



## Centennial State Libraries

June 29, 2007

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### Rural Library Sustainability Forum

On June 22, a cohort of public librarians and state library trainers participated in the **Rural Sustainability Forum** held in connection with the 2007 ALA Conference in Washington, DC. During this day-long forum, moderated by WebJunction staff, over 150 participants from 32 states discussed issues relevant to small rural public libraries in an environment characterized by high energy and synergetic cooperation.

The participants were: *Judy Van Acker*, John C. Fremont Public Library District in Florence, *Patti Chapman*, Park County Public Library in Fairplay, *Sue Keefer*, Las Animas/Bent County Library District in Las Animas, *Michaela Hansen*, *Patricia Froehlich* and *Sharon Morris*, Colorado State Library.

A “Rural Café” round table discussion offered every participant the opportunity to map out what it means to have a library that is the hub of the community. During the ALA Rural Forum, participants also learned about the [MaintainIT Project](http://www.maintainitproject.org) ([www.maintainitproject.org](http://www.maintainitproject.org)) and received a copy of a “cookbook” containing practical information designed to help keep public computers available and technology updated.

Judy Van Acker from the John C. Fremont Public Library District in Florence summed up the excellent exchange at the Rural Forum as follows: *“The room buzzed with excitement. Ideas flew around the room like lightning. An incredible experience for rural librarians needing to share their stories”* and Patti Chapman from the Park County Public Library in Fairplay said about her experience at the Rural Forum: *“You come back with energy and enthusiasm and can pass that*

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*along to your staff. I met a lot of people from outside the borders of Colorado, from similar situations of small rural libraries and we will continue the dialog in email format, giving and receiving help and support.”*

Currently, State Library staff is planning a **Rural Round Up** tentatively scheduled for October 11 and 12 that will present Colorado’s small and medium rural public libraries with the opportunity to increase their technology knowledge and exchange ideas and action plans to support libraries in promoting the sustainability of public access computing.

## **Results from the American-Bulgarian Library Exchange (ABLE)**

Libraries and staff in Colorado have shared in an international project for several years: the American-Bulgarian Library Exchange. Visits across continents, training, workshops, emails, and information about library practices have been part of the flurry of activities.



*Trainer Nadia Grueva presenting at a winter seminar.*

With the conclusion of the project supported by the US Department of State, leaders of the project have shared results. And because the Colorado State Library was one of the partner or sister libraries, it’s appropriate to take a moment to congratulate ourselves, the other libraries in the U.S., and libraries and staff in Bulgaria on their success.

A report by Ani Popova lists some major achievements:

- During the 3-year period, ABLE helped the participating libraries improve all services, launch effective marketing, courageously reach out to the community and establish a new, proactive style of communication with the local government. For some libraries (smaller ones) this influence turned out to be crucial – it changed the library image and led to significant improvements of library operations.
- Some of the best practices in selected Bulgarian libraries identified as models for the other libraries are:
  - The websites of pilot centers
  - The model of communication with the local authorities
  - Free English speaking lessons conducted by native-speaking volunteers
  - Information services for disadvantaged
  - Health programs like “Risk factors for human health

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- Children-oriented
  - Intensive and stable partnerships with local and international NGOs
  - Friends of the library” and volunteer clubs
- Now being observed is the "chain" development – when a neighbor library is introducing new services, you should not lag behind. More frequently and more rapidly libraries are learning from those who are visible on the web with rich online content.

This success was possible because the concept of Library as CIC (Community Information Center) met an exceptionally high public demand for community information in a very dynamic and challenging time for the Bulgarian society. Expanding access to information and building information literacy was the immediate, impending task in a society that is building fundamentals of democracy.



*Ambassador Elena Poptodorova (second from left) at the Bulgarian Embassy in honor of the American-Bulgarian Library Exchange. Washington, DC, June 2007.*

ABLE appeared just in time when other organizations started taking over the online information services in both large and small towns. These organizations could offer better technical equipment & services, but they lacked the library collections, the librarians' expertise and their unique altruism to serve equally and dedicatedly to everyone. That's why ABLE support for equipment and training for libraries found fertile soil and yielded rewarding results.

In an interview for *The Dnevnik* newspaper issued on March 5, 2007, the social anthropologist Haralan Aleksandrov attributes the Bulgarian inability to nurture good leaders with the lack of civic culture, traditions, and skills for civil participation and public control. "As if we are not able and willing to create a common cozy world and are waiting for somebody else to create it for us," he concludes. With reaching out to the community and making the library a place for sharing information and uniting people, ABLE libraries do contribute to the building of this desirable "cozy world" where community members shape together common values and everyone feels needed and respected.

In conclusion, ABLE goals to launch community information services and gain understanding and support from the authorities have been fulfilled with undeniable success. The ABLE idea of a library as CIC transformed the participating libraries into vibrant and responsive units of their communities. The ABLE libraries won higher trust and respect of the local authorities. The information they provide

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empowers citizens; the programs they organize foster communication, public dialog, and charity.

