--only one that leaps to mind, Raising Readers was done as a grants program. That is not the type of program needed in our community, but is needed in other Maine communities.

I've found it hard to forge a connection with historical society. They don't have the dollars or the time.

Arts & Culture went together on Community New Century Grant program. It tried to encourage cooperative ventures between libraries and historical societies. For Cape Elizabeth the size of the grant was not meaningful. Most historical societies are small volunteer operations. Sometimes the state tries to be too many things to too many people, which ends up diluting efforts.

Electronic networks--started from ground zero. Maine has made enormous progress from when I came 11 years ago. Virtually hundreds can glimpse each other's collections. Minerva--there was too fast a push to add libraries rather than consolidate gains. In 5 years the system has grown to 60 libraries. Every time a library is added the database is compromised.

We want into Minerva but are discouraged because there seems not to be enough people to manage the system. Adding libraries has ground to a halt.

Minerva is having trouble defining itself. Who is in charge besides Carl? Not certain this is the direction for our library at this time. Where does the state stand? It seems not to be actively involved. Their stand now is that Minerva needs to be self-supporting. That's a mistake.

Shared catalog is important in the state. Circulation with Minerva is clunky. I want to join Minerva and if I'm willing they should be ready to take me. There is not a lot of hand-holding available from the state. System is running on dated technology. It's more friendly to IT whizzes. I want this for my patrons and I'm

worried about my staff being able to handle it.

The Minerva user council asked for a moratorium. Growth was too fast. In many ways Innovative Interface not as friendly as Dynix. In fairness, all academics are on ILL and look toward techies at U-Maine. May not have been best choice from the patron perspective. The perception is that there has never been adequate training or user tools. In fact it is the worst case of technical writing. Couldn't get authority control.

State needs to do more...more people and money are needed. State is cutting book budget. People asked to do more with less.

**2) Talk about the importance of these various initiatives (district consultants, State Library agency staff in training and support for programs such as MSLN, Maine Info Net, Minerva and MARVEL) to your library and the people who your library serves. How does access to consulting and continuing education services impact your library? How do the various programs support resource sharing within the State?**

MSLN is a very good service for the library I worked in previously. The state provided appropriate technical support. My current library is not taking advantage of this service, but is moving in that direction.

Regional library consultants have varying value. Session for new librarians today. We talk to her all the time. Valuable service for smaller libraries.

Collection of professional books.

CE great way for people to go in for mini-workshops.

There needs to be more.

Librarian degree through state system needed. Advocacy is so important for librarians.

CE is slapdash. No long range plan. Tour of Portland PL was pretty basic and useless.

I have found personally frustrating that there's never been a conscious effort to divide the labor among Library Association, State Library and Friends. It's counterproductive. Librarians are suffering from the same volunteer crisis as others in USA.

The three regional consultants are available via phone.

Regional consultants work well. Librarians get to know them and are comfortable

with them.

Consultants have a lot to work with. Answer questions but no follow-up. We're getting more services than we pay for. The dollars aren't there. We need to change technology but there's no funding.

Support for Summer Library Program is very good. Good training. Reaches a lot of kids who don't use the library year round.

Made use of AV and large print when I first came. We've outgrown the service now and moved out on our own. We used the service to test the market. Real issue is dated collections. Making effort through ILL which brings us again back to decentralized collections.

Little libraries don't make use of ILL. Very independent. Wouldn't think of going to Maine State Library.

No purpose now in large collections. Let a book find its audience. Need for duplicate titles dropping. Without ARC go to Maine Cat.

Depends on character of population. Rural libraries/elderly want the book. Teens and younger don't care if they hold the item. Electronic OK.

At Norway we relied heavily on ARC. When we became part of Minerva that changed. Now at a different library without Minerva and use ARC daily.

Because not on Minerva use ARC.

It is two overlapping systems.

SOLAR taps Minerva pretty deeply. Maine Cat working toward making it "tappable."

