

state**libraryof**iowa

**annual**report - fy**2003**



## missionstatement

The State Library advocates for Iowa libraries and promotes excellence and innovation in library services in order to provide statewide access to information for all Iowans.

## iowacommissionoflibraries



From left, State Librarian Mary Wegner; Commissioners David Boyd, representing the Iowa Supreme Court; Paul Roberts, Dubuque; Pamela Bradley, Burlington; Dale Ross, chair, Ames; Berta Van Ekeren, Monroe; Eldon Huston, Des Moines; and Monica Gohlinghorst, Council Bluffs. *Not pictured: Pam Pfitzenmaier, representing the Department of Education.*

## messagefromthestatelibrarian



The past year (Jul 02 - Jun 03) was one of rewarding partnerships as well as daunting financial challenges.

The year began with a 25% cut (\$409,800) in the State Library's operating budget, which followed a 7% cut (\$124,000) for the previous year. A major consequence of these cuts is that state money is no longer available for purchasing statewide informational databases, and we dropped our statewide subscription to Electric Library. In addition, two public service positions at the State Library (10% of our state-funded staff) were eliminated, and our materials budget was deeply cut, to less than one-third of what it had been in 2001.

Despite these sobering budget challenges, the State Library remains focused on the importance of Iowa's libraries to the citizens of Iowa. Three major projects - all involving significant partnerships - were launched this year, and all are designed to enhance library services for Iowans by supporting Iowa libraries.

The State Library was able to make the rich informational resources of EBSCOhost available at a discounted price to public and academic libraries and their customers by joining a contract already negotiated by the Area Education Agencies on behalf of Iowa's K-12 schools. For the first time, Iowa students in elementary school, high school and college have the same databases available at their public library as in their school and college libraries. We believe that establishing this continuum of EBSCOhost availability is an important step toward helping Iowans become more information literate. These databases bring a wide world of information to the keyboards of Iowans at school, at college, at home and at work.

Working closely with the Area Education Agency Media Directors, last year the State Library launched our first annual survey of Iowa school libraries. We were delighted with the nearly 80% response rate. This survey will help us better understand the impact of school librarians and their key role of teaching Iowa students how to find and evaluate information. Data from the survey can assist schools and school librarians with decision-making within their own buildings, and it provides school library media center information that is comparable at the local and state level.

The third project was the successful initiation of All Iowa Reads, a statewide reading and discussion program. All Iowa Reads was organized by the Iowa Center for the Book, a State Library program affiliated with the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Our Advisory Council members represent fifteen different Iowa groups or agencies who all have an interest in promoting books, reading and literacy, and we are most appreciative of their ideas and support.

You'll be hearing more from the State Library about information literacy in the coming months. Teaching library customers how to find and critically evaluate information is a unique and ongoing role that librarians, and only librarians, bring to our information-overloaded society. Helping Iowans develop these skills is a key role for libraries of all types. And there is so much opportunity for collaboration within communities around teaching information literacy skills. We look forward to partnering with all of you as we work to position Iowa librarians to be recognized as experts in helping Iowans become competent information consumers.

## message from the chair iowa commission of libraries



The strength and resiliency of the Iowa library community have never been more apparent than in the past seven to eight months. Confronted on all sides by crushing budget reductions at local and state levels, libraries -- large and small, rural and urban -- have continued to make quality service to their patrons the most important priority, even when doing so has not been easy for boards and directors.

The State Library has also experienced continuing reductions in its state funding as it shares with other agencies the impact of falling revenues and pressures to reduce the overall cost of state government. While these reductions have played havoc with collection development, their effect is most pernicious -- and most visible -- on the Open Access and Access Plus programs.

Because the State Library's capacity to reimburse libraries for participating in these programs has been sharply curtailed in each of past several years, its clients -- and especially the "net lender" libraries -- have had to increase their subsidies to the programs to keep them viable. The reductions in state funds available to city governments have forced them to reduce their support of public libraries along with other city services. Open Access and Access Plus are, therefore, liabilities of the sort that some local boards may no longer be able to incur. This vexing situation must be addressed in the coming year.

But even in the worst of times (to paraphrase Dickens) may be found some of the best of times. Such a "best" is represented by the Gates computer grant program and its positive impact on Iowa's public libraries. With hardware installation and training now virtually complete, most libraries are positioned to provide electronic services to patrons at an unprecedented level. And most of our citizens now have access to high-speed Internet services through their local libraries.

The Iowa Commission of Libraries continues to pursue policies and programs that focus on such daunting but necessary undertakings as information literacy, library initiatives for children, seniors and historically underserved populations. The glass may be only half-full these days, but we are committed to the belief that strong libraries are in the bedrock of democracy. We also believe that the people of Iowa and their elected representatives share our commitment and will refill the glass in the months and years to come.

