

Symposium Explores Open Source Solutions

Open Source software is both simple and complex. Instead of the standard model of purchasing software and doing only what it allows you to do, Open Source software is typically free and allows you to change it to fit your needs. However, as it has been said, "Open Source software is not free as in beer, but free as in kittens." There may be no up-front costs, but that doesn't mean there will be no costs in the long run.

Nebraska Library Commission Webcasts this spring introduced the concept of developing a catalog using Open Source software (a recording is available at www.nlc.state.ne.us/scripts/training/eventshow.asp?ProgID=8643). In May the Library Commission hosted a symposium to demonstrate how Open Source software is being used for Integrated Library Systems.

Presentations on Equinox software by Bob Molyneux and Koha software by LibLime's Josh Ferraro helped explain how Open Source software can be used to create modular and customizable Library Systems. These systems can be upgraded, changed, and "patched" whenever necessary. The code in Open Source software is developed under a license that allows the user to modify the code and redistribute it. Libraries using the software steer the software development. Customization does not wait for commercial vendors to address needs. Elizabeth McKinney de Garcia, Georgia Pines Program Director, described her experience with integrating more than 275 Georgia libraries with an Open Source library automation system. Comparing Open Source to commercial software she noted, "It's like the difference between renting and owning." Presentations by



Ruth Dukelow, Michigan Library Consortium, and Kathy Rippel, Central Kansas Library System, illustrated the use of Open Source software in their respective shared catalog projects.

The Nebraska Library Commission continues to investigate the possibility of developing a shared Open Source Integrated Library System that can grow to accommodate additional participants over time. An Open Source solution would allow a system to be configured to better suit the specific needs of Nebraska libraries. A shared system also would allow libraries with few or no technical staff to avoid managing their own individual catalogs. Nebraska has already experienced success with shared catalog systems and a voluntary pilot project is being planned to explore the feasibility of bringing an Open Source version of this solution to more Nebraska libraries. Libraries interested in participating in the pilot project are encouraged to contact Susan Knisely, Nebraska Library Commission Online Services Librarian, 402-471-3849 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: sknisely@nlc.state.ne.us.

Far left:
Shannon White
wraps up the
symposium.

Above:
Nebraska librarians
gather at Bellevue
University for a
discussion of Open
Source software.

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From the Director...

Some eighty people traveled to the Saint Benedict Center north of Schuyler for the Nebraska Libraries Future Search Conference (June 9 and 10). The conference was held to explore future possibilities and directions for Nebraska library services.

Participants were invited based on nominations from the conference's fifteen-member planning committee and included librarians, mayors, a city council member, teachers, a city administrator, business owners, leaders in non-profit organizations, school and community college administrators, students, and more. The participants were broadly and geographically representative with emphasis on stakeholder groups closely aligned to Nebraska libraries. They were asked to contribute fresh perspectives on library services and they fully responded.

High school student participants were small in number but highly visible and vital in conference activities. The students contributed from the get-go with their own unique perspectives, participating fully in conversations and inspiring others to think globally and challenge assumptions.

Many ideas and suggested projects came forward in response to Nebraska trends, opportunities, and library service challenges. The conference generated ideas for action that can be adopted by libraries, organizations, and individuals. While there is no mandate or even consensus on all of the ideas, there is the opportunity and expectation that many of the ideas and concepts will be acted upon. That is the "common ground" purpose of a Future Search event. The ideas are opportunities to make significant differences in the kind and quality of library services throughout Nebraska for all libraries and for the benefit of the people of Nebraska.

Further details concerning the Nebraska Libraries Futures Conference can be found on the conference wiki at www.nlc.state.ne.us/wikis/fs/.

Rod Wagner



Nebraska library representatives visit Congressman Lee Terry's office, (l. to r.) Patricia Gross; Michael Brzica, Legislative Counsel for Congressman Lee Terry; Jenni Puchalla; Pamela Springer; Rod Wagner; and Judy Henning.

Nebraskans Participate in Legislative Day

Nebraska library representatives were among more than 400 in Washington, D.C., in May for the 2008 National Library Legislative Day. Patricia Gross, Gering High School; Judy Henning, Nebraska Educational Media Association President; Jenni Puchalla, Nebraska Library Association Legislative Committee Chair; Pamela Springer, Nebraska Educational Media Association Past-President; and Rod Wagner, Nebraska Library Commission Director, were Nebraska's participants in Legislative Day activities themed "Vote for Libraries."

The event included briefings on library-related legislation and policies currently before Congress, and visits to congressional offices. The Nebraska group attended the Nebraska Breakfast,

a weekly gathering hosted by the state's congressional delegation. During the breakfast Senator Nelson and Representatives Fortenberry, Smith, and Terry spoke about current issues. The Nebraska library representatives visited each of Nebraska's five Senate and House offices to discuss legislative issues of special importance to Nebraska libraries including Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) appropriations, E-rate funding policies for schools and libraries, the Strengthening Kids' Interest in Learning and Libraries (SKILLS) Act, and copyright.

For more information contact Rod Wagner, Nebraska Library Commission Director, 402-471-4001 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: rwagner@nlc.state.ne.us.



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John Dale, Lincoln, term expires 2008; Jean Ahrens, Scottsbluff, term expires 2010; Patrick Gross, Wayne, term expires 2009; Mary Nelson, Holdrege, term expires 2009; Charles Gordon, Fremont, term expires 2010; and Carol Spencer, Broken Bow, term expires 2010. Commission meetings are held the second Friday of every other month or as scheduled by public action of the board.

This publication was supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provision of the Library Services and Technology Act.

Summer Reading Themes Chosen

“Water” and “World Cultures” were selected as general Summer Reading Program themes for 2010 and 2011 at the annual meeting of the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) in April.

The children’s slogan for 2010 is “Make a Splash – READ!” and the teen theme is “Make Waves @ your library®.” Slogans for “2011: World Cultures” will be selected at the group’s meeting next year.

Nebraska Library Commission Children’s Services Coordinator Sally Snyder currently serves as president of CSLP, which is a grassroots consortium of states working together to provide high-quality summer reading program materials for children at the lowest cost possible for public libraries. By combining resources, libraries can purchase posters, reading logs, bookmarks, certificates, and reading incentives at significant savings.



The group will next meet April 22-25, 2009, in Omaha. Nebraska librarians interested in attending the meeting or serving as a local area expert are asked to contact Sally Snyder at the Library

Commission. Nebraska representatives attending this year in addition to Sally Snyder were Karen Drevo, Norfolk Public Library, Vendor Committee Chair, and Beth Trupp, Gering Public Library, Vendor Committee member.