The ABLE Advisory committee Member Krasimira Papazova who has been 45 years in the profession, says: "Never has there ever been a library program with such enormous practical effect on libraries. It changed the entire concept of a public library". The project developments in 2006/2007 show optimistic evidence that ABLE best practices will turn into a standard for the entire library network in Bulgaria.

The American-Bulgarian partnerships continue. If you are interested, visit the Colorado/Bulgarian Library Partnership Interest Group on the Colorado Association of Libraries web site (<http://www.cal-webs.org/bulgaria.html>).

### Out & About with CSL Staff

- Debbi MacLeod attended Special Libraries Association's National conference and spoke about podcasting at CTBL on the panel - Podcasting the Librarians Way. She represented CTBL at the Caregivers Symposium in Boulder. Debbi also attended the NLS Western/Midlands Regional meeting and the Best Practice Exchange for State Documents in May.
- Diana Reese, institutional library services coordinator, attended the 2007 ALA Annual Conference to receive the 2007 Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) Exceptional Service Award.
- It was another busy month for Institutions as both Teresa Allen and Diane Walden visited various facilities around the state. Diane also spent time photographing libraries in Canon City for the Out for Life DVD and attended the ALA conference in Washington, DC.
- Bonnie McCune attended ALA and went to a pre-conference on the new advocacy campaign as well as a number of other sessions. Those that were most thought-provoking and inspiring were on how boys learn best (with lots of applications to library programs, like keep the room temperature at 69 degrees and let them stand rather than sit) and another on seniors and their continuing learning styles and creativity. Hoo-ray!
- Kris Johnson, the AskColorado coordinator, attended and lent her talents to a number of events in the month of June. She attended the Colorado Academic Library Summit in Denver. She also volunteered to answer questions at the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Special Library Association



*Diana Reese (far right) after receiving the ASCLA Exceptional Service Award at the ALA conference.*

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Information Booth at the 2007 SLA Conference. While at the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC, Kris attended the “Reinvented Reference 3: Emerging Technologies for Reference Services” ALA pre-conference sponsored by the MARS Section of the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA).

## **Recently Published Fast Facts from Library Research Service**

The Library Research Service looks at the impact of the Colorado Talking Book Library in new “Fast Facts.”

No. 252 [CTBL Provides Essential Service to Community](#) by Jennifer French  
The results of a fall 2006 patron survey show that patrons overwhelmingly consider CTBL services as important and useful for meeting their informational and recreational reading needs.

View these and other Fast Facts at <http://www.lrs.org/fastfacts.php>

## **Colorado Institution Wins Laura Bush Foundation Grant**

Kate Elder, librarian for the Rene Spitz School at the Colorado Mental Health Institute, Fort Logan, is a recipient of a \$3,000 grant from The Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries. The school library serves more than 600 K-12 students ages 5 to 18 over the course of a year.

Eighty-five percent of the students perform 3 or more years below grade level in reading and writing, and 50-60% have substance abuse problems. Elder’s “Skills for Recovery” project will provide books at appropriate reading levels to assist students with their overall recovery and life goals.

Elder has been the Ft. Logan staff librarian for 23 years, and became responsible for the school library in 2003. Teresa Allen, Institutional Library Services' youth institutions consultant, assisted with the grant proposal. Elder said, "Teresa was excellent. She gave me so many constructive criticisms and good feedback. Without her I couldn't have done it."

The award was one of 263 school libraries receiving grants nationwide.

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## Delight in Diversity: Diversity News

- The CSL Special Populations & Issues Committee has been hard at work on a wonderful, practical, easy-to-use web site. Tentatively set to launch in August, this will include Diversity Resources in a number of major areas, including sample Library Diversity Plans, how to assess needs, training and recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers, collection development, programming and marketing, leaders in libraries nationally, and even more tools and resources. There also will be a section for all Colorado libraries to enter their own promising practices, along with the long-range plan and the Diversity Toolkit.

If you are considering applying for an LSTA grant through CSL for 2007/08, you may wish to consider how this new site and its resources can help support your proposal. (LSTA grants for the upcoming year should address diversity/special populations in some way.)

- The current issue of Colorado Libraries (volume 33) has a column on "Lessons on Evaluating Programs and Collections for Immigrant Communities," by Anna Winkel. Colorado's libraries are interested in learning about model programs in the country. See pg 43.
- The Denver Foundation has released "A Report from the Pipeline: Reflections on the nonprofit sector from people of color in Metro Denver." The small pamphlet may be accessed online at <http://www.denverfoundation.org/page30151.cfm> The foundation also has a large training handbook, list of trainers, and other resources.

This news brought courtesy of the CSL Special Populations & Issues Committee, charged with improving library services to the underserved. See <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/librarydiversity.htm>