**3) How well do you think these services ( Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, outreach to children, seniors, and rural residents, books by mail) are addressing the needs of Maine residents who have difficulty accessing traditional library services? How does the support for the summer reading program help your efforts to reach the children of your community?**

Advocacy is being pushed.

In some ways they're trying to address underserved--Maine Cat and electronic catalog best way of doing that. Uniform price structure (\$3000) a good deal. One price fits all may not be in the state's best interest. Public perception of taxpayers' rights comes into play. Why should people in one town not get equal share of cost?

Wireless networking, over 50 libraries got grants. One of the most well received services in the past three years. Very well used in Windham.

All residents have been addressed through focus on connectivity. When I first came, it was USPO, not van delivery network. Databases/EBSCO. Delivery network. What do you take off the back burner? Look at reimbursing net lenders. Maybe we shouldn't be building central collections (ARC).

**4) As Maine moves toward development of its next five year plan, which of the LSTA goals do you believe need to be emphasized more? Since LSTA funding is finite, if some new areas should receive more attention and funding, which of the LSTA goals do you believe are lower in priority in Maine?**

Partnerships at the top of my list. We need modeling. If we were partnering more smoothly it could alleviate some problems. Help in partnering with business community and with organizations that have \$.

Question of fairness. Partner on a state level--on local level partnering may be difficult. Electronic communication among and between libraries important. When business meets everyone walks in with a laptop. There's a growth in doing things electronically. Given the resources, the state has done an amazing job moving Maine into the electronic age and making library resources available to all. How do we do more without new resources?

I agree on partnering although I see it slightly differently. Library has partner with Gates/Apple, but we come as beggars. Need to encourage partnerships regionally. May be time to split the database. Grow another consortia. Look at ways to increase partners.

Electronic networks important for partnerships. Consolidate hodgepodge. A lot of libraries want to be part of Minerva.

**5) Final say?**

The library community is far healthier than it has a right to be. Expansions/remodeling taking place, but not because of the state. Rather libraries are going out to find the \$. The cup is half full not half empty. Painful to find the \$ but libraries everywhere are doing it.

It's important that communities recognize the importance of libraries. Annoyed that so much fundraising must go on. Our city manager is supportive of library. If federal government gives grants that says something to communities about library service. It's important for the feds to give \$ because libraries are a vital part of their communities.

## AUGUSTA

October 11, 2006

**Present:** Betsy Pohl, Lithgow Public Library, Augusta (Pop: 18,618)  
Susan Preece, Topsham Public Library Topsham  
(Pop: 6,271)  
Jeff Small, Augusta's Cony High School (arrived later)

**Summary:** There were questions about LSTA, how it's budgeted and what it supports.

\*There was great praise for MARVEL and the fact that this program gives them access to resources that would otherwise not be available to them.

\*Van delivery is viewed as a key service for resource sharing and worthy of state support to keep it affordable in order to include as many libraries as possible.

\*Minerva is important for resource sharing, but it is also resting on a shaky foundation because of its rapid expansion.

\*There is a feeling that the state library is operating with an inadequate number of staff for the services provided. The staff is viewed as working above and beyond.

\*There's a feeling that the ILL structure, including Area Resource Centers, needs to be re-examined. The technology has changed and yet the system developed during 70's/80's remains unchanged. Technology is grafted on top of an obsolete structure.

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Diversity/Disabilities/Literacy; Underserved**

There were questions from both participants about how much state receives from LSTA, where it's going, how it's apportioned.

Great strides have been made in resource sharing and electronic networks in recent years.

MARVEL is an amazing tool. Great use of resources. Don't know how much is attributable to LSTA.

Considering the amount of money (not much) it makes sense to focus. We take advantage of Books by Mail, Talking Books, Summer Reading Program. People

call and we direct to state's outreach services. Staff does a good job publicizing the service. We get regular updates at district meetings. A lot of residents use services for the blind. We're seeing the need for help for kids with reading disabilities. My children's librarian is involved in the Summer Reading Program. Resource sharing saves time and money. MARVEL allows us to have access to data bases we wouldn't be able to afford otherwise. Good for general reference. It's practical for everyday use.

