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

Summer
2014

Secretary White awards \$670,000 in “Another Back to Books” grants

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White has awarded more than \$670,000 in “Another Back to Books” grants to 159 Illinois libraries to acquire fiction and/or non-fiction books, learning CDs and DVDs, and other educational materials.

“It’s important that our libraries have access to a diverse collection of books for patrons to read for knowledge or enjoyment,” said Secretary White. “These grants are a great way for libraries to encourage reading and get more people to use their local libraries.”

Libraries submitted grant applications specifying the types of books and other materials they would purchase if they received funding, which included:

- Building collections in women’s studies and sociology.
- Health sciences books for nursing students.
- Books and other materials to help veterans make the transition from military to civilian life.
- DVDs to provide training for firefighters.
- New materials in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and crafts-

manship subjects.

- Cultural, geographical and travel books and DVDs.
- Spanish language fiction and non-fiction books, DVDs and audiobooks.
- Large-print books for senior citizens on topics such as health, hobbies, finances, technology and travel.

The grants are funded by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services and the State Library. A list of libraries receiving grants is available at www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/grants/pdfs/another_b2b_recipients.pdf.

ISL Heritage Project complete

Chronicles 174 years of the ISL

Secretary of State Jesse White has announced that the book, *Illinois State Library Heritage Project, 1839-2013*, is now available to the public. Authored by critically acclaimed freelance writer and historical researcher Tom Emery of Carlinville, the book documents the history and growth of the State Library since its inception and the creation of public libraries.

“As Secretary of State and State Librarian, I am pleased to present this informative

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SECRETARY WHITE HONORS GWEN HARRISON

Secretary of State Jesse White honored State Library employee Gwendolyn Harrison as the Secretary of State 2013 Employee of the Year during a ceremony at the State Library. Gwen is part of the Library Development Group. She was chosen from 11 other Secretary of State Employees of the Month for 2013, including the State Library’s IT liaison Jim Shepard.

“On the Front Lines” conference

August 4-6

“On the Front Lines,” a highly acclaimed continuing education opportunity sponsored by the State Library, returns for a 10th time to the University of Illinois Springfield, August 4-6. Library staff from public, academic, school and special libraries are invited to attend. Registration is available through L2 at www.librarylearning.info/events/?eventID=16074. The registration fee is \$15 per person, which covers all programs and conference-supplied meals.

On the Front Lines is designed to equip and enlighten frontline staff with training and exposure to the latest technology and techniques that will enable them to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of their patrons. Dr. Steven Bell, associate university librarian for Research and Instructional Services of Temple University Libraries, will deliver the opening keynote address: “Librarianship in the Great Age of Experimentation.”

There will be approximately 40 concurrent sessions with topics on emerging technology trends, makerspaces, safety and security in the library, aggressive online reference, the changing complexion of resource sharing and much more. For more information, please contact Gwen Harrison at garrison@ilsos.net or Karen Egan at kegan@ilsos.net.



School District Library Grants awarded

Secretary of State Jesse White has awarded FY14 School District Library Program Grants totaling nearly \$1.4 million to 656 Illinois public school districts. Nearly 1.7 million students served by school library media programs will benefit from the grants.

“The school library is a place where children have access to resources and opportunities for achieving academic excellence,” said Secretary White. “I am proud to award this grant to ensure that our school libraries stay vital and relevant while educating our students.”

Grants were awarded based on a formula of \$.75 per student, with a minimum grant award of \$750. The School District Library Grant Program provides funds that can be used for such things as library materials to support reading for academics and enjoyment, library subscriptions to electronic resources, or improved technology to support student research.

A list of school districts receiving grants is available at www.cyberdriveillinois.com/news/2014/april/140417d1.pdf.

Public Library Construction Act grant update

With the help of an FY13 Public Library Construction Act grant, **Bunker Hill District Library** has recently completed and moved into a brand new library building that is triple the size of its original building. The original 900-square-foot building was donated by a community member and had housed the library since 1968. After converting to a library district in 2011 and doubling the population it served, a new building was needed. The library raised local funds through a variety of means to secure the state award and began work on the new 4,000-square-foot building project last August. Congratulations to the staff and trustees of the Bunker Hill District Library for this achievement.

Two other libraries — **Zion-Benton Public Library District** and **Glen Ellyn Public Library** — qualified for FY13 Public Library Construction Grant funds under the category of “disaster grants” and have successfully completed their projects. In April 2013, the Glen Ellyn library suffered major flood damages to its mechanical room, basement and first-floor public areas after a 7-inch rainfall. In September 2013, the Zion-Benton library’s local area network servers and other equipment were destroyed when an air-conditioning unit failed and flooded a mechanical room. Both libraries contributed local money to qualify for the funds requested through the grant process and have completed work on their projects. Congratulations to the staff and trustees of these libraries on their achievements.

Other grants awarded through the FY13 Public Library Construction Act grant program are available on the State Library website.

2014-15 Read for a Lifetime reading list

Read for a Lifetime is the State Library’s popular reading program for high school students. Students receive a list of 25 book titles representing a mix of classic and contemporary literature. Each student who reads at least four titles from the reading list during the school year receives a Certificate of Achievement from Secretary of State Jesse White. The reading list for the 2014-15 school year is available at www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/public/rfl.html.

Letters About Literature winners announced

Secretary of State Jesse White has announced that three students from Algonquin, Northbrook and Barrington are the winners of the 2014 Letters About Literature contest. The national reading and writing contest for students is sponsored by the Illinois State Library and the Illinois Center for the Book, an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

“For the seventh year in a row, I am proud to announce that Illinois had more entries than any other state,” said Secretary White. “The young writers we honored today have demonstrated through their writing skills how much literature impacts the lives of everyone.”

