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A Newsletter from the Illinois State Library — Jesse White, Secretary of State & State Librarian

Fall  
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# INSIGHT

## Secretary White awards more construction grants

Secretary of State Jesse White continues to travel throughout Illinois to distribute Public Library Construction Act Grant awards. The matching grants assist public libraries with major construction projects. Awards to date have included seven projects for newly constructed buildings, four projects to remodel existing library buildings, two conversions of buildings into libraries, five new additions to existing buildings and two disaster-relief projects. Chicago Public Library also built a brand new branch in Albany Park, and is remodeling and repairing existing branches.

The Public Library Construction Act Grant program is part of a \$31 billion capital construction program approved in 2009 by the Governor and the General Assembly. A total of \$50 million was appropriated for permanent capital improvements to public libraries in FY13.

Six Mile Regional Library District in Granite City received more than \$2 million to renovate and repair portions of the library to make it a safe place and easily accessible for all patrons. The Belleville Public Library received more than \$500 thousand for remodeling its main branch library. The Marissa Area Public Library District received \$107 thousand to repair severe water damage to the roof and interior of the library.



Joining Secretary White at a construction grant award ceremony at the Belleville Public Library were (left to right) Mayor Mark Eckert, Secretary White, Board President Carol Keeley, State Rep. Jay Hoffman (D-Belleville) and library Director Lee Spearman.

## Live and Learn Construction Grant program applications now available

Public libraries may now apply for FY15 Live and Learn Construction Grants. Applications and program information is available at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/grants/livelearn\\_construction.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/grants/livelearn_construction.html). The application deadline is **January 9, 2015**.

## Secretary White urges student readers to enter “Letters About Literature” competition

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White is urging students in grades 4-12 to enter the 2015 “Letters About Literature” contest, a national reading and writing competition sponsored by the Illinois Center for the Book.

“Letters About Literature” invites students to read a book of their choice and write a letter to the author about how the book changed their life or view of the world. Students can enter on their own or through their schools, libraries or other youth organizations.

“Every year thousands of students in Illinois enjoy participating in this inspiring competition,” said Secretary White. “Illinois has had more entries than any other state for seven years in a row.”

There are three levels of participation: Level I, grades 4-6; Level II, grades 7-8; and Level III, grades 9-12. One Illinois winner will be selected for each level and receive a \$200 cash award. Teachers of the winning students will receive a \$100 cash award to purchase materials for their school library. Winners and teachers will be invited to an awards ceremony in Springfield, and the state winners’ letters will be forwarded for national judging.

The deadline to enter the competition is **Monday, December 15, 2014, for Level III, and Thursday, January 15, 2015, for Levels I and II.** State winners will be announced in April 2015. For more information about the competition, contact Bonnie Matheis at 217-558-2065 or [bmatheis@ilsos.net](mailto:bmatheis@ilsos.net). Information also is available at <http://illinoiscenterforthe-book.org>.



## Secretary White awards \$5.7 million in Adult Literacy Grants

Secretary of State Jesse White has awarded more than \$5.7 million in FY15 Adult Literacy Grants to help adults develop and enhance their reading, math, writing and language skills.

“I am pleased to provide more than 100 local literacy providers with funding that will allow adult students to achieve their utmost potential,” said Secretary White. “I will continue to do all I can to ensure that every citizen of this state has access to quality literacy programs.”

Nearly 22,000 students served by adult literacy programs will benefit from the grants. More than 8,500 volunteer tutors provide training for students to set them on the path to lifelong learning. Adult literacy projects help Illinois adults who function below the ninth grade level or speak English at a beginner level to fully engage in family, work and community roles.

The Adult Literacy Program is administered by the Illinois State Library Literacy Office, and grants are awarded in the following three categories:

- **Adult Volunteer Literacy Grants** provide training for volunteers who tutor adults over age 16 in basic reading, math, writing or language skills. Participating literacy providers include libraries, volunteer tutoring organizations, community-based organizations, community colleges, regional offices of education, schools (individual and public), pre-school programs, school districts, domestic violence shelters and correctional facilities.
- **Penny Severns Family Literacy Grants** provide educational services to parents and children to enhance basic reading, math, writing or language skills. Programs must partner with an adult literacy provider, child-at-risk agency and a library.
- **The Workplace Skills Enhancement Project** provides on-site instructional services to help the basic reading, math, writing or language skills of employees. Eligible employees must read at or below the ninth grade level. Grantees must match the grant award and provide instructional services to prospective employees. The fiscal agent and submitting agency may be either the educational partner or the business partner.

To become a volunteer tutor, please contact the Illinois Adult Learning Hotline at 1-800-321-9511. For more information, visit [www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/literacy/adultlitgrants.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/literacy/adultlitgrants.html).

## Public Library Construction Act Grant update

Seven of the 21 libraries that received a FY13 Public Library Construction Act Grant have now completed their projects. Those libraries are Selby Township Library District in DePue; Bunker Hill Public Library District; Glen Ellyn Public Library; Zion-Benton Public Library District, El Paso Public Library; Tiskilwa Public Library District; and the Case-Halstead Public Library in Carlyle.

These projects ranged from minor remodeling and maintenance to major additions to existing libraries and a brand new library building. In total, more than \$16.7 million of the original \$50 million appropriation from the program has been disbursed to these 21 libraries. Another six projects are more than 90 percent complete.

## Secretary White awards \$280,000 in Project Next Generation grants

Secretary of State Jesse White has awarded \$289,310 in FY15 Project Next Generation (PNG) grants. Project Next Generation is the first-ever statewide mentoring program to be administered through Illinois public libraries. Project mentors work with young students at public libraries to develop technology skills and guide them in exploring life skills such as effective communication, goal-setting and conflict resolution.