Any children’s or teen librarian interested in serving as a representative for Nebraska is asked to contact Sally Snyder, Nebraska Library Commission Children’s Services Coordinator at 402-471-4003 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: ssnyder@nlc.state.ne.us.

For more information about the Collaborative Summer Library Program, contact Sally Snyder or see www.cslpreads.org.

Position Open: Planning and Data Services Coordinator

The Nebraska Library Commission is accepting applications for **Planning and Data Services Coordinator**. Required: Master’s degree in library science from an ALA-accredited program, plus previous experience in a professional or administrative-level position, including planning and policy analysis. Also required: knowledge of national data collection and reporting requirements; knowledge of federal policies and procedures related to Library Commission activities; ability to develop and maintain effective processes for collection and organization of data; and ability to interpret and communicate data and programmatic information.

Responsible for:

- developing and managing data collection and use of data for program planning and evaluation
- managing data collection and reporting for Nebraska library participation in national library statistical programs
- verifying public library accreditation requirements for state aid eligibility
- administration of Nebraska’s Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) state grant program

For more information see www.nowhiringatyourlibrary.org or see www.wrk4neb.org for an application. Evaluation of applications will continue until position is filled. For more information about the position, contact Doreen Kuhlmann, Nebraska Library Commission Business Manager, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023, 402-471-4007 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: dkuhlmann@nlc.state.ne.us.

Grant Applications Now Available

The Nebraska Library Commission is accepting applications for continuing education and training grants of \$250 to \$5,000 through August 4, 2008. The purpose of the grants is to assist Nebraska libraries in providing improved library services to their communities through continuing education and training for library personnel and supporters.

Applications from libraries cooperating with other libraries or entities will be given first consideration. Applications from libraries that have never received a continuing education and training grant also will be given preference. Each grant requires a 25% local match.

Grants will be awarded to projects that develop the knowledge and skills of library personnel to further an institution’s mission. Library board members,

volunteers, advocates, and other supporters may be included in the training.

This funding is available for accredited public libraries, accredited public libraries in conjunction with recognized community organizations or agencies, groups of public libraries, Regional Library Systems, consortia of public libraries, and state-run institutional libraries.

Grants will be awarded September 5, 2008. See www.nlc.state.ne.us/libdev/conedgrants/cegrant08/index.html for applications, Frequently Asked Questions, and grant-writing tips.

For more information contact Laura Johnson, Nebraska Library Commission Continuing Education Coordinator, 402-471-2694 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: ljohnson@nlc.state.ne.us.


Database Roadshow Offers Flexible Format

The Library Commission's annual Database Roadshow is scheduled to tour the state in July and August. This year the Roadshow will be presented in two parts, and librarians can choose to attend one or both parts. Part 1 will be held in the morning (9:30 – 11:30 a.m.) and cover eLibrary. Part 2 will be in the afternoon (1:00 – 3:30 p.m.) and cover Books In Print and FictionConnection. As in past years, participants will learn about a variety of features in each database and have the opportunity for hands-on practice. Participants can attend one or two sessions, or attend the morning session in one location and the afternoon session in another location.

Dates and locations are:

- July 9: Sidney, Western Nebraska Community College
- July 16: Wayne, Wayne State College
- August 8: Kearney, ESU 10
- August 20: Elkhorn, Metro Community College
- August 27: Lincoln, Nebraska Library Commission

To register, click on Library Training at the Library Commission's Website, www.nlc.state.ne.us, and search on Database Roadshow. Participants who want to attend both sessions must register twice.

For more information contact Allana Novotny, Nebraska Library Commission Network Services Librarian, 402-471-6681 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: anovotny@nlc.state.ne.us. 

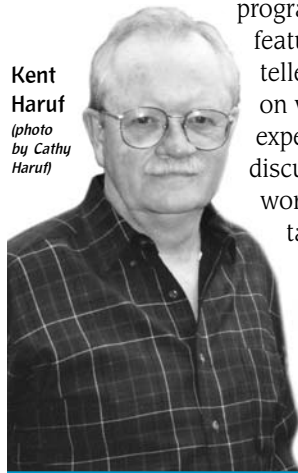
Haruf to Open Nebraska Book Festival

Kent Haruf will open the 2008 Nebraska Book Festival with an address at the Nebraska State Capitol on Friday, October 17. Haruf, a Colorado resident and former member of the Nebraska Wesleyan University faculty, is the author of *Plainsong* and other novels set on the High Plains. Haruf's presentation will be followed by a reception at the Lincoln Woman's Club honoring Nebraska writers involved in the Festival.

The Festival will continue on Saturday at downtown Lincoln locations. The Lincoln Children's Museum will host a


program for children featuring story-tellers and hands-on writing experiences. Panel discussions, writing workshops, round-table discussions, readings, book sales, and other events for adult readers and writers

Kent Haruf
(photo by Cathy Haruf)



will be hosted by the Nebraska State Historical Society Museum of Nebraska History and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism, which are located, along with the Children's Museum, on Centennial Mall at 15th and P streets.

The 2008 Nebraska Book Awards and the Mildred Bennett Award will be presented at the Festival. Nebraska Book Award winners will read from their work following the awards ceremony. The Festival will close Saturday evening with a reception at the Great Plains Art Museum honoring Professor Paul Johnsgard, author of more than fifty books on birds and the Nebraska ecosystem.

The Nebraska Book Festival is sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Humanities Council, Nebraska Library Commission, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. For more information contact Michael Cartwright, Nebraska Book Festival Director, 402-471-4006 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: mcartwright@nlc.state.ne.us, or see www.nebraskabookfestival.org. 

New Directory Survey Online


Last year's Bibliostat Collect® survey was shorter than usual because several non-statistical directory elements were removed, notably: staff salary information, as well as staff, boards, friends, and foundations name/address information. Because this kind of data is so dynamic, it can become dated as the Bibliostat® data traverses its long processing path.

This name/address/e-mail data is used by the Library Commission for a variety of important purposes—mailings, e-mail notices, the online library directory, board certification, continuing education tracking, various Web pages, and many others. It's important that public libraries enter this current information into this separate, real-time data collection system at www.nlc.state.ne.us/PLsurvey. The Library Commission asks each public library to visit this site over the next few weeks and use it to review current data and submit any needed updates. Users

will be asked to log in with the ID and password used for the Bibliostat® survey.