Dale H. Ross, Chair  
Iowa Commission of Libraries

# State Data Center excels in making census figures available

Iowans obviously want and use census statistics. In FY03, the State Data Center recorded nearly 400,000 web site requests for information. Average monthly hits on the site increased nearly 90 percent between FY02 and FY03. Staff spend long hours transforming raw data from the U.S. Census Bureau to make Iowa's information easy to find and use.

The site has more than 5,000 data tables, maps and other files. In August 2002, the release of the Census 2000 sample data included 1.6 gigabytes of Iowa data.



*"The {Data Center} staff is always knowledgeable about release dates, what is currently available, where it can be found, and what I really need to know about the census information that is available. Without the service they provide, I wouldn't be able to generate half the information requested by other city departments and the public about Des Moines and surrounding areas, nor would I have the accurate information I need to generate statistical information on Des Moines. It is always a pleasure to call the staff and be helped promptly and courteously and to get more than I expected.*

*Philip R. Poorman, AICP, Assistant Planner  
Des Moines, IA*

# Law Library staff help thousands with reference questions

**On any given day, law library staff take requests for information from attorneys, government employees, medical personnel, and the international community.**

**Whether it's finding the excise tax on a barrel of beer in 1933 or determining who owns the roads in Iowa, staff serve a vital role in providing needed information about Iowa laws.**

**Law library staffers took 12,498 requests for information in FY03 via the telephone, fax, e-mail and walk-ins.**

*"As the only legal research assistant in our firm, I have been using the services of the State Library for well over 10 years with nothing but excellent results.*

*Over that decade, our firm's research resources have expanded from 'print only' to a variety of online and other computer-based sources. I thought once we were equipped with these latest research capabilities, I would no longer need the State Library's services.*

*"...I still rely on Linda, Mandy and the rest of the staff...to help me out on those very difficult or obscure issues to which our firm's resources cannot provide a lead or answer. I have always received extremely courteous, knowledgeable, and helpful service from the State Library staff."*

*Jeanne Myers, The Wilcox Law Firm,  
Jefferson, IA.*

# Reference services used by customers worldwide

Requests for information from the State Library's reference services come from around the world. In FY03, a student from the University of Shanghai e-mailed a request for information on Iowa's form of government. One woman wanted help contacting a hard to find company because her brother had joined their sales force and had vanished. There are all kinds of interesting requests, like the one from U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy's office wanting to know if there was a record of the number of times political members of the Kennedy family had visited Iowa. In FY03, library reference staff took information requests from nearly 5,000 people.

In addition, the highly popular HealthInfoIowa web site, with trustworthy online resources on health information, was accessed over 100,000 times in FY03.

*"The State Library has been an invaluable resource in my work as a health planner in the Iowa Department of Public Health. There has never been a time when I have contacted library staff with a request for materials, training, or other assistance that members have not responded with what I need in a courteous and prompt manner. Customer service is at an exceptionally high level."*

*Louise Lex, Iowa Department of Health*



## EBSCOhost now available to all Iowans

Iowans now have access to one of the information industry's most comprehensive, easy-to-use, full-text databases from the convenience of libraries, schools and colleges, offices and home. The availability of EBSCOhost, a web-based information resource with links to thousands of magazines, newspapers, journals and graphics, was made possible through a partnership between the State Library and Iowa's Area Education Agencies (AEAs). In FY03, 402 public libraries, 54 academic libraries and eight hospital libraries signed up to receive EBSCOhost through the State Library. AEAs have provided access to EBSCOhost for schools since July 2001, so students now have the advantage of EBSCOhost availability through their public library, as well as having a familiar resource for information as they move from grade school to high school to college.

Iowans immediately valued the EBSCOhost resources. During FY03, public and academic library users logged in 745,274 times and completed 2,243,773 EBSCOhost searches. They viewed the full text of 2,098,757 articles. The average cost per log-in was \$.37.

The State Library provided information to state employees about the availability of EBSCOhost and many took the opportunity to attend training sessions to improve their searching skills.

*"I attended the EBSCOhost training sponsored by the State Library of Iowa and have been able to use the training and the resources several times. The research time was minimal and the resources were immediately available. EBSCOhost is a great resource for timely response to specific questions our staff have about disabilities and their implications for employment."*

*Micheleen Maher*

*Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services*

# State Library develops bold new goals for five year LSTA Plan

The State Library submitted a bold and innovative five-year plan for federal Library Services and Technology Act funding that brings in about \$1.6 million a year to help support library programs and services in Iowa. The plan, which was accepted and commended by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, identified the following goals:

- Provide expanded, equitable access to library information, materials and services to Iowans of all ages, using an understanding of customer needs to improve services and to increase customer awareness of library resources.
- Improve library service to Iowans through knowledgeable, customer-oriented staff and well-informed, effective public library trustees.
- Position librarians to be recognized as the experts in helping Iowans become competent information consumers.
- Identify and encourage resource sharing and partnerships in order to help libraries provide effective, high-quality service to Iowans.
- Strengthen Iowa's libraries through state level leadership and statewide library advocacy, coordination and planning.

