

## E-rate funded for third year

The Federal Communications Commission recently announced a funding level of \$2.25 billion for Year Three of the E-rate.

John Carlo Bertot, co-author of the 1998 National Survey of Public Library Outlet Connectivity: Final Report, estimates that 92.95 percent of all public libraries now have at least basic access to the Internet, an increase of 9.3 percent over 1998, thanks largely to the E-rate. In Iowa the number of public libraries with Internet access is 88 percent. Bertot's analysis shows that those still in greatest need of Internet access are the libraries in high-poverty, rural areas.

The E-rate is a need-based discount for telecommunications and Internet services provided to public libraries and public and private schools by the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

## First Lady kicks off "Iowa Stories 2000"

With the goal of strengthening communities, families, and children through reading, storytelling, and libraries, Iowa's First Lady Christie Vilsack announced the creation of Iowa Stories 2000 at a news conference April 10 in Des Moines.

Seven Iowa communities have been selected to serve as pilot sites for the Literacy Communities initiative, the first phase of Iowa Stories 2000: Algona, Ames, Bayard, Belle Plaine, Cherokee, Independence and Oskaloosa.

"The goal for a Literacy Community is to create an environment where everyone in a community takes responsibility for ensuring that children grow up loving to read," said Vilsack.

The Literacy Communities initiative will give participating communities the opportunity to inventory existing literacy programs and to raise awareness of local literacy efforts. Public and school librarians will spearhead this effort, which will also include local govern-

ment, business and community leaders, and educators.

"I've chosen Iowa's libraries and librarians as the keystone of my literacy initiative because they help thousands of Iowans develop reading skills, promote lifelong learning, and build an educated work force," said Vilsack. "I believe Iowa's libraries are our passport to the 21st Century.

Partnering with Vilsack on Iowa Stories 2000 are the State Library of Iowa, Rotary Clubs of Iowa, Wells' Blue Bunny Ice Cream, and the Des Moines Junior League.

Vilsack is also developing plans for two other phases of the project. First, a Media Blitz to inform the public how important reading to children at an early age is to brain development. Second, the Next Generation initiative will provide each newborn baby or adopted child in Iowa with a new book from the First Lady and Governor.



First Lady Christie Vilsack unveiled her Iowa Stories 2000 initiative at a news conference in the Law Library, State Capitol.

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## Notes from the State Librarian

On Saturday, April 8, I participated in a Library Friends Conference sponsored by East Central Regional Library and Southeastern Library Services.



There were approximately 80 people in attendance. These lay people took time out of their lives to drive to the Amanos to talk about libraries and to gather ideas about how they can improve and promote library services in their communities.

Over the course of the day, I was struck by the energy and enthusiasm of the group, by their willingness to learn from one another, and by their sharing of failures as well as successes. Listening to the discussions, I was reminded of what libraries are about:

- Libraries are in the knowledge business, not the information business.
- Libraries are in the people business, not the warehousing business.
- Libraries play many roles in communities, beyond dispensing bits of data.

My remarks at the conference were titled, "Why befriend libraries?"

Libraries are fundamental to our democracy and were established:

- To support democracy by providing citizens with the knowledge to make decisions in a democratic society.
- For the common good.
- To educate people.
- To provide a gathering place for the exploration and discussion of ideas without fear of reprisal or censorship.

These tenets continue to be reflected in the major roles of today's libraries as centers for lifelong learning, community centers, reflections of community vitality, and as equalizers/safety nets guaranteeing every person access regardless of his or her personal situation. As we become more technology-driven, more isolated, and as the gulf between the haves and the have nots widens, libraries will become even more important to society.

As often happens when I speak at such events, I felt I was "preaching to the choir," but it doesn't hurt any of us to be reminded of our roots. I attended the conference as a speaker, but I probably learned more and came away more rejuvenated with renewed confidence in the future of libraries than anyone.

## Real books in school libraries

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Two things are needed when a child is given his or her first research assignment in elementary school or junior high: an active curiosity (usually no problem) and a well-stocked library (a problem in all-too-many American schools).

Experts in the field complain it has been decades, in many parts of the country, since school budgets set aside funds to replenish and refresh school libraries. The result is thousands of schools with tired collections dating back to the '60s and '70s. Is this really a concern in the age of the Internet, when more and more classrooms and libraries are equipped to give kids access to reams of Web-based knowledge?

That question demands a fresh look at the book. It remains the handiest, most-efficient form of organized knowledge. Its physical form, however, is in transition.

The Web, for all its marvels, dishes up a million subjects. Search engines help. They bring related stuff together. You sort it out. Find a book (on a shelf or on the Web), and if the writer's any good at the craft, the sorting has already been done.

Digital technology is rapidly bringing on the age of electronic books that are as easily readable as print-on-paper volumes. But refining the technology and making it widely available could take years. Traditional books and libraries shouldn't be shorted in the meantime. Kids need books. They need good models for organized and creative thinking. School libraries help meet that need, especially for kids who have few books at home.