The online data is pulled from the Library Commission's live database at the time users log in, so it is mostly up to date. Libraries are asked to correct any information that is inaccurate, outdated, or incomplete on the Web page. Changes will be reflected in the online library directory and dozens of other data-driven Web pages very quickly—typically within twenty-four hours.

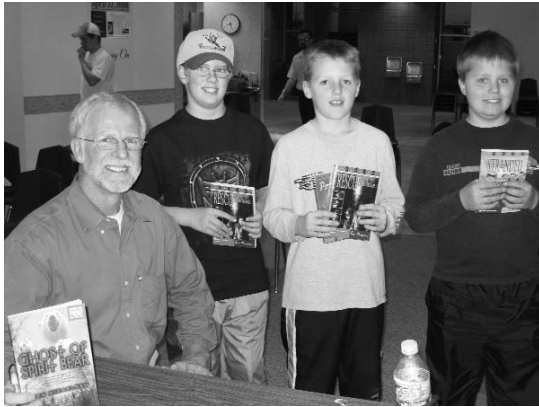
The Library Commission will keep this new system live at all times, so please use it to submit updates throughout the year. If library hours change, board membership changes, e-mail addresses become available, or staff turnovers occur, use this new service to submit updates whenever they happen.

For more information contact Vern Buis, Nebraska Library Commission Infrastructure Support Analyst, 402-471-4030 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: vbuis@nlc.state.ne.us. 

Ben Mikaelson Encourages Students to Believe in Themselves

by Sherry Houston, Republican Valley Library System Administrator and Sally Snyder, Nebraska Library Commission Children's Services Coordinator

Nebraska students were fortunate to have author Ben Mikaelson speak in their schools and public libraries during National Library Week in April. Mikaelson's *Rescue Josh McGuire* was chosen as the One Book for Nebraska Kids 2007 title, and his Nebraska tour was sponsored by the Library Commis-



Ben Mikaelson (l.) with three young readers.

sion, with the Regional Library Systems scheduling the presentations and accompanying Mikaelson to his twelve speaking engagements around the state. His message of courage and following one's dreams resonated with students and adults at every stop.

Mikaelson told audiences his story of growing up in Bolivia and later moving to Minnesota, but being handicapped with reading problems and feeling that he didn't fit into the culture of either place

during his school years. He related how he turned to writing and storytelling to help cope with his differences. Mikaelson said he learned to fly, cliff-dive, and parachute during his high school years, and he always wrote stories.

He currently lives in a log cabin in Montana with a 750-pound black bear named Buffy. *Rescue Josh McGuire*, Mikaelson's first book, received numerous awards, including the Intermediate Division Nebraska Golden Sower award in 1995. His ninth

novel, *Ghost of Spirit Bear*, is now available.

Mikaelson's appeal to middle and high school boys was very evident during his presentations. He closed by telling the students and adults in the audience: "Don't be afraid to be different. Life is a story and you are the author. Make the story the most fantastic story ever told."

For more information see Mikaelson's Website at www.benmikaelson.com, or contact Sally Snyder, see contact information on Page 3.

Hastings Middle School students expressed what Mikaelson's visit meant to them in these thank-you letters:

"Thank you for getting Ben Mikaelson to speak for us. He was very funny. And told me to believe in myself and to follow my dream. And I like listening to stories about his life. I wish he could have talked longer, but he did tell us about the bear. That would have been cool if he could have brought it."

"Thank you for having Ben Mikaelson come to my school. It was a fun learning experience. He is a very funny person. His books are wonderful, once you start reading them, you can't put it down. It was great to have him sign my Stranded book. Thanks again for the wonderful opportunity."

"Thank you so much for allowing Ben Mikaelson (who is now my favorite author) to come and talk to some lucky HMS [Hastings Middle School] students. He was very funny. Not only did he teach us about his books, he taught us in a creative way how to deal with bullying. It was very educational and I feel safer at HMS after talking to him. So once again, thank you for the once in a lifetime experience."

"I would just like to say thank you again for giving us this opportunity and that I really enjoyed the speaker who came to HMS. The story of his life and where he came from was inspiring. It's amazing how a person who couldn't even spell the word 'the' could become such a famous and appreciated book writer. So thank you again."

Promote Teens' Top Ten This Summer

It's summer and teens are going to be reading, so it's a great time to promote the twenty-six final nominations for the title of Teens' Top Ten, which will be voted on during Teen Read Week 2008, October 12-18. The theme this year is "Books with Bite @ your library®!"

Teens' Top Ten is a "teen choice" list where teens nominate and choose their favorite books of the previous year. Nominators are members of teen book groups in fifteen school and public libraries around the country. Readers ages 12 to 18 can vote online at www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/teenstopten.cfm anytime during Teen Read Week.

Sponsored by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) of the American Library Association, promotional materials including a bookmark, booklist, and podcast are available. For the list of books, to access the materials, learn how to become one of the nominating groups, find out more about the Teens' Top Ten reads, or find ideas to promote Teen Read Week, visit www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/teenstopten.cfm. The site also has links to the user guide. To listen to the podcast, visit <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/2008/05/14/yalsa-podcast-49-teens-top-ten/>.

Library Improvement Grants Awarded

The Nebraska Library Commission awarded over \$194,000 federal dollars in twenty-five grants to eligible library service organizations in March. These funds are provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and are administered through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). This money augments local support for library programs and services, and will be used to improve access to information resources throughout Nebraska.

Libraries will use the grant funds to automate circulation, purchase computers, provide WiFi access, digitize microfilm and newspaper collections, add photos to Nebraska Memories, improve management of volunteers, promote One Book One Lincoln, conduct a space needs study, redesign a Website, provide video gaming kits, improve presentation capabilities, create a young adult space, and obtain professional assistance in planning a new library building.

Grant recipients were:

Bassett, Rock County Library
Beatrice Public Library
Bennington Public Library
Bridgeport Public Library
Chadron Public Library
David City, Hruska Memorial Library
Fairfield Public Library
Hartington Public Library
Hastings Public Library
Holdrege Area Public Library
Lincoln City Libraries (2 grants)
Mead Public Library
Nebraska Health and Human Services Consortium libraries
Nebraska Regional Library Systems
Neligh Public Library
Norfolk Public Library
Pierce, Lied Pierce Public Library
Plattsmouth Public Library
Ralston, Baright Public Library
Schuyler Public Library
Scribner Public Library
Shelby Public Library
South Sioux City Public Library
York, Kilgore Memorial Library

Tips on Web 2.0 Tools Presented

by John Felton, Nebraska Library Commission Research Analyst

Web 2.0 topics were at the forefront again at the 2008 Computers in Libraries Conference in Arlington, Virginia, in April. This year, however, the theme shifted from *discovering* Web 2.0 to *using* these tools to provide innovative services for library customers. Several sessions emphasized how these technologies can help librarians market their library, enhance their Web presence on a shoe-string budget, display important data about their library and community in dramatic new ways, and communicate and collaborate more easily with customers. Another thread in these presentations was how new Web tools have enabled users to become adept at creating their own online applications.

