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ABSTRACT

This document outlines the Alaska State Plan for 1998-2002 prepared in accordance with the Library Services and Technology Act. The overall goal of the State Library program is to assure access for all Alaskans to the library resources necessary to meet informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs. Population characteristics impacting library services in Alaska are first described. Five goals for library service in Alaska are then outlined, and a background on priorities is discussed for each goal. The goals include: (1) Connectivity - Access to telecommunications; (2) Information - Access to worldwide sources of information, educational resources, research data, etc.; (3) Partnerships - Develop regional and multi-jurisdictional agreements; (4) Service - Improve library services to the underserved; and (5) Accessibility - Services to Alaskans with special needs. The remaining two sections of the document focus on evaluation of the program, and policies and procedures for public input and the role of the State Advisory Council. (AEF)

Library Services and Technology Act: Alaska State Plan, 1998-2002

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Library Services and Technology Act

Alaska State Plan

1998 - 2002

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I. Introduction

This plan was prepared in accordance with Public Law 104-208, the Library Services and Technology Act of 1996. Its purpose is to comply with Section 224 (b), and to show how funds under the Act will contribute to meeting library needs in the state.

The plan has been written and reviewed by the Alaska State Library with the advice of the Governors Advisory Council on Libraries. It includes goals and priorities aimed at enhancing electronic access to information, sharing resources among libraries, and improving the delivery of library services to underserved populations. Also detailed are the activities and programs the State Library will implement to accomplish these goals and the policies and procedures for evaluation of these programs.

The overall goal of the State Library program is to assure access for all Alaskans to the library resources necessary to meet informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs.

II. Population characteristics impacting library services in Alaska.

The population of Alaska according to the 1990 U.S. Census is 550,043, a gain of 36.9% over the 401,851 reported in 1980. The state demographer has estimated the population for 1996 at 607,800. Population growth from 1990-96 averaged about 1.9 percent annually. Population growth was at its highest in the early 1990s, when growth was almost 3 percent annually. The loss of over 11,200 military and dependents due to base closures and realignments has contributed to the slowdown of growth since 1993.

Areas which have shown the greatest increases in population are the state's five largest boroughs. Anchorage, Mat-Su, Kenai, Fairbanks, and Juneau. 76.3% of Alaska's population lives in these boroughs. Although other areas have also seen increases in population, these increases were generally in communities of over 1,000 persons.

The median age in 1996 was 30 years old, although a significant portion of Alaska's population is under 18 years of age (30.62%)

Educational attainment in Alaska as measured in the 1990 Census indicates that 13.4% of the population over 25 year of age do not have a high school diploma. 86.6% of that same age group are high school graduates, (56.4% have a high school diploma and/or some college) and 23% have bachelors degrees or higher.

The 1990 Census identified 9% of Alaska's population as living below the poverty level. The largest segment of this population were children under 5 years old, living in families headed by females. 39% of these children live in poverty.

In FY96 there were 88 legally constituted public libraries in Alaska. Six of these libraries have a total of 17 branches, so there are 105 library outlets providing service to about 575,000 Alaskans.

Local public library service is available in all but 13 communities of 600 or more persons.

The Anchorage Municipal Library serves the largest community with a population of 254,269. Fairbanks follows with 82,435, and Juneau with 30,209. Only eleven libraries serve communities with populations between 15,000 and 5,000 people; another eleven are located in areas with a population base between 2,000 to 5,000; the remaining 63 libraries serve communities with fewer than 2,000 people (53 of these libraries are located in communities with populations less than 1,000.)

III. Goals for Library Service in Alaska

Goal 1: Connectivity - Access to telecommunications.

Goal 2: Information - Access to worldwide sources of information, educational resources, research data, etc.

Goal 3: Partnerships - Develop regional and multi-jurisdictional agreements.

Goal 4: Service - Improve library services to the underserved.

Goal 5: Accessibility - Services to Alaskans with special needs.

Goal 1: Connectivity - Access to telecommunications

Ensure that all Alaskan residents have affordable access to the telecommunications infrastructure for the delivery of information.

