Technology Director
Board Report
October 25, 2011

November Technology Linkage
Mark has asked that I provide a "technology showcase" at the November board meeting as the month's linkage activity. I am looking forward to that opportunity. If there is anything you are specifically interested in hearing about, please let Mark or Laurie know so that I can get that on my radar.

Computer Purchases
I have submitted a number of requisitions lately to replace aging workstations. We have systems still in use that are more than 7 years old. Because we support both Apple and Windows-based computers, the purchases come from more than one vendor.

With the Apple desktop computers ordered, the displays do not have to be made by Apple. Because Apple's hardware is somewhat more expensive than other manufacturers, I purchased AOC displays at a much more reasonable price than that of comparable Apple displays.

In an upcoming order of PC notebooks, I have moved away from the custom builder that I've used in the past to take advantage of some cost savings. The new systems will be HP notebooks and I will be interested to see how they perform for us as compared to what we've been using (Bytespeed, primarily). The systems are not going to impress the local computer geek, but they should be solid work horses with the necessary capabilities for our use.

For us to meet the five year replacement strategy, we would need to purchase about a hundred computers per year. The budget we have available doesn't support such an aggressive stance and so we are left sometimes focusing on replacing just the oldest of the old. Staff understand that if money were unlimited, we'd do business differently. But given the limitations in which we need to operate, we aren't doing as badly as one might think. I prefer to think of our approach as being "very frugal" - which is probably pretty appropriate given the economic climate today.

New Lion Server
A brand spanking new Lion Server was ordered from Apple this month. It will be a replacement of our current Apple server. The name "Lion Server" is the official name of the product and it's derived from the base operating system that is currently available from Apple. Our current server (Tiger Server) runs 10.4 on an operating system released in 2005 - so it is quite a few years out of date. In addition to the hardware upgrade the new server brings with it, more importantly, the operating system will be brought current and will include many new and much needed tools (such as some first release management tools for working with iOS devices such as the iPad and iPod.) With our new initiative in embracing these devices, having some tools to help will be nice.