One of these new Web-based programs that can make amateurs into experts is the wiki. In his presentation Chad Boeninger, Reference & Instruction Technology Coordinator at Ohio University's Alden Library, promoted the use of a wiki to aid in communicating with users, to promote the library, and to encourage collaboration. A wiki is an easy and quick way to create a Website and can be structured so that others can easily contribute content. He recommended using WikiMatrix (www.wikimatrix.org/) to compare wiki tools and find the right one for a project. For examples of how others are using wikis, visit WikiIndex (<http://wikiindex.org/>).

The session by Sarah Houghton-Jan, Digital Futures Manager for the San José Public Library, on using Web 2.0 services in small libraries with small budgets should resonate with Nebraska librarians. She demonstrated how to create and maintain an innovative library Website for little or no cost. One of the steps was communicating with customers through the Website by adding an instant messaging tool, like the Meebo widget (www.meebo.com) to a library's home page. (See an example on the Nebraska Library Commission's Ask a Librarian page at www.nlc.state.ne.us/ref/contactus.html.)

Among her other suggestions:

- It's easy to start a blog for a library, but be sure to allow comments and keep the dialog going.

- Provide an Internet browser extension that allows online users to download a searching toolbar for the library's catalog (<http://libx.org/>).
- Give the library a face by setting up a free Flickr account (www.flickr.com) and upload photos of events and activities.
- Create a profile for your library and join a social network like Facebook or MySpace.

After providing twenty steps such as these for improving a library's Web presence, Houghton-Jan finished her session by adding this important caveat: "Keep everything current."

Nancy Dowd, Marketing Director for the New Jersey State Library, emphasized that "Web 2.0 is really about helping others spread the word for you." It is not just about pushing information to users, but *communicating* with them. Instead of using the Web in the same way you used "old" media by telling people what you have, she suggested that librarians use it to ask customers what they want and then *listen*. Her advice in using new media for marketing was to be authentic, be transparent, and give your customers a voice.

In "Harnessing New Data Visualization Tools," Darlene Fichter from the University of Saskatchewan showed how new online applications can make it easier to understand and analyze trends contained in the information we collect.

- Swivel (www.swivel.com/) lets you upload data from a spreadsheet, create a graph, and then share it over the Web.
- Track-n-Graph (www.trackngraph.com/) provides templates that help you get started with your graph, or lets you create and re-use your own templates.
- ManyEyes (<http://services.alphaworks.ibm.com/manyeyes>) from IBM, probably the most interesting application, provides sixteen different types of data visualizations and gives users tips on choosing the right one for your project.

To download some of the presentations at the conference, see www.infotoday.com, click on Conferences on the menu at the left and then click on Computers in Libraries.

For more information contact John Felton, Nebraska Library Commission Research Analyst, 402-471-4002 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: jfelton@nlc.state.ne.us.

Learning 2.0 @ the Library Commission

by Susan Knisely, Nebraska Library Commission Online Services Librarian

On February 11, 2008, the Nebraska Library Commission kicked off a nine-week staff development program, "Learning 2.0 @ the Nebraska Library Commission." Patterned after the Learning 2.0 program designed by Helene Blowers for the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, the goal of the Library Commission's version was to provide staff members the opportunity to explore and become comfortable with a variety of new and emerging technologies.



Learning 2.0 consisted of twenty-three self-discovery exercises, referred to as "Things." Interested staff members completed several exercises each week, recording their observations and experiences on the blogs they set up. In addition to blogging, participants explored Flickr, RSS and newsreaders, image generators, Library-Thing, tagging and social bookmarking, wikis, YouTube, and more during the nine weeks.

Twenty-five staff members participated in Learning 2.0. Those who completed all twenty-three "Things" by the deadline were entered into a drawing for donated MP3 players. Winners were Evelyn Kubert, Interlibrary Loan Staff Assistant; Linda Jensen, Library Development Staff Assistant; and Cathy Hatterman, Acquisitions Librarian. A celebration of Learning 2.0 highlighted Library Worker Appreciation Day on April 15.

Organized by the Library Commission's Network Services staff, with support from the agency's Steering Committee, participants' comments demonstrated that those who took part in Learning 2.0 felt it was a worthwhile experience:

"I did really enjoy the chance to learn new things, even, and especially since I

had to work for everything I learned. It gives me a little more patience and confidence in approaching new applications. And trying to make old ones do new things...I'd do another discovery program like this in a New York minute. Can we do mashups next?"

"It was awfully helpful that someone put together a time frame and curriculum for this kind of learning. I don't think I would have gotten to it any other way."

"A program like this makes learning fun."

– blog on

Participants also commented that they enjoyed getting to know their co-workers through their blogs:

"My favorite discovery was reading co-workers' blogs and learning a bit more about them. It helped to know that some folks were confused or uncertain about... some of the same things I was, or liked some of the same stuff."

"One of the unexpected outcomes was all of the interesting things I learned about my co-workers by reading their blogs."

"I really loved blogging and making the time to look around and compare notes with others...We have some great writers and thinkers on our staff! It was nice to meet them through this format."

– More Humor Please

To learn more about the Nebraska Library Commission's Learning 2.0 program, and to read participants' blogs, see www.nlc.state.ne.us/netserv/learning2.0. To view photos see www.flickr.com.

For more information contact Susan Knisely, see contact information on page 1.

Ed. Note:

Nebraska librarians are invited to use the Library Commission materials to initiate a local independent Learning 2.0 experience or to adapt the materials for local library staff.

State Advisory Council to Focus on Library Advocacy

by Marty Magee, McGoogan Library of Medicine, President, 2008 Nebraska State Advisory Council on Libraries

The State Advisory Council on Libraries held the first meeting of the year on March 14 in Kearney, and announced a yearlong focus on the theme of Library Advocacy. As part of the Library Advocacy theme, marketing components were discussed, including:

- **Knowing your community**
- **Knowing your library**
- **Implementation**
- **Communication**
- **Evaluation**

The meeting featured information on the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds and an update of the 2008 Nebraska legislative session. Further discussion centered on a survey of Advisory Council members. For details on this discussion, see the Library Commission Website, search on State Advisory Council on Libraries, Minutes. Each member reported a success and a challenge—a fun part of the meeting, as all discovered the many creative talents of members and what's happening in their libraries.