MARVEL is a tremendous asset, dramatic supplement to everything. For students we find local newspapers of colleges they may be considering. Can access at home. We used on curriculum development. Several students using large print books they get through ILL.

MARVEL is a great equalizer. None could afford on their own. Important for such a diverse population with varying levels of support. For those of us in Minerva we're sharing everything and this increases our collection. This all happened quickly. Van saves time and money for us. Wouldn't be able to do without state. Van delivery should be sustained and more resources go toward keeping it affordable.

Minerva expanded so quickly we don't have the infrastructure in place. It may collapse under the weight of its own success.

Does seem like a state function. All of that access is terrific. Make sure that it continues.

**2) Talk about the importance of these various initiatives (district consultants, State Library agency staff in training and support for programs such as MSLN, Maine Info Net. Minerva and MARVEL) to your library and the people who your library serves. How does access to consulting and continuing education services impact your library? How do the various programs support resource sharing within the State?**

State has a small core staff of dedicated people. Core won't be able to sustain indefinitely. Maine is such a big state. A lot of driving. Perhaps the state could use four or five additional people. When something goes wrong now there is an upheaval in scheduling when for example a van driver leaves.

When something goes wrong, it seems like there is only one or two people to contact.

A real challenge for libraries to keep up with workload. A lot of workflow is changing. Subsidizing delivery service and equalizing services encourages people to keep on.

Ed techs stressed that it is hard to keep up with students so ILL is an additional

burden. It's a Catch 22. Teachers and students are requesting materials. More hours for ed techs would help.

Throw some \$ at delivery statewide. If libraries don't have to pay for delivery, they could buy something else.

We're victims of our own success. By keeping costs down we can allow small and medium libraries to participate more fully. It's hard to break out of the mindset of keeping resources for my taxpayers. Keep services cost effective.

Database quality of shared catalog questioned. Prop up infrastructure because garbage in then garbage out. Need quality control of shared catalog.

All types of libraries participate. Good and bad because we need to insure records are accurate.

Technology has come faster than our ability to process. Some planning important for the future with some intentionality. A lot of us are leery about open requesting. We've realized the benefits. Satisfaction of users has never been higher (*both agree*).

There are some good CE efforts. The district meetings have good topics. A handful of people come. Maybe a different model is needed, video conferencing?

Is there a need for more support people on a higher level? Their job is to present us with information in a variety of channels. More people are needed in a support role. "Just ask Carl." Does Carl need helpers?

Yes, spread the load and responsibility.

Staff is down in numbers from ten years ago.

MSL and university very important partner (MARVEL/URSUS).

There is a lot of support to small rural public libraries. There is such diversity as to who is running a library. A huge challenge. Maine does a good job trying to support all.

Consultants in each district have been important resources for us (How do I run my library better?)

Resource sharing system developed in the 70's and 80's with Area Resource Centers. We're doing things differently than the system that remains in place. Look at whole structure. Right now it's kind of like the Wild West. District consultants work well. It's someone you can call.

Yes the district consultants work well.

Time for a statewide discussion. Planning piece is important. Take a look at the big picture.

**3) How well do you think these services ( Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, outreach to children, seniors, and rural residents, books by mail) are addressing the needs of Maine residents who have difficulty accessing traditional library services? How does the support for the summer reading program help your efforts to reach the children of your community?**

Consultant in state library for schools extremely important in developing facilities and policies. Position is shared with Dept. Of Education. As to resource sharing, I'm not sure how we got to where we are.

Pretty good job done for outreach, good publicizing and connecting and coordinating.

School library accessible to people with disabilities thanks to state consulting help with design.

Physical access lousy in our library. State library points me in the right direction for the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**4) As Maine moves toward development of its next five year plan, which of the LSTA goals do you believe need to be emphasized more? Since LSTA funding is finite, if some new areas should receive more attention and funding, which of the LSTA goals do you believe are lower in priority in Maine?**

In libraries we always want more. Given the amount of funding the state library has to work with, they're doing a good job.

Electronic stuff, resource sharing helpful to persons with disabilities. This way they are not limited by physical surroundings.

