

South Dakota State Representative Report  
To the MPLA Executive Board  
July 2002

Timed perfectly to coordinate with National Library Week, computers began arriving at SD public libraries in April. Governor William Janklow, in extending his commitment to wiring the schools to wiring communities, gave computers to all public libraries who had indicated a need in an earlier telephone survey. The computers are to assist libraries in developing and improving library services including patron use of the internet. Over 475 computers representing over \$500,000 found new homes in our public libraries.

The Dakota State University, Karl Mundt Library, the Northern State University, Williams Library and the South Dakota State Library, Hiram Briggs Library received a LSTA grant to purchase necessary software and equipment to start a cooperative online chat (synchronous) reference service. This service will compliment the other services provided, such as email (asynchronous) reference. This is a pilot project for South Dakota and the primary goal is to serve patrons and evaluate the service and its usage. Librarians from each university will participate in helping the students from all three universities. Participating libraries will learn the software this summer and a new way to respond to questions in this new environment. The service will premiere to students and faculty this Fall. Once the policies have been established and the "bugs" are worked out, other South Dakota libraries will be invited to join the service.

The "Read Across South Dakota With Arthur" program was a joint collaboration between South Dakota Public Broadcasting and the South Dakota State Library. South Dakota Public Broadcasting and the South Dakota State Library created this program as a means to promote summer reading and reading enjoyment in general. From June 3 to June 7, Elaine Larson, Director of Education and Outreach at SDPB, Pamela Chamberlain, Children's Services Development Coordinator at the South Dakota State Library, and Aimee Everett, South Dakota State Library summer intern, traveled the state with Arthur. Arthur is the beloved character creation of popular children's book author, Marc Brown.

The program featured the sharing of Arthur stories, Arthur related games and activities and an appearance by Arthur himself. In addition, information concerning the importance of summer reading and South Dakota Public Broadcasting's *Ready To Learn* program were made available for parents. The *Ready To Learn* program is a nationwide Public Broadcasting System (PBS) project that educates parents and caregivers about the appropriate and educational use of children's television programs.

The "Read Across South Dakota With Arthur" program was implemented at 10 libraries around the state. Two libraries were visited a day. The total attendance at all of the programs was 664 kids (ages 0-16 years) and 260 adults. The libraries were selected based on a competitive grant application system. The libraries that received the program demonstrated a community commitment to it, as well as a limited summer reading program budget. We had a total of 46 school and public libraries apply for the program statewide.