The State Library developed the goals after assessing recommendations and plans from other library groups, including the Iowa Commission of Libraries, the 2000 Library Services Task Force, and the Library Service Areas/State Library Annual Plan of Service.

## State Library, LSAs focus on Telling the Library Story



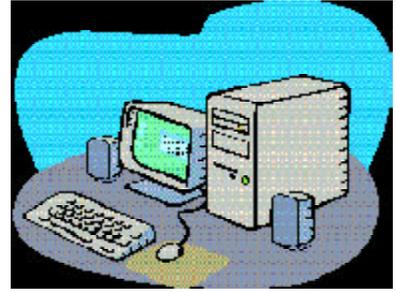
Telling the Library Story was one of the primary areas of emphasis of the State Library and Library Service Areas' (LSAs) Joint Plan of Service for FY03, as well as one of the priorities of the Iowa Commission of Libraries.

Through workshops, Town Meetings, and the State Library's web site, the importance of telling the library story in order to increase awareness of the value of libraries and use of library services was emphasized. Libraries were provided access to tools on the web site ([www.silo.lib.ia.us/for-ia-libraries](http://www.silo.lib.ia.us/for-ia-libraries)) to assist them in telling their stories to local and state decision makers and their communities. Tools include articles on the importance of libraries in communities, points on how to talk with government officials, scripts to help write speeches and press releases, and many "props" such as ideas for newspaper columns, newsletter and annual report templates, and graphics.

In addition, the initiative stressed the importance of filling out the State Library's annual survey so that libraries are able to use comparative data in telling their story. Future objectives include a survey of Iowans to gauge their awareness of the value of library services.

As noted on the web site, the "plot" for telling the library story stresses that "everyone has a dream...and libraries help dreams come true. Dream freely and watch them come true @ Your Library."

# Gates Foundation approves State Library's application for computers



“Every day our new Gates equipment helps our customers find new ways to improve their lives,” noted Carole Stanger, Atlantic Public Library Director.

In FY03, some of the 380 approved public libraries in Iowa began receiving more than \$3,735,000 in new computers and software thanks to an application submitted by the State Library of Iowa to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In addition to the computers and software, libraries received training, installation and technical support.

According to Glenwood Public Library Director Denise Crawford, “The moment we unpacked the new computers, the public was clamoring to use them. They were so excited to have new, faster computers. Add high-speed wireless Internet to the mix and they were even more excited,” said Crawford.

The Gates computer program had the added benefit of helping librarians get high speed Internet access. In 2002, only 41 percent of Iowa’s public libraries were using Advanced Telecommunications Services, or high speed service. By June 30, 2003, when public libraries were beginning to get their Gates computers, the number jumped to 65 percent. It is expected that by December 2003 after all the computers are installed, nearly 75 percent of Iowa libraries will have high speed Internet access.

The Gates Foundation U.S. Library Program began in 1997. Since then the program has made grants to more than 5,800 libraries in the United States, installed more than 25,000 PCs and trained 7,000 librarians.

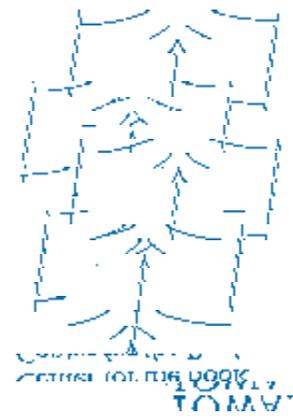
The program is dedicated to providing increased public access to computers, the Internet and digital information to library customers in low-income communities in the United States.

# Iowa Center for the Book takes flight with exciting new programs

Since its inception in February, 2002, the Iowa Center for the Book, a program of the State Library, has lived up to its mission to promote a love of literature and literacy to the people of Iowa via the printed word.

The Center’s first major project was “All Iowa Reads,” a program that encourages Iowans statewide to read and talk about a single title in the same year. Public libraries, schools, book clubs, community colleges, universities and other multi-organizational groups planned programs and book discussions to talk about the 2003 selection, *Peace Like a River*.

Information about All Iowa Reads is available on the Iowa Center for the Book’s website, [www.iowacenterforthebook.org](http://www.iowacenterforthebook.org). The site also contains links to books about Iowa or by Iowans; Letters about Literature, the national reading promotion program for youth; lectures and presentations on the production and distribution of books; and will soon have a Literary Calendar of Iowa with information about literary programming throughout the state.