Priorities

- Identify and develop opportunities for libraries to participate in cost effective telecommunications networks.
- Develop programs which assist libraries in the following areas:
 - planning and identifying hardware and software needs;
 - identifying local providers and evaluating services;

- training library staff and parent agency personnel;
- establishing libraries as community information centers.

Background on Telecommunications Priorities

Alaska's unique combination of small population and huge size makes access to telecommunications advances a necessary challenge. In many rural communities even dial up access at 9600 baud is unreliable. Local telcos do not have the economic base to invest in new technologies, and long distance carriers maintain a presence in fewer than 50 communities statewide. Because of this lack of infrastructure, libraries in rural Alaska have been slow in developing and offering electronic information services. According to the *FY96 Annual Technology Survey of Public Libraries*, 80% of Alaska's public libraries have computers and although 50% of these have modems only 35% use online information resources.

In FY94, the Alaska State Library, the Rasmuson Library and the University of Alaska Computer Network planned and implemented Alaska's statewide information network known as SLED - Statewide Library Electronic Doorway. As a vehicle which allows libraries and the general public access to the Internet, it is extremely popular. The easy menu system allows users to choose from local resources such as library catalogs, the status of bills in the State Legislature, and employment information, to the collections at the Library of Congress, White House News, ERIC, and the Federal Grants database.

SLED is available via 800# AlaskaNet access in 42 communities. SLED's telecommunications budget pays for these calls at the standard toll rate of \$4/\$2 per hour. With well over 35,000 AlaskaNet calls per month these costs are an ever increasing portion of the SLED budget. In recent years, the State Library used federal LSCA monies to fund direct network connections to the SLED through the public libraries in Alaska's larger communities. This savings however has been out distanced by SLED's rate of growth. In October 1996 the State Library negotiated a flat rate monthly fee with Alascom in an attempt to further contain the telecommunications cost. Within the next few years, Alascom is expected to add 15 communities to the list of AlaskaNet sites. This additional access is certainly good news for libraries but only if the cost of this access is affordable.

As part of the SLED project, the State Library sponsors E-mail accounts (MUSKOX) for anyone working in a publicly funded library. The subject matter of this mail covers everything; large print interlibrary loan requests, offers of recycled reference materials, training announcements, and grant queries. Now in its third year, MUSKOX has shown phenomenal growth. Although the number of accounts and logins have stayed constant, the message traffic increased almost 700% in FY96.

It is expected that the 1996 Telecommunications Act will have major impact on telecommunication links in Alaska. The State Library has encouraged librarians around the state to participate in FCC and the Alaska Public Utilities Commission (APUC) hearings on preferential rates for libraries and to voice their concerns on universal access. In August, 19 librarians responded to the APUC's request for comments on universal services. This represented almost 50% of those commenting.

Also of great importance to libraries is the statewide telecommunications plan being drafted by the Lieutenant Governors Office and the Telecommunications Information Council (TIC). This plan addresses the role state government should play in "the equitable provision of telecommunications services to all Alaskans." A number of librarians participated in this effort by serving on task force subcommittees. The draft plan is now available for comment.

Information dissemination, planning and evaluation of services, and training are vital components in linking libraries to the NET. Providing these consultant and technical services to libraries will increase the

number of libraries capable of using technological advances to provide for the information needs of their citizens. In FY96 the State Library and the Alaska Library Association sponsored a program on the impact of technology in libraries called "Libraries on the Cusp." Over 100 participants at thirteen sites received the live video broadcast with interactive audio. This demonstration project focused on giving librarians and stakeholders the opportunity to discuss how the mission and operation of local libraries will be impacted by technology and to meet as a community to encourage further cooperative and collaborative planning.

Activities 1998-2002

Activity 1.1 Explore current and alternative communications links to remote areas of Alaska.(FY98-FY02)

Activity 1.2 Encourage telecommunications providers to expand low-cost, high-speed access to additional communities in rural Alaska. (FY98-FY02)

Activity 1.3 Participate in FCC and APUC processes which effect communications access for libraries.(FY98)

Activity 1.4 Collaborate with statewide groups and consortiums to build and expand access to Alaska's online library catalogs and other bibliographic data bases.(FY98-FY99)

Activity 1.5 Assist libraries in 3 communities annually to acquire hardware and software to connect to SLED (Statewide Library Electronic Doorway) and the Internet.(FY98-FY02)

Activity 1.6 Provide training to libraries in identifying, assessing and evaluating automation/electronic access needs.(FY98-FY02)

Activity 1.7 Support and encourage school libraries to participate in statewide and districtwide programs to integrate technology into school curricula.(FY98-FY02)

Activity 1.8 Continue administration of MUSKOX as a communication tool for staff in Alaska's publicly funded libraries.(FY98-FY99)

Goal 2: Information - Access to worldwide sources of information, educational resources, research data, etc.