The next meeting of the State Advisory Council will be July 18, 2008, in Chadron.

For more information contact Marty Magee, National Network/Libraries of Medicine Education and Nebraska Liaison, McGoogan Library of Medicine, University of Nebraska Medical Center, 402-559-7076 or 800-338-7657; e-mail: mmagee@unmc.edu or Rod Wagner, see contact information on page 2.

Commission Reference is Twitter-pated

by Lisa Kelly, Nebraska Library Commission Information Services Director

In March 2007, Michael Sauers, Library Commission Technology Innovation Librarian, asked if the reference department would be willing to post reference questions as they were answered in a new microblogging tool called Twitter. We agreed and have been posting ever since. (See http://twitter.com/NLC_Reference.) As we achieved our 1,000th tweet (post), and 100th follower, we want to celebrate the success of this project. If you were ever curious about what kinds of questions are answered by a state library reference librarian, wonder no more!



At first, viewers of the site wondered why we didn't answer the questions. With Twitter's 140-character limit, it generally isn't possible to post the answers to the questions. Michael suggested that we occasionally post curious questions and their answers on the Library Commission blog. (See www.nlc.state.ne.us/blogs/NLC/2008/04/all_a_twitter.html to read about one that generated discussion regarding librarians and a criminal background.)

Most recently, we were asked if we had our patrons' permission to add their questions to the Twitter account. Librarians are always concerned with confidentiality, so in no case do we ever identify who is asking the question, and if posting the question would identify the person, we do not post the query. We continue to gain followers, and invite you to join in the fun.

For more information see <http://twitter.com/> or contact Lisa Kelly, Nebraska Library Commission Information Services Director, 402-471-4015 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: lkelly@nlc.state.ne.us.



Students Win State Writing Competition

Gov. Dave Heineman honored Nebraska student writers by presenting them with Letters about Literature award certificates during National Library Week in April. These young readers participated in this year's Letters about Literature, a competition in which students write a personal letter to an author explaining how his or her work changed their view of the world or themselves. Letters about Literature is a reading promotion program of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress in partnership with Target Stores. In Nebraska, the contest is coordinated by the Nebraska Library Commission and the Nebraska Center for the Book, with additional support from Lee Booksellers and Houchen Bindery Ltd.

Nebraska finalists were honored at a luncheon and received cash prizes, gift certificates, and gift cards. The Nebraska winners advance to the national competition, with a chance to win an expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for themselves and their parents. Nebraska

students recognized for their letters to influential authors were:

Winners

- Ellen Friesen, Lincoln, for *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
- Itahi Sanchez, Lincoln, for *Please Hear What I'm Not Saying* by Charles Finn
- Andrew Squires, Lincoln, for *Prison Writings: My Life Is my Sun Dance* by Leonard Peltier

Alternate Winners

- Carol Fisher, North Platte, for *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini
- Wyatt Nelson, Lincoln, for *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* by Malcolm Gladwell
- Amanda Ferguson, North Platte, for *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank

For more information see www.nlc.state.ne.us, search on Letters about Literature.



Winning student writers celebrate National Library Week as Gov. Dave Heineman (right of podium) signs the proclamation.

Grants for Children's Books Available

The Libri Foundation is accepting applications from rural libraries for 2008 Books for Children matching grants through August 15. The Libri Foundation is a nationwide non-profit organization that donates new, quality, hardcover children's books to small, rural public libraries. Nebraska libraries in Broken Bow, Shelton, Cedar Rapids, Beemer, Oakdale, and David City received earlier 2008 grants.

Previous grant recipients are eligible to apply for another grant three years after receipt of their last grant. For application guidelines, forms, and fundraising ideas, see the Foundation's Website at www.librifoundation.org.

For more information, contact Barbara J. McKillip, President, The Libri Foundation, 541-747-9655; e-mail: libri@librifoundation.org.



WebWise Highlights Library 2.0

Nebraska Library Commission staff Kit Keller and Mary Jo Ryan attended the 2008 WebWise Conference in March. The annual conference draws museum, library, information systems, and other professionals to explore new research and innovation in digital technology. The 2008 conference was co-hosted by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and The Wolfsonian-Florida International University, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.



“WebWise 2.0: The Power of Community” highlighted the growing convergence between libraries and museums in collection and information management. Exploration of digital applications that encourage users to add value through participation is essential to Library Commission planning for the continuation of Nebraska’s Librarians for the 21st Century project. Blogs, wikis, eBay, Craigslist, Flickr, Twitter, and virtual reality games were examined as applications that museums, libraries, and archives are exploring for communication and service delivery potential.


Presentations featured novel approaches to conservation and preservation based on increasing access to the materials and artifacts of the past, partici-

pant-created content, and approaches to programming and informal education that expand traditional library and museum audiences. Collaboration and partnerships were emphasized,

including The Internet Archive which operates thirteen scanning centers in libraries, digitizes 1,000 books a day, and makes more than 300,000 books publicly available on the www.archive.org site.

The projects were innovative, research-based, and remarkable. The presentation on the Encyclopedia of Life was unexpectedly fascinating. There also were presentations about practical tools for Web users. Examples include:

- Zotero (www.zotero.org/), a free, easy-to-use Firefox extension that helps collect, manage, and cite research sources. It lives right where you do your work—in the Web browser.
- LibEx (<http://libx.org/>), a free browser plugin for Firefox and Internet Explorer that provides a library toolbar with direct access to library resources.


For more information see WebWise 2008, <http://webwise2008.fcla.edu>, or contact Mary Jo Ryan, Nebraska Library Commission Communications Coordinator, 402-471-3434 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: mjryan@nlc.state.ne.us. 

Basic Skills Classes Held

Eighty-two students were enrolled in the spring Basic Skills: Organization of Materials class offered in each of the six Nebraska Regional Library Systems and online. Organization of Materials is one of the four Basic Skills courses for Public Librarian Certification required of library staffers who do not have professional library education.

Organization of Materials updates the tools, procedures, and standards used by today’s library managers to organize libraries and to create catalog records that answer questions about the authorship, subject, and location

of library materials. A companion Web page for the course is located at www.nlc.state.ne.us/libdev/basic/BaSkom2008links.html. The online class was taught by Devra Dragos and Laura Johnson from the Library Commission. Face-to-face classes were taught by Sharon Mason, Mary Marchio, Brenda Ealey and Becky Baker, Marilyn Quance, and Margie Harrison and Jill Ellis.