The aging, often-sparse collections in libraries should still be rejuvenated, including electronically where possible. Local school districts shouldn't pinch library budgets. States should direct aid toward libraries. And private citizens can help through book drives or donations.

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## Hundreds participate in Summer Library Program Workshops

This year's "Cosmic Connections" Summer Library Workshops were held in March with 427 librarians attending from more than 350 libraries. Jerri Heid, children's librarian from Cherokee and the workshop presenter, is compiling results from the story time group activities held in each location. All participants will receive copies of the results. The theme for next year's Summer Library Program will be "Roadtrip USA." Dates and sites for workshops will be announced later this year.



## Certification Update

Congratulations to the following public library staff who were recently certified for the first time through the State Library's Iowa Certification Program for Public Librarians.

**Cynthia Albertson**, Nevada  
**Carolyn Greufe**, Des Moines  
**Deanne Henry**, Iowa Falls  
**Diane House**, Waterloo  
**Carol Kayser**, Cedar Falls

## Free reading guide available

The U.S. Department of Education has developed a how-to guide for parents and other caregivers of children from birth to age six.

*Helping Your Child Become a Reader* offers pointers on how to build the language skills of young children; everyday activities to boost a child's love of reading; and book ideas, web sites and other information to help children become readers.

Free copies of *Helping Your Child Become a Reader* are available from the Consumer Information Center, 1-888-878-3256 or by logging on to [www.ed.gov/pubs/parents](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents).

## Library Milestones

The **Elgin Public Library** was recently informed that they are one of 40 libraries nationwide selected to participate in the upcoming tour of "The Great Experiment: George Washington and the American Republic."

According to Bev Strong, library director, "We are the only library in Iowa to get the exhibit, and I believe the smallest." Strong will attend a planning workshop this May in San Marino, CA.

"The Great Experiment" exhibit and tour were developed by the Huntington Library, San Marino, and the American Library Association Public Programs Office with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The exhibit will tour from September 2000 to October 2003.

**Vinton Public Library** received \$7,800 from the local hospital to update and improve its medical collection, including materials on parenting, sexuality, and grief. The library hosted a reception to present the collection to the community.

The **Gibson Memorial Library**, Creston, received a \$4,000 grant from the Dekko Foundation to purchase software and computers for the library's automation project. The project will include a circulation system and an online public access catalog. The project should be completed this fall.

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## **Library Services Highlights**

**Patents ☆ ILL ☆ Medical ☆ Census ☆ Public Policy ☆  
Library Science ☆ State and Federal Documents ☆  
Audio Visual Services ☆ Law**

by Barbara Corson  
State Library Reference Librarian

A wealth of federal government publications is at your fingertips in the on-line catalog of the State Library of Iowa. The library is a Federal Documents Depository Library and receives about one third of all the information published by the Government Printing Office.

This information comes in a variety of formats such as books, pamphlets, serials and posters. Media used include paper, microfilm, and CD-Roms. The State Library began entering all of the government documents it receives into the on-line system in 1997, making access to these documents as simple as an on-line search. Subject access to government websites is also available through our on-line catalog.

The federal documents collection at the State Library covers a broad range of topics including commerce, education, and transportation, with particularly strong collections in medicine, census information, and law.

Interesting titles from the federal documents collection:

Nutritional information in Spanish can be found in the booklet *Su familia se merece los mejores alimentos!* [*Your Family Deserves the Best Food!*] published by the National Cancer Institute.

A high school government student might find *To Make All Laws: A History of the U.S. Congress From 1789-1989*, published by the Library of Congress, very helpful.

Were you thinking of bookmarking health-related websites on your public terminals for your patrons? *Online Health Information* lists a wide variety of such websites collected by the Health Information Center/Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

Federal government documents are available through Interlibrary Loan via SILO. For help in using our on-line catalog to locate materials please call our reference desk at 1-800-248-4483 or 1-515-281-4102 or e-mail us through the State Library website by clicking "Ask a Librarian" and selecting "Public Policy and Management".

## **'Brittle' book campaign begins**

Patrons at the Iowa Historical Libraries in Iowa City and Des Moines can now play a direct role in replacing thousands of family histories that are literally falling apart.

The libraries are starting an "Adopt a Book" campaign in which patrons are invited to pay for archival-quality copies of books that they find useful. Special bookplates honoring donors will be attached to the replacement books.

The program began when Dennis and Linda Anderson of Altoona replaced all 128 volumes of "War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies." The gift is valued at more than \$2,500.

The Society has a total of about 225,000 books at the two sites. Heavy use has contributed to the deterioration but the main factor is that 60,000 volumes in the Des Moines library were housed in substandard conditions until the new Historical Building was completed in 1987.

The most fragile books are often the volumes with the heaviest demand, including thousands of titles used by families attempting to trace their ancestry. Depending on various factors, the cost of replacing a book will be between \$35 and \$150. An estimated 100,000 volumes in the two libraries need to be replaced. For more information or to make a contribution, contact David Hudson at (319) 335-3928 or Ruth Bartels at (515) 281-6200. The libraries are open Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## Date set for "Iowa Heritage at the End of the Millennium!"