To participate, students in grades 4-12 must read a book and write a personal letter to the author explaining how the book changed their views of the world and/or themselves. Students may select authors living or deceased, from any genre — fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic. The Illinois Center for the Book appointed judges to select the top essayists on three competition levels. This year’s Illinois winners are:

- **Level I, grades 4-6:** *Jennifer Nguyen* from Heineman Middle School in Algonquin, who wrote to author Sharon Draper about her book, *Out of My Mind*. Her letter was submitted by teacher Wayne Blake.
- **Level II, grades 7-8:** *Larissa Bersh* from Maple School in Northbrook, who wrote to authors Megan Kelley and Carrie Jones about their book, *Dear Bully*. Her letter was submitted by teacher Lorene Schramm.
- **Level III, grades 9-12:** *Jacqueline Barbera-Mirza* from Barrington High School, who wrote to Jane Austen about her book, *Pride and Prejudice*.

Each winner received a \$200 check from the Illinois Center for the Book, a plaque signed by Secretary White, a tour of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield and lunch at the State Library. Teachers received a \$100 check from the Illinois Center for the Book to purchase books for their school library, a certificate signed by Secretary White, a tour of the Lincoln Presidential Museum and lunch at the State Library. The winning essays may be read at illinoiscenterforthebook.org/projects/projectse.html. Information about the next Letters About Literature competition will be sent to schools in the fall.



Secretary of State Jesse White honored Level I Letters About Literature winner Jennifer Nguyen (right) of Algonquin and Level III winner Jacqueline Barbera-Mirza of Barrington at a ceremony in his Springfield office.

SPLMI Institute

The Illinois State Library hosted its very successful 19th annual Small Public Library Management Institute July 1-6. This week-long, immersive learning experience geared to 52 new public library directors succeeds as a collaborative effort because of the involvement of the University of Illinois-Springfield, the SPLMI Planning Committee, and the State Library. The event also was observed by the Mortenson Center’s international librarian educators representing India, Butan, Nepal, Serbia and the Phillippines.

Two days were spent on administrative topics of human resources, long-range planning, leadership, board relations and community involvement. Another three days included legal information, budgeting tips and safety/security. Many opportunities for networking and discussion were also scheduled. The following comments indicate the impact of the institute on the attendees:

“I am very appreciative of the opportunity you have provided to increase my knowledge and abilities as a library director. This experience will improve and enhance what I am able to accomplish in the community I serve. Thank you and please keep offering SPLMI for future library directors.”

“This week has been a wonderful opportunity for me to learn about Illinois library law, policy development, and to meet the wonderful variety of small public librarians I’m privileged to call colleagues. Thank you so much for the orientation to the State Library and for making yourselves available to us. Great Week! “

E-News from the ISL

E-News from the ISL, the State Library’s weekly electronic newsletter, is the best way to find out what’s happening at the library. *E-News* is where you will learn about grant offerings, continuing education opportunities and other library-related information. If you know someone who would benefit from receiving *E-News*, please send their email address to Kyle Peebles at kpeebles@ilsos.net with the line, SIGN THEM UP!

ISL Heritage Project (continued from page 1)

and historic account of the Illinois State Library,” said Secretary White. “I commend Tom Emery for his commitment to educating the people of Illinois through this accomplishment. This year marks the 175th anniversary of the Illinois State Library. I am proud that this institution has enriched the people of Illinois with resources and knowledge for many years. It is my hope that this tradition lives on.”

In 2007, the State Library awarded Blackburn College a Library Services and Technology Act grant, with funding provided by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, to pursue the project. In March, the Illinois State Historical Society awarded the book the *Award of Superior Achievement*.

“I’d like to thank Secretary of State Jesse White for sharing this opportunity with Blackburn College,” said Emery. “This is when historical research not only becomes plausible, but fun. Working on the *Illinois State Library Heritage Project, 1839-2013*, has been an inspiring experience.”

Public and academic libraries throughout the state will receive a copy of the book for their collections.

“Find a Book” online summer reading tool

Summer vacation is here and that means it’s summer reading program time. Public library summer programs make a difference. In fact, one review of the impact of summer reading loss found that children can lose up to 60 percent of their skills during a summer vacation. Therefore, Secretary White and the Illinois State Library are promoting the “Find a Book” learning resource. Secretary White, along with Governor Pat Quinn and State Superintendent of Education Christopher Koch, sent a letter to library directors and parents encouraging the use of this important tool.

“Find a Book” at www.lexile.com/findabook is a free, online book search that allows children and their parents to quickly and easily select books to match a child’s reading level and interests as well as locate their selection at their local library. The “Find a Book” tool uses a child’s Lexile® measure to assess reading ability and text complexity derived from state standardized tests, including the ISAT. The search tool also features a search option to access appropriate book choices based on grade level and comfort with typical reading materials at that grade level. For more information, visit web-dev.isbe.state.il.us/find-a-book/.

State Library staff news

Diane Manning, assistant manager for the Literacy Office, retired in May following 23 years of service with the Secretary of State, including 19 years at the State Library Literacy Office.

Kathleen Bloomberg, Library Operations manager, was recognized for 30 years of service. **Karen Egan** of the Library Development Group was recognized for 20 years of service.

Kregg Argenta joined the staff as a reference librarian in May. He previously served as a librarian at the Illinois Supreme Court.

Lelia Minor has joined the Talking Book and Braille Service.

SAVE THE DATE

August 4-6

On the Front Lines Conference
U of I, Springfield

August 8-17

Illinois State Library at the Illinois State Fair
Springfield

September 4

ISL Advisory Committee Meeting
State Library

September 16

Illinois Literacy Foundation Board Meeting
Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago

**The State Library will be closed Monday, September 1,
in observance of the Labor Day holiday.**



Insight
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