Ensure that all Alaskan residents have access to the wealth of cultural, and scientific information available in print, recorded, electronic text, multimedia and emerging formats.

Priorities

- Support of regional and statewide cooperative collection development activities and networks.
- Coordination of statewide resource sharing activities and improving linkages with systems outside Alaska.

Background on Information Priorities

In FY95, the total number of volumes held by Alaska's public libraries was just over 1.9 million. Although this 3.09 volumes per capita compares favorably with the national figure of 2.70, a closer look at supporting statistics reveals a different picture. Alaskan libraries borrow 40% more resources from other libraries (55.3 per 1,000 population) as the national average (32.7), and answer 33% fewer reference questions per capita. The three largest public library collections (Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau) account for half of the state total. Forty-two libraries have collections under 10,000 volumes, and only two of the other 45 libraries have collections that exceed 50,000. 75% of the reference questions are answered by the three urban libraries, and statewide, libraries borrow 25% more items than they loan. The ability of small local libraries to afford and acquire current resources is increasingly hampered by the lack of a local economic base. This situation is further complicated when one considers the amount of information available electronically, and the cost of those services.

Since Alaska is a library material poor state, it is necessary to use interlibrary loan services to guarantee access to needed materials. Generally, this resource sharing falls into two groupings, the enhancement of bibliographic access and the sharing of materials. Alaska's six largest libraries are Anchorage Municipal Library, Fairbanks North Star Borough Library, Juneau Municipal Library, UAF Rasmuson Library, UAA Consortium Library and the Alaska State Library. These six libraries are central to the provision of services statewide and will continue to fill this role.

The State Library awards grants to libraries of all types to complete retrospective conversions of their collections on the WLN database. Now that the Alaska title holdings on WLN are approaching one million, special collections with statewide importance are being targeted for conversion. Over 30 public, academic, school and special libraries are full members of WLN.

In FY96 a consortium of libraries funded a license for WLN Easy Access for statewide use on SLED. This gave every library in Alaska with a computer and modem dial up access to the Alaska Library Network Catalog. In addition, LSCA monies were used to expand the Statewide Library Electronic Doorway (SLED). With high speed links in Juneau, Anchorage and Fairbanks it is possible for other libraries and patrons to search the public access catalogs of the 3 largest public library collections.

SLED maintains an active Collection Development Committee which identifies and evaluates Web sites of interest to Alaskans. This makes SLED a dynamic tool for Internet access and offers users the most current, relevant resources for information in an organized manner.

The State Library awarded a grant in FY96 to the Anchorage Municipal Library to provide backup 800 number ILL and reference services to public libraries without LaserCat, and to school district media specialists. This service covers the smallest libraries that may not have the expertise and/or the equipment to use LaserCat or WLN Easy Access. Reference services are provided in the same manner for libraries without basic reference tools, and are used as backup reference for libraries with limited collections.

Collectively these programs insure that almost all monographic, serial and document titles held in Alaska are available to every citizen. Most in-state resource sharing among libraries is a result of these projects and is facilitated through training activities offered by and publications developed by the State Library.

The State Library funds a variety of projects which encourage regional and statewide cooperative efforts. In FY96 these included a grant to the Anchorage Municipal Libraries for the purchase of an Ariel Workstation, funding to assist a demonstration courier project in the Mat-Su Valley, a grant to the UAA Consortium Library for an ILL/WLN terminal, funding for a strategic planning meeting for the ILL/Document Delivery task force, and a grant to the Fairbanks North Star Borough Library to cover the administrative costs of the Alaska Project.

With the availability of online sources of information, Alaska's libraries have yet another challenge - Connectivity in the form of hardware and information access in the form of budgets, knowledge and training to use online resources.

