

November 29, 2008

**The Honorable Beverly M. Perdue
Office of the Lt. Governor
20401 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0401**

Dear Lt. Governor Bev:

How proud we are of you here in New Bern! I can hardly believe that I am the personal librarian of the next Governor of North Carolina! You were always a champion of NC's public libraries, starting back in the days of our dear departed friend, John W. Jones, of the Neuse Regional Library. It is my sincere hope that you will continue to champion the cause of public libraries when you become Governor.

NC's public libraries continue to provide a high level of service to our citizens but we have not fared too well during the past eight years with a Secretary of Cultural Resources who has not considered public libraries to be a top priority. We have not had a true friend in DCR since the days of Betty Ray McCain and Betsy Buford and our public libraries have struggled and lost ground as a result. When making your choice for the next Secretary of DCR, it would be wonderful if, among their qualifications, the candidate had a concern for our public libraries.

All of North Carolina's public library directors are well aware of the financial crisis that faces us both as North Carolinians and as Americans; however, many of our hardest-hit citizens are the very ones who have the greatest need for our services. Many of our users have cancelled their personal internet services and are using ours; others have cancelled their magazine and newspaper subscriptions and are reading ours; many have stopped purchasing books and are checking out more of ours. Usage statistics are higher than they have ever been, not only in the CPC Regional Library System, but also statewide.

Public libraries are such an important adjunct to the state's education system and we are finding it harder and harder everyday to meet the needs of students who come to us for help after the school libraries have closed. In the CPC Region, the Pamlico County Public Library and the Pamlico County High School Library share a facility. The public library staff assumes responsibility

for assisting the students from 3:00 in the afternoon until 8:00 in the evening and the largest portion of the public library book budget is used to buy materials for curriculum support because the school library book budget is very small.

The Havelock Public Library serves as the library for the citizens of Havelock as well as for the students of Craven Community College-Havelock Campus. During this current fiscal year, we have had to reduce the library's hours of operation due to inadequate funding from local governments and it has had an adverse impact on the students and the community at large. Our military citizens and their families depend on that public library for so many things; but most especially, our public access computers allow them to remain in touch during deployments. It is very hard on them and on us when we find it necessary to reduce hours.

The Western Carteret Public Library and Learning Center is a collaboration among the CPC Regional Library, the Carteret County Library and Carteret Community College. It provides a western Carteret campus for students to attend extension classes and has been another successful venture between public libraries and the educational system.

You are also aware of the important role public libraries have played in the success of Smart Start. I remember with great pride how we worked together for Craven County Smart Start—I served as the first Board Chair-- and the two press conferences we had, one at the New Bern Public Library and one at the child care center on Old Cherry Point Road. It was my pleasure to work with Governor Hunt and with you and I would very much like to work closely with you again. By the way, I still serve on the Craven Smart Start Board—10 years and going strong. I am certain that you are being bombarded with requests from all sides and that all of them have merit and great needs; however, other than the educational system, few agencies serve as many citizens as do public libraries. Please don't forget about us.

I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you and discuss these issues in more detail in the days to come. I am at your disposal as your Personal Librarian so please don't hesitate to call on me. Thank you for your time, and once again, you have made all of us very proud!

Best regards,

Jackie Beach

