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Centennial State Libraries

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Telecom Policy Summit

The Telecom Policy Summit, held February 27 at the HEAT center in Denver, gathered decision makers, community leaders, and experts in telecommunications for a full day discussion of rural telecommunications; statewide initiatives for improving Internet access, and updates on telecom policy issues. The day ended with a look into the future of emerging wireless technologies, presented by Howard Thurlow of Cisco Systems Inc.

The library community had a large contingency at the summit. In addition to helping sponsor this event and providing a display table, six staff from the regional systems and the State Library attended the event. Attendees included Nancy Bolt, Paula Busey, and Rose Nelson from the Colorado State Library. Regional system attendees included Donna Jones Morris of the Arkansas Valley, Carson Block from High Plains, and Nancy Orth from Plains and Peaks.

One of the goals for attending the conference was to educate policy makers, business leaders, and communities that libraries are an essential resource in the community. Through local, state and federal efforts such as E-rate, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grants, and regional initiatives, libraries are making efforts to close the digital divide.

During breakout sessions, participants gathered in teams organized by region of state to discuss issues pertinent to rural telecommunications. Library attendees provided solutions for increasing community knowledge and appreciation of Internet applications through use of local libraries. Libraries were acknowledged as key information providers in summaries provided by regional breakout teams.

The Telecom Policy Summit was successful in providing an understanding of rural telecommunications issues. It also gave the library community an opportunity to demonstrate how essential libraries are to the community and how

they have made strides in closing the digital divide.

Free trial of Online Databases

The Colorado State Library and BCR (Bibliographical Center for Research) are holding a free trial of online database products of six vendors that are geared to K12 and children's resources. The vendors are: bigchalk, EBSCO, Facts on File News Services, Gale Group, NewsBank, and SIRS. Selected products from these vendors will be available to you and your patrons free of charge from March 1 through April 15, 2001. This trial is generally available to all libraries in Colorado, although individual vendors may have restrictions on who can access particular database products. You may participate in the trial even if your library already subscribes to some of the products included in it. To participate in the trial, go to BCR Online and sign up on behalf of your library. Information on accessing the trial databases will be provided to you electronically.

New Stories Added to Web Site for Kids

New stories have been added to the "Amazing Americans" and "Explore the State" sections of the America's Lilbrary Web site for kids and families. The site, www.americaslibrary.gov, is presented by the Library of Congress, and presents history in a fun and interesting way using photographs, sounds, short films and other visual elements.

For additional information, E-Mail: Bonnie McCune, mccune_b@cde.state.co.us