Activities 1998-2002

Activity 2.1 Continue coordination of the Collection Development Committee of the SLED (Statewide Library Electronic Doorway) Advisory Board, in identifying Web sites and other resources which meet the information needs of Alaskans. (FY98-FY99)

Activity 2.2 Provide consultation and training to libraries in assessing and evaluating unique local collections for addition to WLN. (FY98)

Activity 2.3 Fund access to 800 number service for Reference and Interlibrary Loan. (FY98-FY02)

Activity 2.4 Identify and negotiate with database license holders to allow regional and statewide public access to resources through SLED. (FY98-FY99)

Activity 2.5 Develop and manage statewide use/licensing agreements for full text journals, and other informational databases and services. (FY98-FY99)

Activity 2.6 Provide consultation and assistance to libraries in accessing and evaluating electronic resources. (FY98-FY02)

Activity 2.7 Provide training opportunities designed to promote effective use of electronic tools for reference, bibliographic access and research to the staff of 10 libraries. (FY98-FY99)

Activity 2.8 Assess and evaluate current access to legal databases and information, and to develop a program to ensure access to these materials. (FY98-FY99)

Goal 3: Partnerships - Develop regional and multi-jurisdictional service strategies.

Explore the potential role of community partnerships and networks in the delivery of information services and encourage innovative and multidisciplinary/multi-jurisdictional approaches to meet the informational and educational needs of Alaskan residents.

Priorities

- Encourage libraries and other agencies to extend and enhance local library services through the development of regional and multitype service networks.
- Provide consultation and technical assistance to libraries in the development, improvement and operation of cooperative activities and networks.

Background on Partnerships Priorities

Alaska's public, university, school and special libraries are faced with shrinking budgets and increased

demand for services, particularly in the area of electronic access to information. In this climate, informal cooperative efforts among libraries are coalescing into formal agreements. Partnerships between libraries and other public agencies offer a cost effective means of improving services.

In FY96 six special libraries in Anchorage began discussions to combine their libraries under one roof and improve services to their parent agencies. This effort is remarkable in that the libraries are currently funded within federal, state and university agencies. All however, focus primarily on natural resources issues and believe that major cost savings can occur within a coalition. The libraries are the Alaska Resources Library - U. S. Bureau of Land Management, Mineral Management Library Services - Department of the Interior, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Library, Alaska Department of Fish and Game - Habitat Library, Oil Spill Public Information Center, and the Arctic Environmental Information and Data Center - University of Alaska Anchorage. Calling themselves the Natural Resources Library Working Group, this coalition became a "Reinvention Lab" to develop the plan for consolidation and reorganization. With final approval and the commitment of the parent agencies this group plans to formalize agreements and consolidate in one facility in early 1997.

In another effort to plan future development with potential partners in mind, the University of Alaska Fairbanks met with the directors of the Resource and Research Libraries in May to discuss an RFP for a statewide University library catalog and circulation system. Representatives of these seven libraries (University of Alaska, Fairbanks, U of A, Anchorage, U of A, Southeast, Anchorage Municipal, Fairbanks Public, Juneau Public, and the Alaska State Library) now form the Online Catalog Working Group which will explore the formation of a statewide network to provide automation and other technological services to member libraries. These services might include a shared circulation system, statewide licensing of full text databases and information resources, and public access catalogs.

Local and regional partnerships are vitally important in Alaska's smaller communities. In FY96 the State Library partnered with the University of Alaska Computer Center and the Southeast Regional Resource Center to bring Internet access to six communities in Southeast Alaska (SEAkNet). This effort pooled the resources of local public libraries, school districts, public agencies such as the Marine Highway and the National Park Service, with an NTIAA grant for telecommunications equipment to bring Internet access to communities where there is no commercial Internet provider. Beyond the expected benefits to the library and the educational programs, the local planning process has placed the local library in a leadership role.