"I am committed to improving the lives of young, at-risk children in Illinois," said Secretary White. "I established this innovative program when I first became Secretary of State to give students an opportunity to receive hands-on experience with the latest technological tools at their local library."

With funds provided through the Library Services and Technology Act, the PNG grants are administered by the Secretary of State/Illinois State Library's Diversity Program. Grants are awarded only to public libraries serving culturally diverse, low-income and underserved populations. To meet the grant's criteria, a library must be able to deliver the program's projects, meet the Children's Internet Protection Act guidelines and exhibit high innovative interest.

More than 6,600 students have participated in the PNG program since its inception in 2000, and 600 mentors have provided training to help students obtain technology skills while encouraging lifelong learning.

The 21 PNG grant recipient libraries are:

- Beardstown Houston Memorial Library
- Bloomington Public Library
- Carbondale Public Library
- Centralia Regional Library District
- Champaign Public Library
- Chicago Ridge Public Library
- Decatur Public Library
- Elmwood Park Public Library
- Harrisburg Public Library
- Hayner Public Library
- Joliet Public Library
- Kankakee Public Library
- Kewanee Public Library District
- Matteson Public Library
- Mississippi Valley Library District
- Moline Public Library
- Pekin Public Library
- Peoria Public Library-Lincoln Branch
- Richton Park Public Library
- Sparta Public Library
- Zion-Benton Public Library

For more information, visit [www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/grants/png.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/grants/png.html).

## Secretary White awards more than \$1.5 million in Talking Book Center grants

Secretary of State Jesse White has awarded \$1,526,542 in Talking Book Center (TBC) grants. The three library systems — Illinois Heartland, Reaching Across Illinois and Chicago Public Library — together with the Illinois State Library, provide talking book and braille services for Illinois residents. TBC grants support the services of the library systems.

"Talking books offer a wonderful opportunity for anyone who cannot use regular print materials due to blindness, visual impairment or physical disability," said Secretary White. "Literacy tools should be available to all, regardless of impairment or disability."

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## Project Next Generation picnic

Project Next Generation (PNG) is Secretary of State Jesse White's mentoring and technology program for young students administered through Illinois public libraries. This year marked the program's 14th anniversary, which began in 2000. More than 171 people attended the August 7, 2014, picnic at the State Library. The event featured performances from the Jesse White Tumbling Team and a step dance routine by teens from the Peoria Public Library's PNG program.



Jesse White Tumbling Team performing in the atrium of the Illinois State Library.



## Talking Book Center grants (continued from page 3)

The Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS) supports the activities of the Illinois Network of Libraries Serving the Blind and Physically Handicapped in providing public library service to any Illinois resident who is unable to read standard print material due to a permanent or temporary visual or physical disability.

The four customer service sites are the Regional Library in Springfield; the Chicago Public Library Talking Book Center at the Harold Washington Library Center; the Illinois Talking Book Advisory and Outreach Center in Burr Ridge; and the Illinois Machine Sub-Lending Agency in DuQuoin. All sites strive to enrich the quality of life for eligible Illinois residents.

The Regional Library acts as the liaison with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and circulates books to all residents enrolled in TBBS. In conjunction with the local service centers, the regional center provides a full range of library services specializing in braille and audio books.

For more information about TBBS, contact Sharon Ruda at 217-782-9435 or [sruda@ilsos.net](mailto:sruda@ilsos.net). Information also is available at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/TBBS/home.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/TBBS/home.html).

## State Library staff news

**Andrew Bullen**, library program specialist, was recognized for 15 years of service.

**Cyndy Colletti** has been promoted to associate director of the Library Development Group. Cyndy will remain the manager of the Literacy Office until further notice.

**Tom Huber** was promoted to library program specialist in the Literacy Office. Tom previously served as a reference librarian. Tom also was recognized for 20 years of service.

**Mike McCarthy** was promoted to account technician II in Library Accounting. Mike previously served in the Talking Book and Braille Service.

**Greg McCormick**, library fiscal officer, was recognized for 30 years of service.

## Jesse White Urges Talking Book and Braille Patrons to Participate in New U.S. Currency Reader Program

### *Program Provides Free Currency Readers for Blind and Visually Impaired*

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White announced the launching of a pilot program to enable Illinois State Library Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS) patrons the option to pre-order a free currency reader. The program began on September 2 and is sponsored by the Library of Congress National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

“Federal Reserve notes are the same size and weight regardless of denomination, making it difficult for blind and visually impaired individuals to tell them apart,” said White. “The innovative program helps visually impaired people to navigate a common aspect of day-to-day life.”

The four-month pilot program allows the government to test its ordering and distribution processes and gauge demand for currency readers by initially offering the reader only to TBBS patrons. State Library staff will order the currency reader, which will be delivered to the patron’s home. To receive a free currency reader, current patrons of TBBS should call 1-888-NLS-READ or 1-888-657-7323.

In January 2015, following the pilot rollout to TBBS patrons, the program will be available to all residents who are blind or visually impaired. Individuals interested in applying for a currency reader device or learning more about the program can visit [www.bep.gov/uscurrencyreaderpgm.html](http://www.bep.gov/uscurrencyreaderpgm.html).

SAVE THE DATE

- **October 14-16** — Illinois Library Association Annual Conference, Springfield Prairie Capital Convention Center
- **October 15** — Public Library Per Capita and Equalization Grant Applications Due
- **October 27-30** — ILEAD USA, University of Illinois, Springfield
- **November 20** — Family Reading Night



Insight  
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