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Jennifer A. Kammerud
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TO: Joint Committee on Information Policy and Technology
FROM: Jennifer Kammerud
DATE: 03/01/01
RE: **Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunications Fund Dissolution**

An Alliance of:

Association of
Wisconsin School
Administrators

Wisconsin Association
of School District
Administrators

Wisconsin Association
of School Business
Officials

Wisconsin Council for
Administrators of
Special Services

The School Administrators Alliance wishes to register its opposition to the dissolution of the Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunications Fund (WATF). The SAA urges the committee to take action so that WATF funds are returned and advocates for the rejection of the use of those funds to pay for executive budget items in Senate Bill 55.

When the Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunications Foundation (WATF) Board of Directors met on February 6, 2001 to discuss the dissolution of the Foundation two issues in particular were cited for the need to dissolve. The first was a challenge to identify grant applicants whose projects could exemplify advanced telecommunications technology applications. The other was a feeling that the WATF and other funding resources, such as TEACH, were overlapping.

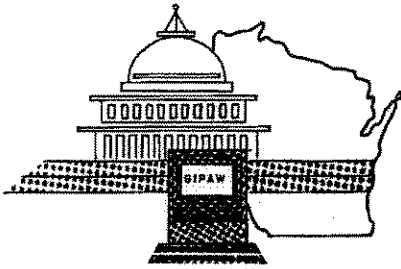
The WATF does have a unique purpose. While there have been allegations that the WATF merely duplicates the efforts of TEACH the two are very different. TEACH primarily provides money for video links and data lines, training and technical assistance, and wiring. On the other hand, 1993 Wisconsin Act 496 created the WATF to build an endowment for support of advanced telecommunications-based projects and efforts to educate telecommunications users about advanced services. Their projects include new applications of proven technology, the use of untested technology, and creative strategies for overcoming traditional barriers to access. Some examples of these types of projects include: a new aeronautical science course and teledentistry pilot project that will also use videoconferencing in addition to web-based technologies; the video-streaming of advanced courses to middle school grades; and the utilization of assistive technology to enhance the communication skills of young children with special needs.

As for the argument that the WATF was unable to identify grant applicants whose projects exemplified the application of advanced telecommunications technology, the SAA feels that there were deserving projects pitched to the WATF over the last few years that did not receive funding approval. Moreover, there are undoubtedly a significant number of deserving projects out there looking for funding. Most educators are not well aware of WATF and its purpose, much less the fact that the endowment fund gives special priority to applications from school districts with lower potential revenue increases and dollars per pupil than other school districts. If this awareness were raised, there would probably be a significant increase in the number of quality applications.

Again the SAA urges the committee to work to stop the dissolution of the WATF and direct the WATF funds back for their original purpose.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the number and address listed above.

Thank you.



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Memorandum from GIPAW to Joint Information Policy & Technology Committee

Date: March 1, 2001

To: Members of the Joint Committee on Information Policy & Technology

From: Tim Ullman, Director
Door County Information Services

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the Governmental Information Processing Association of Wisconsin to express our group's position on the disposition of the \$23 million endowment remaining from the dissolution of the Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunication Foundation (WATF). Our group represents local government Information Technology professionals from throughout the state, including all 72 Wisconsin counties and dozens of cities and municipal governments. Our organization was established in 1988 to promote the development and improvement of technology-based solutions for local governments in Wisconsin through professional collaboration and information sharing.

It has recently come to our attention that the WATF Board has acted to dissolve the foundation and that options for the disposition of its endowment are now being considered by your committee. Our organization requests the committee to consider the following course of action in this regard:

1. Delegate to our organization (GIPAW) the task of developing a recommendation for the statewide distribution of the WATF Endowment funds to units of local government throughout the state. The primary purpose of this fund distribution would be to provide partial, one-time reimbursement to these local governments for otherwise unreimbursed local levy costs associated with the installation and ongoing maintenance and support of state-mandated information systems.

And

2. Defer any other decision-making regarding the disposition of the WATF Endowment until the GIPAW recommendation is received and evaluated.

The primary rationale for this recommendation is that local units of government, particularly counties, have for many years been using local tax funds to pay for technology infrastructure improvements and ongoing maintenance and support costs associated with numerous state-mandated information systems in areas such as the courts, public health, law enforcement and human services. The vast bulk of these costs to local governments are not reimbursed at all by the state, and these unreimbursed technology costs add up to millions annually on a statewide basis. In some cases, the information systems themselves are primarily for state reporting and other compliance activities and

in themselves provide little by way of useful data support for local program managers and policy planners.

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This issue of unfunded state mandates in the technology arena has been a growing concern of GIPAW for over a decade. Local units of government have become increasingly strained under the burden of program and service mandates that are under-funded by the state. A growing number of counties are beginning to cut back on local-option services and public safety programs due to ever-increasing county "overmatch" requirements in state-mandated service areas pushing county budgets to their levy caps. This issue was reinforced quite strongly in the recently released Kettl Commission report, which identified the growing problem of unfunded state mandates as the single biggest source of tension between the state and local governments.

GIPAW therefore believes that distributing the WATF Endowment funds to local governments as a one-time, partial repayment of local tax-funded technology costs incurred in the ongoing operation and support of mandated state information systems would be the most appropriate way for the state to dispose of these funds. It would not only provide a bit of much-needed levy relief to local governmental IT organizations, it would also signal a serious intent on the part of the Legislature to begin to address some of the historical problems in the state-county relationship identified by the Kettl Commission.

