

# Library to face 13-percent budget cut

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Tough times for the economy have meant cuts at a number of levels. Many state and local officials have realized that the economic downturn means less money coming in for operations.

The Springboro and Franklin Libraries are institutions experiencing such cuts.

For 2003 and 2004, state-dispersed funding will be down 13 percent for both years compared to the amount received in 2001. The total will be \$1.4 million yearly.

That money is spent on salaries, supplies, books and other materials and utilities in Franklin. The city of Springboro pays for maintenance and utilities at the Springboro library.

Although located in two separate buildings — Springboro at 125 Park Lane and Franklin at 44 E. 4th St. — they are actually considered to be one when it

comes to funding: Franklin being the main location and Springboro being a branch.

And as less money will be received from the state, a deficit is expected for the first time since 1991-92.

Although not welcome news, the library is prepared to deal with this as library management has saved money from past years.

"In 1991-92 we ran a small deficit," said libraries Director Mary Novak. "We'll have a \$100,000 or more deficit this year. We realized the wonderful economic times wouldn't last forever, and we can do some deficit spending and not be in trouble because we saved. We're O.K. so far — we can last at this level for some years."

Financing comes from state income tax and there are not operating levies for the libraries of Warren County, of which there are five districts: Franklin/Springboro, Waynesville, Lebanon,

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Salem Township and Mason.

There history of library financing dates back to a a basis on intangible taxes — which were derived from stocks and bonds. This, however, created disparity as large cities such as Cincinnati with wealthy citizens could afford large libraries. Rural and poorer areas, such as Appalachia, were left behind as stockholders in these areas were not common.

This changed Jan. 1, 1986, as the Local Government Support Fund based on income tax was put into place to try and equalize funding around the state. There are 250 public libraries in Ohio.

As the cities of Franklin and Springboro have grown in recent years, so have the libraries to keep pace.

Franklin built a new facility, opened Aug. 15, 2002, at a cost of \$3.8 million after a bond issue was passed.

That has accounted for a large increase in circulation — up 40 to 50 percent — as Franklin has since surpassed Springboro as leader in circulation.

The Springboro building received an expansion which almost doubled it's size in 1998.

The Franklin library is 21,000-

square-feet while Springboro's is now 9,000 square-feet.

That difference has left library officials considering an expansion for the Springboro building.

"We have nothing concrete, but we have to be thinking about it," Novak said.

Obviously, that plan may be on hold considering the state of financial matters. Also on hold is a desire to hire more staff to keep up with the increase in demand.

Novak said many more people come to the Franklin library due to its new facility and more computers, but any additions to staff would have to wait.

Currently there are 44 people on the libraries' staff. Three-fifths are part time, two-fifths are full time.

A total circulation for the two libraries last year was 385,165: Franklin had 194,139 items checked out while Springboro's lending amount was 191,026. Those numbers are "anything out the door" such as books, CDs, DVDs, videos, etc.

There are 22,566 active members at the Franklin/Springboro libraries.

The first Franklin Public Library was built in 1923, with the Springboro branch being constructed in 1990.