Activities 1998-2002

Activity 3.1 Monitor network development around the state and continue work toward cooperative arrangements with regional, university, state and municipal network providers. **(FY98-FY02)**

Activity 3.2 Maintain an active role in local, regional and state networking activities and keep abreast of the policies and activities of other network and information providers such as universities and state and federal government agencies. **(FY98-FY02)**

Activity 3.3 Participate and support the establishment of a statewide online library system which can offer a selection of technological services to member libraries. **(FY98-FY99)**

Activity 3.4 Develop a legal entity to manage the activities of the statewide online library system referenced in Activity 3.3. **(FY98-FY99)**

Activity 3.6 Encourage the establishment of a statewide library card.**(FY99-FY02)**

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Activity 3.6 Encourage the establishment of a statewide library card.(FY99-FY02)

Goal 4: Service - Improve library services to the underserved.

Improve library services to Alaskan residents living in underserved urban and rural communities.

Priorities

- Provide alternative services for people who live in areas lacking sufficient population or local revenue to support independent library units.
- Support and fund training opportunities for library directors and staff.

Background on Service Priorities

Alaska's immense geographic area and sparse population make the delivery of public library services to rural Alaska a challenge. In FY96 there were over 37,000 people living in areas not served by a public library. To serve these people, the State Library funds the Books-By-Mail program. The Fairbanks North Star Borough Library provides this service for patrons living in the Northern, Southcentral and Western regions of the state. The Juneau Public Libraries serve Books-By-Mail patrons in Southeastern Alaska. Although these two grants vary in the number of people served and the types of services offered, the primary goal of both is basic public library service. Both libraries provide books by mail, interlibrary loan, and reference services.

State population estimates indicate that urban areas of the state have increases in population while rural areas are losing people. Many communities are too small to have an economic base sufficient to provide public library services. In FY95, 39 libraries out of 84 reported total operating income under \$15,000. With budgets this small, it is difficult for libraries to meet the state's minimum requirement of 10 open hours per week. Libraries which are able to share costs with other agencies have fared better. Alaska has 4 Academic/Public libraries 18 School/Community libraries and 6 libraries with branches. Of these only six of the school/community libraries report income under \$15,000, and a closer look at this reporting reveals that the building and staff expenditures are under reported since the school does not charge for space, heat, light and daytime staffing.

The State Library provides a number of training opportunities each year for library directors and staff as well as an 800# for consultation and assistance. During the last 3 years, directors of public libraries in

communities over 3,000 have been meeting to discuss common issues, develop peer relationships and participate in management training. The success of this effort is evident in the amount of communication among these directors and their increased participation in statewide library activities. An additional benefit, highly regarded by the directors themselves has been the peer network which has resulted from these activities. In FY96, the State Library sponsored scholarships for 5 rural library directors to attend basic skills training at the Idaho Summer Institute. This proved so successful, that the State Library will replicate the Institute in Anchorage this summer for 20 directors. In addition, State Library staff presented a number of programs at the Pacific Northwest/Alaska Library Association Conference in August.

Activities 1998-2002

Activity 4.1 Provide funding to the two Regional Resource libraries (Fairbanks and Juneau) to provide mail service to families and individuals who live in areas that cannot support development of a public library. (FY98-FY02)

Activity 4.2 Support the enactment of public library law. (FY98)

Activity 4.3 Develop a model for strategic planning for use by small and medium sized libraries. (FY99)

Activity 4.4 Encourage development of borough wide library service in areas where units of services are too small to provide effective library services.(FY99-FY02)

Activity 4.5 Provide consultation and support for libraries in developing library programs which meet the needs of the local community. (FY98-FY02)

Activity 4.6 Provide training opportunities for library staff in the areas of basic skills, library management and effective use of technology. (FY98-FY02)

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Activity 4.6 Provide training opportunities for library staff in the areas of basic skills, library management and effective use of technology. (FY98-FY02)

Goal 5: Accessibility - Services to Alaskans with special needs.

Improve the delivery of library services to Alaskans with special needs.

Priorities

- Identify services and equipment which allow libraries to expand and enhance their services to Alaskans with special needs.
- Provide consultation and referral services to help libraries comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Background on Accessibility Activities

In 1991, a study conducted by the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, determined that 22,220 Alaskans have disabilities and live outside of institutions.

Although these Alaskans often have more than one disability, difficulty in walking is the most common at almost 19%. Approximately 9% have visual impairments, 12% hearing loss, 10% are learning disabled, and 12% have arthritis. The other 38% includes those with emotional or communicative disorders, developmental disabilities, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, HIV virus, stroke, seizure, or drug/alcohol addiction. The study also found that most Alaskans with disabilities are white (72%) between 18 and 59 years of age (57%) and live in Southcentral Alaska. (50%).