They're on target with a reasonable plan. Keep priorities library development, resource sharing and continuing education.

**5) Final say?**

I'd like to see more subsidizing of delivery system. Solidify a little better. Minerva subsidizes one stop. Statewide a higher level of participation would be good. This would improve speed.

Emphasize infrastructure support. We need to advocate in the local government for more funding. It does cost to do what we're doing. We're doing things cost effectively. We're not too good at tooting our own horns. We need to push that. Use LSTA to help staffing at state library.

They're very dedicated, but we're concerned about workload for the small staff. We appreciate MSLN, Minerva, training and support statewide.

## **BANGOR**

**October 12, 2006**

### **Present:**

Helen Fogler, Thompson Free Library, Dover-Foxcroft (Pop: 2,592)  
Nancy B. Grant, Penquis Valley Schools, Milo (Pop: 2,383)  
Debbie Lozito, Edythe Dyer Library, Hampden  
Steve Norman, Belfast Free Library, Belfast (Pop: 6,808)

The towns represented at this meeting were in a 40 mile radius from Bangor (Pop: 31,473) the cultural and commercial center for eastern and northern Maine.

**Summary:** There was a great concern in the group about TABOR and what would happen to library/city services if it passed.

\*There is great appreciation for van delivery and some think if it was state funded, it would equalize service and access through expanded ILL.

\*MARVEL is seen as a great state-provided service.

\*Partnerships are viewed positively and state help in developing more is desired.

\*Underlying the discussion is the need for more information from the state to the libraries promoting and explaining state services including LSTA.

\*There's a need for more CE, more contact with state library staff, and more opportunities to meet with colleagues in the area.

**1) LSTA GOALS-Overall, how do you think Maine is doing working toward the LSTA goals? In which areas do you believe libraries in the State are doing well? In which do you believe Maine is lagging behind?  
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Diversity/Disabilities/Literacy; Underserved**

Group is concerned about TABOR and delivery services in a rural areas. Non-resident fees are also an issue.

We utilize the Bangor library.

Electronic network helpful. Listserv helpful in making connections with colleagues and knowing the issues.

I don't have a lot of time to absorb all that's there. Listserv lets you know what's happening around the state.

Listserv provides a way to share resources. We use Books by Mail/Talking Books a lot. We connect people to state services.

We connect people to the state outreach services. Many people who use the library come from other places where there might have been regional services. People can't believe they can't use my library for free.

Nub of the problem is that the libraries are only funded by municipalities, no counties or regional systems.

We get databases.

Outreach (Books by Mail/Talking Books) couldn't support demand if people knew about service.

For us van delivery is more expensive because we don't do a lot of ILL. We mail. We discourage ILL by imposing a fee. There were people abusing the system.

*(Two of the four in attendance are in Minerva, so for them ILL and van delivery service are used and important. If they didn't have delivery, they couldn't absorb the cost for postage.)*

Minerva libraries have become a consortium. We can't afford Minerva. I have a volunteer for tech support. There are a wide range of libraries in Maine.

Van delivery is crucial to making Minerva work. ILL and van are a huge success. Our patrons tell me they aren't limited to our collection. Can easily and quickly get what they want.

In her school ILL a problem because if a teacher wants an item, it better not be out on ILL when they want it. Would like to see school systems do a better job on ILL.

This is another gap that keeps widening. Libraries that can afford to be on Minerva have access to more. We go on URSUS to find out where things are, but ILL is costly in staff time and postage. Bangor is wonderful; they're the clearinghouse. Automated with Spectrum.

If the state could fund the delivery service, that would be great.

My understanding is that there is no county funding, only state or local \$. Is the state supporting Minerva and van delivery? We can all enjoy MARVEL because it's free to everyone in the state. Makes a big difference for my library.

There would be more equity of access if state funded delivery.

Any library can see what we have because of Minerva. It involves more people in ILL.

People give things away but usually specifies van delivery and because we don't get delivery we're not able to take advantage of this.

Maybe the state should look at regional service. I'm not seeing any partnerships (*thinking about business focus, for example LLBean*).

