



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

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### **Jesse White Announces Alton's Hayner Public Library is Newest Project Next Generation Site**

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White announced today that the Hayner Public Library District in Alton has been selected to serve as the newest host for Project Next Generation (PNG), White's statewide mentoring program for young people.

"It is a pleasure to welcome Alton to the Project Next Generation family, especially since I am a native of this wonderful city," White said. "With the addition of the Hayner Public Library District, which will begin operating its PNG program this summer, we now have programs in twenty-five public libraries located throughout the state."

Upon taking office eight years ago, White initiated PNG, an innovative mentoring program that provides positive new learning opportunities for young people in grades six through nine. Qualified mentors teach students how to use state of the art computers, the internet, modems, scanners, and digital cameras, all of which are provided through a grant offered by the Illinois State Library. At each site, the number of students is limited to between 10 and 12 to maintain an optimum ratio of one mentor per three or four students. Though a statewide curriculum has been developed to maintain program consistency, individual sites are given flexibility to evolve based on student needs.

"The Hayner Public Library District is extremely pleased to serve as the twenty-fifth host site for Project Next Generation," said Jeff Owen, library director. "Hayner Public Library District recently developed a new strategy to try to bring more young people, specifically our teenagers, into our libraries, and Project Next Generation adds tremendous dimension to this effort."

"Project Next Generation is doing what I had hoped it would do," Secretary White said. "Students are having fun and developing technological skills that will serve them well for the rest of their lives, and at the same time they are building self confidence through the encouragement and guidance they receive from mentors."

White said Alton will join PNG programs currently operating at public libraries in Beardstown, Bensenville, Bethany, Bloomington, Carbondale, Centralia, Champaign, Danville, Decatur, Des Plaines, Dixon, Elmwood Park, Effingham, Freeport, Harrisburg, Joliet, Kankakee, Macomb, Loves Park, Peoria, Quincy, Richton Park, Sparta and Springfield.

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