1995 state population estimates indicate that over four percent of Alaska's population (28,096) is 65 years of age or older, and Alaskans between 55 and 64 years of age numbered 31,878. Although traditionally these have been the ages at which many Alaskans begin to move south, the census figures show that throughout the 90s, both of these age groups continued to grow and it appears that the number of seniors living in Alaska will continue to increase.

Almost 12% of Alaska's population (61,535) are preschool age children. Census figures indicated that 39% of these children live in poverty.

Although no recent studies on literacy rates have been done in Alaska, the Division of Adult and Vocational Education uses a figure of no fewer than 82,000 adults as being functionally illiterate. The 1990 Census indicates that 13.4% or 43,244 individuals 25 years of age or older have not graduated from high school.

Each of these population groups can be defined as Alaskans with special needs. Local libraries need encouragement to identify new users and expand their programs to include older persons, individuals with disabilities, children in poverty, and the functionally illiterate. Outreach programs, access to special format materials, and cooperative efforts with Headstart and Adult Basic Education agencies are a few of the possible solutions libraries need to consider in serving Alaskans with special needs.

Activities 1998-2002

Activity 5.1 Assist libraries in identifying and surveying target populations. (FY98-FY99)

Activity 5.2 Improve access to materials in appropriate formats to disabled Alaskans. (FY98-FY02)

Activity 5.3 Provide information and training to library staff on the availability of low cost adaptive products which allow disabled individuals access to library catalogs, print materials and electronic data. (FY98-FY99)

Activity 5.1 Assist libraries in identifying and surveying target populations. (FY98-FY99)

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Activity 5.3 Provide information and training to library staff on the availability of low cost adaptive products which allow disabled individuals access to library catalogs, print materials and electronic data. (FY98-FY99)

IV. Evaluation of Program

The following method will be used to evaluate and report on the programs and projects supported by LSTA funds:

All project or program proposals submitted by subgrantees will include an evaluation design based on the objectives of the proposal and consistent with the goals and priorities of the *State Plan*.

Evaluations will address the effectiveness of the projects or programs in meeting the goals and priorities of the *State Plan*.

The Governor's Advisory Council on Libraries will review the *State Plan* annually and may recommend amendments to the plan.

Dissemination of the *State Plan* and the results of the evaluations and other information pertaining to program and projects will be accomplished as follows:

Copies of the *State Plan* and evaluation reports submitted by subgrantees will be available for loan upon request.

Results of program evaluations presented in the Library Services and Technology Act Annual Reports will be disseminated to and reviewed by the Governor's Advisory Council; a lending copy will be available upon request to other interested parties.

Notice of the availability of the *Plan* and the evaluation results will be published in the Alaska Library Association's *Newspoke*.

V. Policies and Procedures for Public Input and the role of the State Advisory Council.

The primary vehicle for public input to the *State Plan* required by Library Services and Technology Act will be the Governor's Advisory Council of Libraries.

The Council is composed of twelve members: six members appointed by the Governor; five members appointed by the Alaska Library Association. The council is broadly representative of the library profession, library users and special populations. The council's primary duty is to advise the State Library on the federal plan and the development and evaluation of library services in Alaska.

It is the Council's policy to maintain membership that is broadly representative of the library profession and all library users, including disadvantaged persons within the State. The Council's voting membership consists of: one public library representative, one special library representative, one academic library representative, one school library representative, the immediate past president of the Alaska Library Association. These members are selected through the Association by their peers in the manner set forth by the Association. In addition, the Council includes the following voting members chosen by the Governor: one blind and/or physically handicapped representative, one disadvantaged representative, one institutional representative, and three library users.

All meetings of the Council are open to the public. To assure coverage in ideas, scope, and needs, the Council utilizes consultants and may recommend and approve individuals as needed to serve on special committees.

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LIBRARIES

Alaska State Library Home Page	Suggestions & Comments
State of Alaska Online	Statewide Library Electronic Doorway (SLED)
Dept. of Education & Early Development	Division of Libraries, Archives, & Museums

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