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SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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Jesse White, Mary Dempsey to Lead Illinois Library Day Rally April 10 in Springfield

SPRINGFIELD—Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White and Chicago Public Library Commissioner Mary A. Dempsey will lead hundreds of members of the Illinois library community at a rally in Springfield on April 10th for Illinois Library Day.

Each year members of the library community travel to Springfield to meet with their local legislators and urge them to support issues of importance to the library community. The highlight of festivities will be a march from the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum to a rally at the Illinois State Capitol. Secretary White and Commissioner Dempsey will address the rally.

“Illinois Library Day provides us an opportunity to show lawmakers who vote for library funding that there are millions of Illinoisans who care deeply about their academic, public, school and special libraries and our library systems,” White said. “Library Day participants will educate lawmakers about current legislation that affects libraries and the patrons who use them.”

The Secretary of State’s office in its FY09 budget is requesting funding increases for public library per capita and equalization aid grants, school library grants, public library construction grants and literacy grants. Secretary White will continue urging lawmakers to approve these increases to keep Illinois libraries and literacy programs strong.

“All of us are delighted that Commissioner Mary Dempsey will join us for Library Day this year,” said White. “Led by the enthusiastic support of Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, Mary has helped make the Chicago public library system one of our nation’s best. Her appearance in Springfield sends a strong message to lawmakers about how essential libraries are to our communities and the citizens of Illinois.”

“The people of Illinois value their libraries for education, enlightenment, information and entertainment,” said Commissioner Dempsey. “As the economy continues to weaken and disposable incomes become limited, more Illinoisans turn to their libraries for free access to books, journals, entertainment and state of the art information technology. We are gathering in Springfield to support Secretary White’s initiatives and to educate state legislators about the need to provide increased funding for Illinois libraries. Although there is much worthy discussion about the need to better fund education in our state, let us not forget that the library -- a place of lifelong learning that is free and available to all people of every age and station in life -- is also worthy of increased funding and support from our state legislature. Our message is clear and simple -- support lifelong learning for all people. Support Illinois libraries.”

The public is welcome to march and rally. Supporters will gather at the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum at Sixth and Jefferson Streets at 11:15 a.m. The march will begin at 11:40, and the rally will be held at noon at the Lincoln statue on the east side of the Capitol Building.

Other events include a strategy session and dinner the night before the event and a breakfast for lawmakers on April 10 at the Illinois State Library. Box lunches will be available at the State Library following the rally. Information about cost and registration for these events, and all information about Library Day may be found at www.illinoislibraryday.info.

The Illinois Library Association, the Illinois School Library Media Association, the Illinois Library Systems Directors Organization, the Illinois Special Libraries Association, and the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois sponsor Illinois Library Day.

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