There's a partnership with cultural institutions.

We partner locally with the Kiwanis Club. It would be nice if the state worked with state organizations.

Through the school librarians association we're trying to do with teachers and principals.

I'm not sure I would know how to begin developing business partnerships.

Couldn't state library help work with parent company and spread out the benefits throughout the state?

**2) Talk about the importance of these various initiatives (district consultants, State Library agency staff in training and support for programs such as MSLN, Maine Info Net, Minerva and MARVEL) to your library and the people who your library serves. How does access to consulting and continuing education services impact your library? How do the various programs support resource sharing within the State?**

They did the e-rate forms. They're going to do tech plans. Also grant writing programs, forms for MSLN connections. State has done these things well.

Being able to call the regional office is helpful.

It's hard to get to the public library directors institute. Good stuff but I can't always get there, although I don't have a suggestion on how to do better.

They are doing better with ATM (2-way TV). It works well. MARVEL is marvelous.

E-rate help is big.

Although it was a pain in the neck to do the Web Junction thing, it was helpful. Who's paying for Janet McKinney? She's helping with district tech plan. State helps get little libraries up to a level. Schools don't have same need as small public libraries because they have tech staff.

Circuit rider was terrific for those who had no help. There were 3, now only 2.

MSLN circuit rider is to help maintain. Complaint—unless you call they don't call you. It would be nice if circuit rider showed up once a year. They need to be more proactive.

*(It sounds like there is need for a little PR about services from the state library.)*

Helps to meet and know staff people. People may not be comfortable calling. If you're on Listserv you're fine. Sometimes I miss things/services.

There are libraries in Maine that are not being reached because they're not in the electronic age. I don't know how many there are. Towns aren't paying the salaries to attract professional librarians.

We don't hear about LSTA.

**3) How well do you think these services (Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, outreach to children, seniors, and rural residents, books by mail) are addressing the needs of Maine residents who have difficulty accessing traditional library services? How does the support for the summer reading program help your efforts to reach the children of your community?**

It's behind the scenes. We know we have access to it, but I'm not sure where to get access. Underserved people are entitled to Books by Mail. If they knew about it, they would take advantage of it and overwhelm the service.

We've lost homeschoolers to Books by Mail. They're not renewing library cards.

Half our circulation is to non-residents who live in towns without real libraries. What percentage of support do we get from them? That's not supportable. What's the answer?

There are many things I'd like to attend in Southern Maine Library District...reader's advisory, cluster meetings. There's more stuff going on there. In the Northern Maine Library District we don't have that. There are fall and spring meetings. If you miss that meeting there isn't something to pick up. The Tri-County Librarians have had a struggle to keep going. We need some

leadership to help us sustain the group.

We see disparity in the programs offered across the state.

What CE? We don't have a lot.

Maine Library Association just got out of the certification business

We have nothing for certification.

The districts are a mystery to me. State agency with local governing board.  
Bylaws are strange.

I could use some collection development advice.

District seems to concentrate on special projects such as mascot.

We need more nuts and bolts things.

A lot goes on that doesn't impact us.

We need statewide focus. But we're not getting fallout from it.

Big website but they don't have time to update. Concept is wonderful but flawed because people don't have the time.

I can't think of anything from the state related to seniors.

Summer Reading Program is nice to get, but we tie in very loosely. I don't see a lot of support. I don't see a lot of libraries using. Presenters are always in the south

Our children's librarian does her own thing.

Our library uses.

In Maine it seems like everyone wants to do their own thing.

I'd love more things for seniors.

**4) As Maine moves toward development of its next five year plan, which of the LSTA goals do you believe need to be emphasized more? Since LSTA funding is finite, if some new areas should receive more attention and funding, which of the LSTA goals do you believe are lower in priority in Maine?**

I'd like to see more CE in our area, more communication from the state library, more outreach to libraries that don't come to Augusta. Personal visits. MARVEL.

More communication from the state library to reach non-electronic libraries. MARVEL. MSLN is vital.

