

ST-8

North Dakota Representative  
MPLA Board Report  
May 9th, 2007

North Dakota Reads - the North Dakota Humanities Council received funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a new initiative called North Dakota Reads. The NEH We the People grant program creates opportunities for libraries and other nonprofit groups across the state to offer free book discussion programs to underserved rural communities. The NEH awarded the NDHC \$34,010, with an additional \$15,000 available in matching funds for North Dakota Reads. The NDHC has purchased sets of books, as well as audiotapes and large-print copies, and provides scholars to facilitate each theme or title selected. Participants are encouraged to write about their experience with the books and films, and may post their opinions and thoughts on a Literary Discussion Board to allow further dialogue between readers across the state.

Sixty-eight rural library directors, staff, and board members from across the state participated in the “Bright Ideas, Bright Future” workshops, as part of the Rural Library Sustainability Project, a cooperative effort of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, WebJunction, and the North Dakota State Library. The Project is to provide rural libraries with resources and ideas to help them sustain and further develop their library technologies and services. Participants gathered for a day of discussion and idea sharing on topics from public access computers and library technology to community outreach and library advocacy. More information on the Rural Library Sustainability Project, along with sustainability resources and ideas from rural library staff around the country can be found on WebJunction at <http://webjunction.org/rural>.

2007 NDLA Conference Theme is Laughter for Librarians. Laugh with Librarians as they become UNHINGED AND UNSHELVED in Jamestown, ND, September 26-28,2007. Join Bill Barnes and Gene Ambaum from Overdue Media, home of Unshelved, Dr. Attitude, Mary Bushing and others as we explore together how laughter can relieve stress, help us relate to our public and equip us to be better managers and leaders.