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SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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White Says Vendor Fairs Generate Record Number of Assistive Technology Grant Applications

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White has announced that the Illinois State Library has received a record total of 529 Assistive Technology grant applications for Fiscal Year 2001.

White says the record number of grant applications can be attributed in large part to a series of 10 Assistive Technology Vendor Fairs held around the state in September and October. Approximately 400 citizens, mostly librarians and special education teachers, attended one or more of the fairs.

"These important grants allow Illinois libraries to improve technology and provide state-of-the-art computers and networking equipment," White said. "These state funds are awarded each year through the State Library's Educate and Automate Program, and I anticipate this year's grants will be awarded in January."

White said the number of applications this year is nearly two-and-one-half times the number of applications received in 1999, when 203 libraries applied for funding. Last year, 195 Illinois public libraries were awarded grants.

This year, in recognition of the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Secretary White doubled from five to 10 the number of Assistive Technology vendor exhibits to demonstrate assistive technology products for use in local libraries.

"These vendor exhibits included adaptive technology for

computers, software and furniture to suit the physical and working conditions of the user," White said. "In an effort to help libraries fund equipment for the disabled, my office will be offering grant awards of up to \$2,500 each to individual school and public libraries to assist them in obtaining adaptive equipment, with no matching money required."

White commended staff from the state's 12 regional library systems for working with the State Library to greatly facilitate attendance at the vendor fairs by both librarians and vendor representatives. Individual vendors each said that Illinois was the only state they were aware of that went into small local communities to attract potential applicants and customers.