MARVEL. Resource sharing. MSLN is a great success. Minerva. Maine Info Cat another great success. Need statewide van delivery to take us to the next step.

MARVEL.

See databases as economic development. People can do from home. Push to communities and business.

All agree that MARVEL, resource sharing and van delivery are important.

MSLN is vital. State does very well lobbying for us.

Worried about TABOR. State library will be decimated.

I'd like to see regional northeast connections. There could be stronger regional connections.

Counties don't work in Maine. Maine pays through the nose for these substandard services as a result. Improvements could be made if we could regionalize. I would like to see net lender reimbursement.

Priorities: MARVEL, Minerva, van delivery the key.

**5) Final say?**

No one had anything more to add.

## CARIBOU

October 13, 2006

**Present:** Katherine Corey, Washburn Memorial Library, Washburn  
(Pop: 1,200)  
Diane DuBois, Caribou Public Library, Caribou (Pop: 8,308)  
Linda Faucher, Cary Library, Houlton (Pop: 5,270)  
Nancy Troeger, Abel J. Morneault Memorial Library, Van Buren  
(Pop: 2,369)  
Janice Fletcher, Ft. Fairfield Public Library, Ft. Fairfield  
(Pop: 1,600)

The towns represented at this meeting were all located in Aroostook County, which is the largest county in the state and greater in area than Rhode Island and Connecticut combined. It has an economy based on potatoes and lumber. All these towns are near the New Brunswick border.

**Summary:** Participants greatly appreciate MARVEL and the fact that the service provides the libraries with access to databases they could not otherwise afford.

\*Participants recognize and appreciate the state's efforts in fostering connectivity with computers and Internet access.

\*Along with connectivity there has been technological staff support from the state that has been very important for success.

\*The state's assistance with connectivity and technology is viewed as part of the effort to reach the underserved.

\*There are not a lot of opportunities for CE, but they'd like more. But opportunities need to be close-by because of budget constraints (no money for travel or other staff to open library when they're not there). Or perhaps the state could experiment with alternate CE delivery mechanisms.

\*All participants used (some to a greater extent than others) and appreciated the Summer Library Program.

\*The biggest concern of this group was their isolation due to geography and distances. They'd like more opportunities to see state library staff and each other.

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Three of the five in attendance have wireless and they see more and more people coming in for it. Maine has 90 libraries with wireless capability.

MARVEL is marvelous. Electronic databases. Kids and adults coming in all the time to take advantage of this service. All agree they couldn't do what they're doing without the state. They couldn't afford the services. These services give the library a lot of credibility in the community.

They've leveled the playing field for us. We're so lucky that the State of Maine has led the way in the 90's insuring that every library has a computer and Internet access. They have done a phenomenal job. We have a T-1 line. We couldn't have done it without the state. They've done outstanding.

Circuit rider program, two people to help with Internet. He'll call and check. Nice to know we have back-up and support. Ben is incredible.

State library led the charge in the Gates computer program providing opportunities to apply for. Gates did training. All the stuff we got was top of the line. Technology: MARVEL (we don't pay), T-1 or DLS (we don't pay), MSLN (we don't pay). We get support from the circuit riders who troubleshoot. They don't do things local vendors could do. They set up a network and help with connectivity issues. We wouldn't be able to afford without the state.

There's also a sense of security about technological issues. They have good people.

Stateline online library catalog that let's us find a book. We can access any book in the state. We can't borrow directly on computer but we can request from library.

All these things are for the underserved. A lot can't afford wireless. .

*(None of the attendees have Minerva. Too costly for these libraries. A lot have Spectrum standalones. Two have web-based catalogs.)*

We can join SOLAR and if we do, we must agree to ILL. Might be too costly for us to participate. State could provide an opportunity for us to join. State provides a number of options for networking depending on what a library can afford. Van delivery saves a lot of \$ for people who do a lot of ILL. When postage costs are high, you can justify delivery; otherwise it's not cost effective. *(Only 1 of participants uses van.)*

**2) Talk about the importance of these various initiatives (district consultants, State Library agency staff in training and support for programs such as MSLN, Maine Info Net, Minerva and MARVEL) to your library and the people who your library serves. How does access to consulting and continuing education services impact your library? How do the various programs support resource sharing within the State?**

There's not a lot of continuing education. Through the Listserv the state lets us know about opportunities. Haven't done any teleconferencing.