The Iowa Folklife & Prairie Voices Institutes will present "Iowa Heritage at the End of the Millennium!" June 8-10, 2000 at the Iowa Historical Building, 600 E. Locust St., Des Moines.

Librarians, traditional folk artists, educators, museum program staff, and cultural event planners are invited to explore the traditional culture of Iowa's new refugees and immigrants. The workshop will provide resources and information to use in programming or classrooms.

Highlights:

- Take a cemetery tour and learn about funeral rites and symbolism;
- Listen to a panel discussion about rites of passage in different cultures;
- Do genealogy by collecting family stories and memorabilia;
- Read photos and learn to use them

for learning resources;

- Learn how to write grants for classroom activities and artist residencies;
- Use primary sources - diaries, newspapers, historic murals, photos and more;
- Check out the Internet and Powerpoint
- Visit the Culture Cafe and experience cultures from Bosnia, the Sudan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Somalia, Mexico and more!

The registration fee, due May 12, is \$159 and includes three lunches, two evening dinners, tours, free lesson plans, study units and more. For more information, visit [www.culturalaffairs.org/iac/confwkshps/wkshop02.htm](http://www.culturalaffairs.org/iac/confwkshps/wkshop02.htm), or call (515) 281-4011.

## Iowa library will partner with PBS series on dying

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has awarded \$170,383 to the American Library Association and the Kettering Foundation to support programming in 12 U.S. libraries, including the Public Library of Des Moines, in conjunction with a new PBS series, the Bill Moyers-produced *On Our Own Terms: Moyers on Dying in America*.

Libraries will take part in a national outreach effort that includes hospitals, foundations, media, ethics groups, hospices, clergy, and many other participants. The series will be broadcast on four successive evenings beginning September 20. Libraries will sponsor four programs in the weeks following the series.

Programs will include a reading and discussion session, followed by a panel presentation featuring community representatives. A Kettering Foundation "National Issues Forum" series on the end of life will be the focus of the next event.

A final program will examine community opinions and responses to topics raised in the television series and plan for further activities on the topic.

## New URL for Genealogical Society

The Iowa Genealogical Society's new web address is [www.iowagenealogy.org](http://www.iowagenealogy.org). The old site will be maintained for a couple of months, but not updated. An automatic transfer to the new site will be effective in May.

## Iowa Teen Award list announced

The following books were suggested by the Iowa Educational Media Association for students to read in 2000-2001 as part of the Iowa Teen Award list.

*The Iron Ring*, by Alexander Lloyd  
*Tangerine*, by Edward Bloor  
*The Terrorist*, by Caroline Cooney  
*I Dream of Murder*, by Catherine Dexter  
*Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*, by Jack Gantos  
*Reaching Dustin*, by Vicki Grove  
*Among the Hidden*, by Margaret Haddix

*Leaving Fishers*, by Margaret Haddix  
*My Louisiana Sky*, by Kimberly Willis Holt  
*Twelve Shots: Outstanding Short Stories about Guns*, by Harry Mazer, ed.  
*Petey*, by Ben Mikaelson  
*My Life in Dog Years*, by Gary Paulsen  
*Remembering Mog*, by Colby Rodowski  
*Annie's Baby: The Diary of Anonymous, a Pregnant Teenager* by Beatrice Sparks, ed.  
*Hard Ball*, by Will Weaver

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## First Lady invites lowans to Spring Fling

First Lady Christie Vilsack announced the 2nd Annual Spring Fling, an event for families and children of all ages. The event will be from noon to 3 p.m. Sunday, April 30 at Terrace Hill, 2300 Grand Avenue, Des Moines. The rain date is May 7.

The theme for this year's Spring Fling is based on the book *The Wizard of Oz*. Governor Tom Vilsack, Mrs. Vilsack, Lt. Governor

Sally Pederson will dress up as characters from the movie.

Activities will include storytelling and book reading by Iowa librarians; a tornado simulation from the Des Moines Science Center; tethered hot air balloon rides; face painting; gigantic inflatable rides; pony rides; and a petting zoo.

Admission is \$5 a person and includes lunch. Children ages two and younger are free. Call (515) 281-7205 for more information.

## Town Meetings scheduled for 2000

The State Library and Iowa Regional Library System will once again have town meetings around the state this fall. The schedule is:

**Sept. 12, North Central**

**Sept. 13, Northeast**

**Sept. 14, East Central  
and Southeast**

**Sept. 19, Northwest**

**Sept. 20, Southwest**

**Sept. 21, Central**

Locations and times will be forthcoming.

## FOOTNOTES<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Official Newsletter of the  
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### Iowa Commission of Libraries

John Bennett (Iowa City)  
Dwight Carlson (Des Moines)  
Eldon Huston (Des Moines)  
William O'Brien (Des Moines)  
Dale Ross (Ames)  
Nancy Ross (Harlan)  
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### State Library Services

Audio/visual services; Information services and medical library; Specialized consulting services; Law library; Networking; State Data Center; Publications; State documents program

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