Basic Skills courses are sponsored by the Library Commission and the Regional Library Systems. For more information contact Laura Johnson, see contact information on page 3. 


Libraries Urged to Promote 2-1-1 Service

The University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, in partnership with the Nebraska Library Commission, reminds Nebraska library staff that 2-1-1 service is available via the Web at www.ne211.org and by phone at 2-1-1 or 404-444-6666. The Website and the phone connection to a certified information and referral specialist at a 2-1-1 resource center make it easy for Nebraska library customers to find information about health and human services in their communities and throughout the state.

Through 2-1-1, information is available about a variety of health and human services, including homeless shelters, transitional housing, health care, financial assistance, food banks, mental health care and counseling, crisis lines, utility assistance, substance abuse, recreation, mentoring, community services, volunteering, disaster relief, and more. This information is free, 24/7, and Nebraska library staff are encouraged to try both the 2-1-1 Website and call center.

Here are some ideas about how to let library customers know about 2-1-1:


- Print out a 2-1-1 information tent at www.ne211.org/download_info.php and post it near public-use Internet-connected computers
- Add a link to ne211.org from the library Website
- Include an article about 2-1-1 in the library newsletter or e-mail distribution group news
- Include 2-1-1 as a resource on the library “after hours” telephone call message

For more information contact Teri Perkins, Research Specialist, University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, 402-472-5620; e-mail: tperkins@nebraska.edu. 

Grant Recipients Travel to Conference

Thirty-eight individuals were direct or indirect recipients of 2007 Continuing Education and Training grants to participate in the Public Library Association national conference in Minneapolis in March.

Southeast Library System was project coordinator for the Regional Library Systems' grant from the Library Commission to charter a bus for travel to the conference. Fourteen staff members from public libraries in Hastings, Lincoln, Ord, Seward, and Wayne received direct grants. Feedback from conference participants has been very positive.


For more information contact Richard Miller, Nebraska Library Commission Library Development Director, 402-471-3175 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: rmiller@nlc.state.ne.us. 

WebJunction Workshops Scheduled for Fall

The Nebraska Library Commission will hold workshops on WebJunction and technology planning this fall.

WebJunction (www.webjunction.org) is an online community where library staff meet to share ideas, solve problems, and take online courses. There will be four daylong workshops:

- September 9 Nebraska Library Commission, Lincoln
- September 11 ESU #10, Kearney
- September 23 Northeast Community College, Norfolk
- September 25 Western Nebraska Community College's John N. Harms Advanced Technology Center, Scottsbluff

When the agenda, times, and registration are finalized, they will be posted on the Library Commission Website, www.nlc.state.ne.us, click on Library Training. 

Virtual Public Library Conference Offered


by John Felton, Nebraska Library Commission Research Analyst

Now that we can experience virtual worlds through the Internet, it seemed appropriate that the Public Library Association (PLA) would experiment with providing a virtual conference as part of its 2008 annual meeting in March. While sitting at their computers or gathered with colleagues in a meeting room, virtual attendees were able to participate in ten conference sessions adapted for an online format. Presentations ranged from practical subjects like weeding practices to theoretical topics, such as "Dangerous Ideas: What if Libraries...?"

Sponsored by WebJunction, the conference also featured interviews with authors Connie Brockway, Laura Lippman, and Nancy Pearl, who answered questions posed by the virtual audience. During this program, as with each of the others, audience members had access to chat rooms that provided opportunities to interact both with the presenter and each other. One program even had break-out sessions using chat rooms for each group, based on topic of interest.

Most of the virtual programs also were presented "live" at the actual conference and then repeated in a studio for the online audience. In this way, it resembled most other Webinars, with PowerPoint™ screens prevailing as the primary means of sharing program content. An attempt to also show the presenter at the microphone was abandoned when it interfered with the audio portion of the feed.

Providing chat rooms as a substitute for face-to-face interaction was a sensible idea, but fell short of the natural give-and-take among colleagues and friends at a real convention. Missing were the spontaneous reactions of the audience and the unplanned comments from the presenter elicited in a live venue. Still, it was a worthwhile effort for PLA to offer an alternative method for training opportunities for those who were unable to travel to the conference. The format for virtual conferences needs to be improved, but hopefully experiments like this one will lead to better experiences in the future.

For more information contact John Felton, see contact information on page 6. 


NEBASE Annual Meeting—East Set for August

The 2008 NEBASE Annual Meeting—East is scheduled for August 12, at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln. The keynote speaker will be Michael Porter of WebJunction. Michael may be best-known by his online moniker, "Libraryman." Renee Register, OCLC Global Product Manager for Cataloging and Metadata Services, is also scheduled to speak on NextGen Cataloging. Planning is under way for sessions on Creative Commons, WorldCat search plug-ins, and NetLibrary Subject Sets.

NEBASE facilitates access to OCLC services for libraries throughout Nebraska

and includes 141 member libraries of all types and sizes. Member libraries benefit from NEBASE's wide range of products and services in the areas of cataloging, reference, and resource sharing.

To register, click on Library Training at the Library Commission's Website, www.nlc.state.ne.us, search on NEBASE Annual Meeting East.

For more information contact Susan Knisely, Nebraska Library Commission Online Services Librarian, 402-471-3849 or 800-307-2665; e-mail: sknisely@nlc.state.ne.us. 

Talking Book Conference Primes for Digital Book Technology

San Antonio, Texas, was the site of the 2008 National Conference of Librarians Serving Blind and Physically Handicapped Individuals. Based on the theme, "Our Digital World: That All Might Read," the conference drew nearly two-hundred librarians nationwide from talking book programs and the Library of Congress to finalize plans for the conversion from analog tape to digital flash memory. Limited numbers of digital players and digital books are scheduled for release early next year, with priority given to talking book readers who are military veterans.

A daylong preconference, hosted by talking book librarians from the Midlands, looked at best practices in local digital recordings and explored ways for talking book network libraries to share locally produced digital books and magazines. Library Commission staff members David Oertli and Scott Scholz

attended the conference and the preconference.

Currently the national talking book program, for individuals who cannot see regular print or hold a book or turn its pages, is planning for a four to six-year transition to digital technology, depending on federal funding. The Nebraska Library Commission's Talking Book and Braille Service has converted both its studios for digital recording. The studios are networked with the Tape Duplication area, where recordings undergo editing and other postproduction before being circulated on audio-cassettes.

