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Nebraska MPLA Board Report
October 12, 2005
Submitted by Nina Little, Nebraska Representative

Nebraska Library Association/Nebraska Educational Media Association Annual Conference

The 2005 conference took place September 28-30 at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln, NE. This year's theme was "Libraries: Heart & Soul of Communities." There were 640 registrants, with 62 vendors in the exhibit area and an additional 24 non-profit exhibitors in the atrium

The MPLA booth was well situated on the route between the elevators to the parking lot and the entrance to the conference area. It was difficult not to have to pass it. Traffic was very good. In fact it was better than during the 2004 conference.

Registrations were taken and a drawing was held for 10 free one-year MPLA memberships. An MPLA report was presented in written form as well as orally at the NLA Luncheon and Business Meeting held on Thursday.

Highlights of the conference were as follows: Friday's Keynote given by Martha Choe, Director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Libraries Program; Bridges Out of Poverty; Strategies for Professionals & Communities, a preconference workshop sponsored by the Nebraska Regional Library Systems and presented by Jodi Pfarr based on the book by Ruby K. Payne, Philip DeVol and Terie Dreussi-Smith; attendance and greetings from Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman along with First Lady and recently retired elementary principal Sally Ganem; a total of 63 presentations making it difficult for conference goers to decide what to attend at any given time and the 25th year celebration of Nebraska's Children's Choice, the Golden Sower Award.

NLA 2005 president Brenda Ealey, Southeastern Library System Administrator, passed the gavel to incoming 2006 president Joan Birnie, director of the public library in Broken Bow, NE.

Mardi Gras at Conference!

For a minimum suggested donation of \$5 for three strands of Mardi Gras beads available at the NLA membership table during the conference, Nebraska librarians were able to show their support of the Louisiana Library Association Disaster Relief to help with the losses resulting from Katrina. More than \$1,000 was collected and conference-goers looked festive decked out in their Mardi Gras beads.

By-Laws Change

A proposal to change the NLA By-Laws to include a Diversity Standing Committee was presented at the NLA Business Meeting held during the annual NLA/NEMA conference. The proposal had been unanimously supported by the NLA Board and was adopted by a vote of the general membership. The intent of the Committee is to aid in recruiting and retention of under-represented groups and to provide continuing education opportunities concerning all issues of diversity.

MPLA/WLA

For the second year Nebraska librarians had the opportunity to network as they traveled to the Jackson conference by chartered coach. The coach started in Omaha and traveled through the state along I-80 picking up additional passengers as it went. Thank you to the Nebraska Library Commission for making it possible.