Wrap up: Texas Legislative Session
The 87th Texas Legislative Session ended May 31 in a dramatic way. House Democrats left the Capitol and broke quorum so that the House was unable to vote on SB 7, the elections and voter registration bill. It was the culmination of a one-of-a-kind legislative session which opened under strict COVID-19 restrictions in January. At the end of the 140-day session, 6,927 bills were filed, and 1,073 were passed. Governor Greg Abbott has until June 20 to veto any bills. TLA successfully advocated for an additional $3.75 million for the TSLAC budget to support library services. HB 5, the omnibus broadband bill passed, and was updated to include adoption, access and use, rather than just a focus on infrastructure. Learn more here.

TALL Texans Class of 2021 Announced
Congratulations to the TALL Texans Class of 2021! Members of the TALL Texans Leadership Development Class of 2021 were selected from a pool of dynamic Texas library leaders to study strategic planning, risk-taking, conflict negotiation, persuasion, coaching, ethics, and more. See the list of participants here.

Federal Funding: American Rescue Plan Act
The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) passed in March. ARPA provided $200 million to the Institute of Museum of Library Services, of which $8.3 million will go to Texas. The Texas State Library & Archives Commission will administer these funds. TSLAC plans to use some of the funds for two new Texas library technology grant programs focused on telehealth and digital navigators.

Emergency Connectivity Fund
ARPA also includes $7.2 billion to establish the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) to be administered by the FCC. The ECF program will provide funding for public and tribal libraries and K-12 schools to purchase connected devices and broadband internet connections for use off of library and school grounds. Libraries participating in the ECF will receive 100 percent reimbursement of costs for eligible equipment and services and the ability to receive upfront reimbursement.

Libraries and schools can apply for funding for the purchase of eligible equipment and services made between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. The application window for the ECF program will open on Tuesday, June 29, and close on Friday, August 13. ALA has created an ECF Solutions Toolkit to help libraries take advantage of this funding opportunity.

Conference event planning form available in txla.org
TLA officers, are you planning an education program for the TLA 2022 Annual Conference? You'll need to fill out the conference event planning form. You can find it by logging into the members only section of txla.org. Log in and click on "Officer Only Section" and then click on "Conference Event Planning Form."
We created this short video to guide you through filling out the form. Deadline to submit the conference event planning form is July 1.

Unit Business, Committee and Unit Executive Board meetings will be virtual before
New for TLA 2022: All unit business, committee and unit executive board meetings will take place before the in-person conference, virtually. Only education sessions, pre-conferences and meal functions will be scheduled. This change will make leadership opportunities available and accessible to everyone, and allow TLA to better plan for our return to an in-person conference in Fort Worth. Because of this change, the option to select these types of meetings is no longer on the Event Form. Instructions will be sent out late in 2021 on scheduling virtual business meetings for the Conference. Council I, II and the Annual Membership Meeting, as well the TLA Executive Board meetings, will still take place in person at TLA 2022.

TLA Engage Coming this Fall!
The Texas Library Association is planning to fully migrate our communications from the Lyris listserv our groups currently use to TLA Engage, a brand-new site. We’re working to make TLA Engage the centralized space for TLA members to communicate online. TLA Engage has entered beta testing with a small group of people and we plan to roll it out to all TLA members in August/September. The Lyris listserv will remain available as we transition to the new platform. We’re excited for this new community and can’t wait to share it with you!

NOTE: The Texas Library Connection (TLC) and TCAL listservs will not transition to TLA Engage this time; they will remain on the Lyris platform.

UTEP Receives 2021 Outreach Award
The Texas Digital Library (TDL) recently announced that The University of Texas at El Paso’s Institute of Oral History (IOH) was its 2021 Outreach Award recipient for its creative and successful approach to increased awareness and accessibility to digital information. Learn more about the award here.

A Thank You and Special Offer
To express our appreciation to our dedicated TLA members, all current members will be entered into a drawing to win one of three $100 prizes: a Kendra Scott gift card, a YETI gift card, or a Book People gift card.

Not a current member? Renew by June 30 and be entered to win.

Names in the News
- Julianna Barrera-Gomez, digital archivist at the UTSA Libraries Special Collections, received the Individual Impact Award from the Texas Digital Library.
- Elizabeth Polk, assistant director of library media services for Austin ISD, retired this month.
- Dick Robinson Jr., the president and CEO of Scholastic, died on June 5.
- Mark Smith, TSLAC Director and State Librarian, announced that he will retire on August 31, 2021.

We appreciate our sponsors!