For more information contact Dave Oertli, Nebraska Library Commission Talking Book & Braille Service Director, 402-471-4005 or 800-742-7691; e-mail: doertli@nlc.state.ne.us or talkingbook@nlc.state.ne.us. ♦♦

Talking Book Outreach Continues

Efforts to connect individuals with visual or physical impairment with the Nebraska Library Commission's Talking Book and Braille Service continued in early 2008. Recent efforts focused on placing articles and ads in Nebraska publications of special interest to Nebraskans who might qualify for free talking book service. Articles appeared in *MS Connection*, *NEMA News*, and *Prime Time*. Ads were placed in *Prairie Wind*, the newsletter of the Nebraska Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, *Neighborhood Extra*, *Lincoln Journal Star*, *Older Nebraskan's Voice*, *Prime Time*, *New Horizons*, and *Nebraska Life*.

Packets were mailed to numerous service providers: optometrists, ophthalmologists, Agri-Ability and other Easter Seals' staff, parish and congregational nurses, and long-term and assisted-living care personnel. Information was distributed to United Cerebral Palsy of

Nebraska, the Nebraska Chapter of Arthritis Foundation, and the Nebraska Polio Survivors Association as well as to support groups for diabetes, stroke, Parkinson's disease, dystonia, multiple sclerosis, traumatic brain injury, caregivers, and learning disabilities. Displays were presented at such events as the Phelps County Diabetes Fair, Diabetes Education Center of the Midlands Spring Seminar, and the University of Nebraska Service Fair.

The Library Commission has a supply of 8-1/2 x 11 inch posters promoting the Talking Book and Braille Service that are suitable for bulletin boards, and 3-1/2 x 5-1/2 inch rack cards for distribution to library customers.

For posters or other information, contact Dave Oertli, Nebraska Library Commission Talking Books and Braille Service Director, see contact information above. ♦♦



Day Police Force, City of Lincoln, May 1885

Nebraska Memories Highlighted on The Chief's Corner

Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady has a very informative and entertaining blog (see below) in which he recently mentioned a Nebraska Memories (www.nebraskamemories.org) project that the Library Commission and the Police department are building.

From the blog of Tom Casady, *The Chief's Corner*, Chief of Police, Lincoln (<http://lpd304.blogspot.com/2008/05/history-online.html>):

Friday, May 23, 2008

History online

I'm not exactly sure why, but *The Chief's Corner* seems to be particularly popular among librarians. Someone must have discovered it one day, and forwarded the link around. It makes sense, I suppose, since they are in the information business. At any rate, some of the employees over at the Nebraska Library Commission took note of a few posts concerning the history of the Lincoln Police Department. It turns out that the commission is involved in a great project to do exactly what we've been working on: preserving and digitizing many of our historic documents and photos for online access.

We've been doing this work using a succession of interns. Free labor is great, but it's also episodic, so the work proceeds slowly, if steadily. The Library Commission, however, has the scanning, conversion, and web serving of historic documents on a fast track with the Nebraska Memories Project. We are thrilled to have their help, and this is a great way to make our historic documents available to the general public. We hope you enjoy the collection as it grows! ♦♦

Prime Time Libraries Sought

The Nebraska Humanities Council seeks to expand Prime Time Family Reading Time to public libraries in Nebraska communities and neighborhoods where student reading scores do not meet state standards. Since 2002, the Nebraska Humanities Council has funded Prime Time (a six-week reading and discussion program for low-income families with children ages 6 to 10) at fourteen libraries and five schools in thirteen communities across the state.

Last summer, the Humanities Council expanded Prime Time beyond Spanish-speaking families to help fund sessions at Omaha's Washington Branch library, serving African-American families from neighborhoods where poverty is high and student reading scores are low.

A recent study conducted by a University of Nebraska at Omaha research team confirmed the program's success at instilling in families a love for reading. According to the survey, 100 percent of responding parents said that Prime Time changed the way they read and discussed books with their children. Of those parents, 92 percent said they participated in reading activities more often with their children, and 83 percent agreed that the program encouraged them to spend more time reading and discussing books together.

In South Sioux City, a discussion leader said that a few parents "had to read all three books nearly every night of the week with their children because the children were so caught up in the experience." A Grand Island discussion leader said: "I was talking with the mother of a six-year-old boy who had hated reading. Hated it so much he was doing very poorly in school. In the six weeks since they had come to Prime Time, he had come to love reading and was starting to like school. In her heart and mind, we had saved her son's life."

For more information see www.nebraskahumanities.org/programs/prime.html or contact Chris Sommerich, Humanities Council Development Director, 402-474-2131 ext. 105; e-mail: chris@nebraskahumanities.org.

Hooper Library Wins Grant

Hooper Public Library is one of thirty-four libraries nationwide to receive a \$5,000 grant to increase literacy services to adult English language learners. The grants are funded by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation and implemented by the American Library Association (ALA) to provide literacy services to adult immigrants and expand or add resources and services for adult English language learners.

Library Director Karla Shafer offered these thoughts on receiving the grant:

"When I became director of the Hooper Public Library three years ago, I was surprised to see a void in library resources for Spanish-speaking adults who are trying to learn English. When I considered what I would feel like if I were one of the few immigrants who make their home in our area, I knew I wanted to make the Hooper Public Library a place where Spanish-speaking folks feel welcome.

As a member of the American Library Association, I receive ALA online information, and when I saw "The American Dream Starts @ your library" grants, I really sat up and took notice. It didn't take me long to get the application in when I thought about the possibilities this generous grant would open for our library. Being from such a small library, I was unsure about the results, but we did win, and I actually shrieked out loud

when I received the good news. It was extra thrilling to know that among the 34 public library grant winners in 18 states, we were the only Nebraska winner, and the smallest community to win.

With the grant money, I will purchase software that will allow people to learn English at their own speed, with any assistance they need from me. I also will purchase books to make a nice bilingual section in our library and will order signage in Spanish/English.

My goal is to encourage those who want to improve their English to know they have an advocate in me. I hope the library will be a place they know they belong and can enjoy, along with the wonderful patrons of the Hooper area who have lived here for their entire lives. I am so excited to be able to say to any Spanish-speaking person, "Come to Hooper Public Library and learn English. You are wanted here, and will be welcomed as you continue on your road to the American Dream."

For more information contact Karla Shafer, Hooper Public Library Director, 402-654-3833; e-mail: hooperlibrary@yahoo.com, or Dale Lipschultz, Office for Literacy and Outreach Services Literacy Officer, American Library Association, 800-545-2433, ext. 3275; e-mail: dlipschultz@ala.org.