## Iowa children served through programs, training for librarians

The State Library provides several exciting and thought-provoking programs each year for children's librarians in Iowa. In FY03, 150 people attended the biennial Kids First Conference in Des Moines. Keynote speakers were Claudia Quigg from Babytalk, Inc., and Walter Minkel, a well known columnist for *School Library Journal*. Breakout sessions included programming ideas for children from birth to high school.



In addition, the State Library, in conjunction with the North Central Library Service Area, provides summer library program materials to Iowa public libraries. The 61,298 kids who attended "Join the Winner's Circle" not only maintained or improved their reading skills, but had a great time, too.

## School library statistics collected

Building on the assumption that "ongoing assessment for improvement is essential to the vitality of an effective library media program,"\* the State Library, in cooperation with media directors from Iowa's Area Education Agencies, began a project in FY03 to collect school library media center statistics.

The project addresses one of the Iowa Commission of Libraries' priorities to develop a uniform data collection system for all types of libraries so that outcome-based information can be compared locally, statewide and nationally.

Response from libraries was excellent. The surveys represented 1,221 of 1,528 school buildings, or nearly 80 percent. Results showed that school libraries provide a high level of service with very limited resources. Operating budgets, not including salaries, for all school libraries was \$6.3 million. A typical school library has a budget of \$4,008 for books and materials. But libraries check out more than 600,000 items a week, about 400 items a week in a typical school.

Data is already available on public and college libraries, so collecting school library information will allow the State Library to present a more complete picture of library materials and services available in Iowa.

*\*"Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning"*

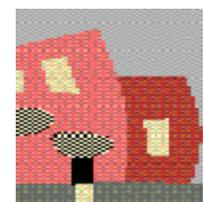
## Iowans rely on resource sharing

Whether at their own library or a library across the state, Iowans know they can get the information and materials they want thanks to several resource sharing programs.

There were 3,271,803 Open Access loans in FY03. Open Access is a statewide "library card" program that allows people to walk into libraries anywhere in Iowa and borrow materials.

Equally successful is Access Plus, the state's book sharing subsidy program. To obtain books and other information for customers, 606 libraries loaned 189,322 items to other libraries in FY03.

Librarians borrow books and other materials from one another through the SILO (State of Iowa Libraries Online) interlibrary loan system. Last year, 706 participating libraries borrowed 128,615 items for their customers. The titles of over four million books and other materials in 696 libraries are listed on the Iowa Locator, which is the starting point for libraries looking for materials to borrow via interlibrary loan.

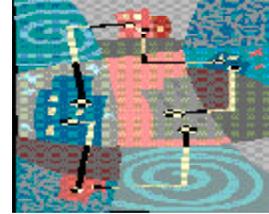


*"Our library has had the opportunity to serve kids through Open Access who would not have the chance to visit a library otherwise."*

*Rockwell Public Library*

# State Library offers a wide variety of continuing education classes for librarians, trustees

Since its inception in 1986, hundreds of Iowa librarians have participated in the State Library's Iowa Certification Program for Public Librarians. The program addresses the need for education and training for the 86 percent of Iowa public library directors who do not have formal education in library science.



The program goals are to:

- improve library service in Iowa;
- encourage public librarians to acquire, maintain, and develop their skills through basic and continuing education;
- recognize public librarians who update their knowledge and skills to provide better library services to their customers;
- improve the public image of librarians and libraries; and
- provide guidelines for public library boards to use in developing policies for hiring staff.

The basic requirements for the six certification levels have not changed since 1986. Levels I through IV require completion of Public Library Management (PLM) 1 and 2. In FY03, five PLM classes were taught to 150 librarians. Direct State Aid and accreditation requirements have boosted the certification participation rate among public library directors from 65 percent to 90 percent.

Those who have attended the classes have noted:

*"It just helped me so much in my day to day running of the library."*

*"Without doubt, this course would be beneficial to every new library director."*

*"I didn't realize how much library directors are responsible for in terms of budgets, planning, etc. I learned a great deal in PLM. It was an eye opening experience."*

Other courses offered to librarians in FY03 included teleconferences offered by the State Library in cooperation with the Bibliographical Center for Research and the College of DuPage. They were:

- "Building Another Bridge: Equal Access to Technology for Special Populations"
- "Effective Web Design"
- "Time Management"
- "Virtual Reference Services: Parts 1 and 2, and A Leadership View"
- "Library Support Staff"

The State Library also sponsored a teleconference on the U.S.A. Patriot Act that was provided by the Association of Research Libraries.

Public library trustees also had continuing education opportunities in FY03. They included two Iowa Communications Network (ICN) classes ("Building an Effective Library City Team" and "Legal Issues for Libraries: A National Update") that were attended by more than 160 people.