

# Calling All Explorers!

## Charting a Future Course for Nebraska Library Services

### Executive Summary by Nebraska Libraries Future Search Task Force

Nebraska Libraries Future Search is a culmination of a variety of focus group meetings held throughout the state as well as a conference attended by more than eighty invited participants in June 2008. Hosted by the Nebraska Library Commission, sponsors and contributors included the Peter Kiewit Foundation, Nebraska Library Association, Nebraska Library Commission, Regional Library Systems and University of Nebraska at Omaha.

This effort is also a follow-up to *Nebraska Information Partnerships*, a statewide conference sponsored by the Nebraska Library Commission in 1991 that brought together people to envision goals and directions for Nebraska library services.

The goals of the 2008 Future Search conference were to:

- Develop a shared vision for library and information services in Nebraska.
- Design a blueprint for seamless, customer-centered, life-long access to library and information services in Nebraska.
- Explore how all types of libraries can work together to provide library and information services more efficiently and effectively.
- Educate library staff and boards, public officials, customers, and other stakeholders about library and information services in Nebraska.
- Engage librarians from all types and sizes of libraries to unite and speak with one voice.
- Foster collaboration among library and information professional organizations, library advocates, including the Nebraska Library Commission and the Nebraska Regional Library Systems, and library resources, to improve library and information services for Nebraskans.

Through SWOT analysis, brainstorming ideas, and follow-up surveys, this conference unearthed a rich array of practical ideas that can inspire all libraries in this state to seek their very best future. And while each library will indeed blaze its own path, participants at this conference enthusiastically framed a shared vision that can be found at the end of this report.

Following this conference a task force was convened to determine a framework to further the conference goals and visions. In recognition of the tireless efforts of the Nebraska Library community individually and collectively following the 1991 conference, which resulted in significant improvements to library services, the Future Search Task Force has concentrated on building a dynamic community-owned toolbox available to and used by all.

That toolbox is presently in Wiki form at <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/wikis/fs>. This continuously-evolving toolbox includes a wealth of background information about the 2008 Future Search process, a full conference report, and most importantly a fully democratically-charted course by and for libraries committed to a better future for those we serve.

As each of us dip our toes into uncharted waters described on the pages of the 2008 Future Search Conference report, there are no futures that are not worth exploring. This is Nebraska's commons to journal (as all explorers do but now in electronic form) your experiences,

reflections, collaborations and learning lessons. Those who follow in your footsteps and pull YOUR ideas out of this toolbox will greatly appreciate how you have chronicled the charting of your future.

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## **Our Shared Vision for Library and Information Services from Nebraska Libraries Future Search Conference, June 2008**

**A. Vital** - The library is a vital hub, woven into the fabric of the greater community, responding to and empowering people through local and global connections.

**B. Committed to Service**—Nebraska libraries leading a magnificent metamorphosis of superior customer service, humming with activities and learning, unencumbered by walls or political boundaries.

**C. Global** – Libraries embrace the richness of a global community.

**D. The Community Front Porch** - Libraries provide an inviting and welcoming front porch where the community comes to learn, play and investigate. People come first in this nurturing and enriching gathering place for all.

**E. Highly Visible in our Communities and Nebraska** - Through listening, communicating, and delivering services to enhance our communities.

**F. With Core Values**—The library champion universal access to information for purposes of personal and community empowerment through communication, collaboration and customization.

**G. Going Green** – Going green starts @ your library: the library models environmentally sustainable practices, places and policies, and shares these with the community.

**H. Staffed for Excellence** – The staff is key to the success of the library: cultivate our staff.

**I. Facilities and Buildings** — A convenient, vibrant places to discover life’s possibilities.

**J. Education** —Libraries are innovative, vibrant places of discovery where collaborative learning spaces encourage sharing of ideas between all ages and languages while promoting lifelong learning, literacy, and literary leisure, thereby enabling users to succeed anytime, anyplace, on any path at any pace.

**K. Quick Easy Fix Button** – Your Library: the “easy button” to timely, relevant resources for all your information needs.

**L. Technology Hubs** – We are committed to providing seamless connections and equitable access to high quality virtual resources.