Youth Grant Applications Available in August

Applications for Youth Grants for Excellence will be available August 15 at the Library Commission Website, www.nlc.state.ne.us, search on Youth Grants. They are due October 10 and winners will be announced December 3. The grants are available for innovative projects for children and young adults in public libraries, offering an opportunity to expand youth service capabilities in new or different directions.

Any children's librarian, young adult librarian, or adult librarian in an accredited public library or a state-run institutional library in charge of children's or youth services, and Regional Library System administrators may apply.

For more information contact Sally Snyder, see contact information on page 3.

News of Nebraska Libraries and People

■ **New Library Directors** include Clarkson Public Library, **Melissa Baumert**; Fairfield Public Library, **Tysha M. Francis**; Harrison, Sioux County Public Library, **Kristina Lotton**; Omaha, Metropolitan Community College, Elkhorn Valley Campus, **Scott Mahoney**; Omaha, Metropolitan Community College, South Omaha Campus, **Rachel Steiner**; Ravenna Public Library, **Karrie Huryta**; and Schuyler, Cargill Meat Solutions Learning Center, **Becky Carpenter**.

■ **Devra Dragos** was appointed as **Nebraska Library Commission Network Services/NEBASE Director**. Devra brings expertise with OCLC products and services, cataloging and technical services, automated library systems, and experience as a member of the Network Services unit. She replaces **Shannon White**, who resigned June 2.

■ The 2008 Nebraska Library Association/Nebraska Educational Media Association Conference, **Nebraska Libraries: Vision for the Information Age**, is set for October 15-17 at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln. For more information see www.nebraskalibraries.org/conference/2008/index.html.

■ **Grand Island** was recently named one of the nation's **100 Best Communities for Young People** by America's Promise Alliance, with the Grand Island Public Library programs for children and youth contributing to the award.

■ **Hastings College Perkins Library** hosted a YouTube Contest in celebration of National Library Week 2008. Entries can be viewed at www.youtube.com/user/HCP PerkinsLibrary.

■ The fourteenth annual **Norfolk Public Library Literature Festival** is set for July 26. For more information see www.ci.norfolk.ne.us/Library/Literature_festival_flyer.pdf.

■ **Doug Keel**, media specialist from Omaha's Marris Magnet Center, is the winner of the **2008 Christa McAuliffe Prize for Courage and Excellence in Education**. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln awards this prize annually to a Nebraska educator.



Nebraska State Poet William Kloefkorn (r.) confers with a participant at the Fremont writing workshop.

■ **Fremont's Keene Memorial Library** hosted a Spring Writers Workshop as part of its celebration of **2008 One Book One Nebraska**. Bill Kloefkorn, author of *Restoring the Burnt Child*, facilitated the workshop, which focused on memoir writing.

■ The **Raymond A. Whitwer Tilden Public Library** is hosting an exhibition, **Between Fences**, this summer. For more information see www.tildenlibrary.org.

■ The **Holdrege Area Public Library** and Holdrege campus of **Central Community College** sponsored the first **Phelps County Reads!** project. The library borrowed one-hundred copies of the book, *The Worst Hard Time*, from Lincoln City Libraries which used the book for a previous citywide reading promotion.

■ The **Gering Public Library** received a grant from the Union Pacific Foundation to purchase the **Rosetta Stone Language Program**.

■ **Lincoln City Libraries** is sponsoring an **Adult Summer Reading Program** this summer. See www.lincolnlibraries.org for details.

■ **2008 Nebraska Golden Sower Award** winners are listed at www.goldensower.org. The award is sponsored by the Nebraska Library Association's School, Children, and Young People Section.

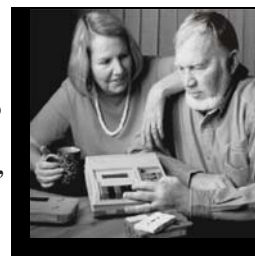
■ The **Syracuse Public Library Foundation** hosted a celebrity cook-off, with two local men preparing appetizers and dinner to raise funds for a new library building.

■ Libraries across Nebraska will set up **See to Read** displays to encourage See to Learn vision screenings for 3-year-olds. Materials were sent to all public libraries by the Nebraska Library Commission and the Nebraska Foundation for Children's Vision, with support from the Lions Club Foundation. For more information see www.nechildrensvision.org/SeetoRead.html.



A Good Book Is Worth Sharing

Talking books is a free service for anyone who has difficulty holding a book, turning a page, or seeing regular print.



The high-quality recordings and playback equipment are loaned and returned through the mail free of charge.

Nebraska Library Commission
Talking Book and Braille Service
402-471-4038 800-742-7691
talkingbook@nlc.state.ne.us www.nlc.state.ne.us/tbbs

Library Commission to Offer Return on Investment Sessions

When librarians hear the phrase, *return on investment (ROI)*, they probably don't associate it with public libraries. Yet, during the past few years, many libraries and other non-profit entities have been using this formula to convey their social and economic value to the communities they serve. Illustrated in terms of value received per dollar invested, several studies of library return on investment have been completed at the state and local levels.

Florida's Public Libraries Build Strong Economies: A Taxpayer Return on Investment Report (http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/bld/roi/pdfs/2005_SLAF_ROI_report.pdf) was published in 2005, and concluded that libraries in the state return \$6.54 in benefits for every \$1 invested. A survey of libraries in southwestern Ohio in 2006 showed that the economic benefit of library investment was about \$3.81 per dollar expended (www.ila.org/advocacy/pdf/Ohio.pdf). In a January 2008 study of local



Library staff brainstorm ROI ideas at the Papillion Spring meeting.

library economic value commissioned by the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, the result was a return to the community of more than three times the amount invested (www.friendsandfoundation.org/press_release.cfm?id=41).

Many public libraries also have enabled their customers to see for themselves how valuable their services are by providing

personal "ROI calculators" on their Websites. These tools allow users to input the type and quantities of library services used in a visit and quickly see the dollar value of those goods and services.

ROI information sessions facilitated by Library Commission staff at the Nebraska Library Association School, Children, Young People, and Public Library and Trustee Section Spring Meetings demonstrated a growing interest in this topic. The Nebraska Library Commission will offer summer workshops for library-initiated community teams who want to learn to use ROI information as a communication and development tool. Information about the workshops will be posted on the Library Commission's **ROI for Public Libraries** wiki at www.nlc.state.ne.us/wikis/roi4libraries.

For more information contact John Felton, Nebraska Library Commission Research Analyst, see contact information on page 6.



Nebraska Library Commission

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