Northeast Library District workshops keep getting cancelled or put off.

There's actually not a lot offered. There's stuff out there, but too much travel wipes out our travel budgets. Districts are figured by population so distance becomes a problem here. We need more attention up here.

Bonita can't get up here so we're left out.

There's got to be a way we don't need to be there. Is there some technology to help us?

Some people are not here for this meeting because they have to open the library. Maybe videotaping?

The districts used to offer CE classes on topics. Now they're offered, but we have to go to Bangor. When something is mandatory, it's pretty tough for us to get to Augusta.

Connection is very important to us.

Public library director institute is a good thing. It introduced me to the physical entity of the state library.

I couldn't go to the institute. I could use more information on budgeting, dealing with the city council, working with trustees. Offer something for our trustees. ATM's are received at school but it's not easy to get access. ATM's haven't offered anything in a long time. I would use for a course, especially in the wintertime.

Offer online classes. They haven't offered any.

Tech Atlas is encouraging to see through Web Junction. Linda is good as buzzing us e-mails and informing us about things through the Listserv.

**3) How well do you think these services ( Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, outreach to children, seniors, and rural residents, books by mail) are addressing the needs of Maine residents who have difficulty accessing traditional library services? How does the support for the summer reading program help your efforts to reach the children of your community?**

Books By Mail is good.

Staff person doing a good job on PR about Books by Mail to the library world (bookmarks, displays).

Contact new directors to tell them about state library services for persons with disabilities. I had to figure it out on my own. Talking Books/Large Print service very responsive to suggestions for changes.

Maine website is very good.

I knew about the program through my aunt.

It's a wonderful service and I'm glad I found out about it.

My mom uses it and it works slick. Descriptive videos are also a good service.

Summer Library Program-couldn't ask for more. It's got everything in it. *(All agree.)*

I wasn't really promoting SRP until I got stuff from the state. The school likes it a lot.

It's a great timesaver. It would take too much time to develop a program on your own. *(All participants use, some to a greater extent than others.)*

**4) As Maine moves toward development of its next five year plan, which of the LSTA goals do you believe need to be emphasized more? Since LSTA funding is finite, if some new areas should receive more attention and funding, which of the LSTA goals do you believe are lower in priority in Maine?**

Our biggest problem is to get state library to come up here. They haven't been here for a few years. Hold a few more district meetings.

Sometimes there's a lot to wade through on the Listserv.

I'd like to see more meetings with our district consultant. We used to have one every other month. We should be talking about TABOR. What should we do? Rally the troops. Have a game plan.

We need someone to handle/coordinate meetings.

Perhaps the state should consider dividing up the district consultant money a little differently in order to take account of the distances.

It shouldn't be population based. I don't know what the district budget is. We could use more or at least to keep the electronic emphasis. Keep us as current as possible. Maintain MARVEL.

Offer statewide downloadable audio.

### **5) Final say?**

Provide more continuing education opportunities. The state library is extremely helpful and useful. Very responsive to e-mails. I feel connected. Congratulate them. *(Two others agree. All seem to agree that when talking about the state library they feel part of a network not a hierarchy.)* Being a library in a small town, I worry about small libraries in regards to training and funds. Help us connect with ways to work together.

We fight for dollars for everything. Town office doesn't understand us. Would like help in learning how to help the city better understand library service. More get-togethers. More opportunities to learn how other libraries do things. Offer more continuing education to help us out with these problems.

On the state library webpage provide central place for a one page information sheet on how much MARVEL costs, T-1 costs. These figures would help in budget presentations and to explain how we are getting these expensive services at no cost to us. The information has been distributed piecemeal, but one central location would be good.

I really love the "Value of Public Libraries" on the MSL website. The calculator is a fantastic tool.