On behalf of GIPAW, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this input to the committee and request this memorandum be included as testimony in the committee record.

Cc: GIPAW Board



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

Department of Administration

Sharon M. Morgan, Director
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Fax: (262) 653-2828

To: Members of the Joint Committee on Information Policy & Technology

From: Sharon Morgan, Director, Kenosha County Information Services
Dennis Schultz, Director, Kenosha County Department of Human Services

Date: March 1, 2001

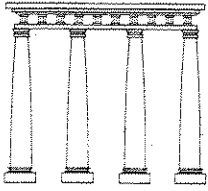
We are writing to express Kenosha County's position on how to dispose of the \$23 million endowment remaining from the dissolution of the Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunication Foundation (WATF). The foundation was established in 1993 to support technology improvement at the local community level that ultimately benefit the public interest. This public interest is largely served by the economic development and direct service activities of local government.

Our county is one of the local governments represented in the statewide IT professional association known as the Governmental Information Processing Association of Wisconsin (GIPAW). We understand that GIPAW has taken the position all endowment funds remaining from the dissolution of this technology foundation should be disseminated back to counties and municipalities that for years have been forced to use local property tax funds to pay for costs associated with state mandated information systems.

We wish to express our strong support for this GIPAW position. Our county Information Services Division provides and maintains at county expense the hardware and network platforms and the technical staff support for a number of required state information systems in areas such as the courts, public health and human services. Most, if not all, other counties in the state are in a similar position. Although the annual cost to local taxpayers of this technology support for state mandated systems has never been precisely calculated, we can estimate roughly that in Kenosha it would add up to more than 5% of our \$2 million annual operating budget.

This technology cost is only one of many "hidden" un-funded mandates that counties routinely pay for as we deliver state programs and services to our citizens. The GIPAW proposal makes sense, because it recognizes this as part of much larger problem and offers a way for at least a partial reimbursement to local government for these costs.

On behalf of Kenosha County, we thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide this input and encourage you to act favorably on the GIPAW proposal to distribute these funds back to local governments to help ease the burden of un-funded technology mandates.



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March 1, 2001

Testimony before Joint Committee on Information and Technology

Presented by Louise G. Trubek, Senior Attorney, Center for Public Representation

Re: Dissolution of the Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunications Foundation (WATF)

We appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today. We applaud the Committee's decision to hold a hearing on this important issue. The Center for Public Representation (CPR) is a nonprofit public interest law firm. We are a combination law firm, training center, watchdog and publishing house dedicated to speaking out for the unrepresented.

We participated in the discussion during the period that Act 496, The Telecommunication Deregulation Act, was developed and have remained active in telecommunication issues since that time. I serve on the Universal Service Fund Council (USFC) and have devoted many hours to insure that the funding in that fund is spent for the betterment of people with low-income and people with disabilities. In addition, I was instrumental in the creation of the nonprofit and telemedicine grant programs recently created by the Public Service Commission with Universal Service Fund monies. I have attached material describing the grant programs. CPR was also a recipient of a grant from WATF which has been crucial in our ability to communicate to our constituency.

We are deeply concerned with the proposal to dissolve the WATF. WATF was created as part of the package presented and enacted by the legislature and governor to attain a new telecommunication system for the state. Act 496 preceded the Federal deregulation act, presenting innovative approaches to deregulation. There was widespread support for the Act because people believed that it presented a balanced approach; it allowed competition and protected the interests of those who might be left behind.

That package is seriously undermined by the dissolution of WATF and transfer of the funds for unauthorized purposes. The funds that are administered by WATF were transferred from telecommunication providers as part of the deal for deregulation. The money transferred belongs to the consumers and were meant to provide funding "to educate telecommunication users about advanced telecommunications services".

This funding should only be used to benefit underserved consumers. The creation of TEACH removed the schools and libraries from the ambit of Act 496. The purpose for the creation of WATF has not been accomplished however- there are still underserved users. Presently, major

underserved users in the State are the rural consumers, so eloquently described in the letter from Sen. Jauch and Rep. Pettis, and small nonprofits and their clients who struggle to move into the new economy.

I recommend to the Committee:

- 1) The Committee immediately recommend to Joint Finance Committee that the funds not be transferred until a thorough review is conducted by your committee.
- 2) The Committee convene an ad hoc work group to consider the legal and effective uses for the \$23 million currently in the fund. The ad hoc group will report by May 1 so that their recommendations can be inserted in the Budget bill. The ad hoc groups should consider and report on:
 - a) How to assist consumers and groups in rural communities access advanced telecommunications.
 - b) How to assist nonprofits throughout the state who are unable to afford telecommunications equipment and training on the market.
 - c) How to assure that all outstanding payments to the fund be transferred in a timely manner.
 - d) Recommend changes to Act 496 that may required to accomplish items a ,b, and c.

CPR would like to be involved as the WATF discussions move forward. We continue to be committed to a fair and equitable telecommunications system for Wisconsin. The WATF debacle raises the question of the commitment of the State to this promise.

Special Report — Promoting Universal Service Through Grant Funding for Non-Profits: Wisconsin PSC § 160.125's First Grant Cycle

By *Adam Nathe*
Law Student

This report presents a brief history of the Wisconsin Public Service Commission's, Universal Service Fund, Access Programs or Projects by Non-Profit Groups (Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.125) grant program. It reviews the regulation's enactment, implementation and the results of the first grant distribution. The goal of this report is to give a brief history and offer an assessment of the program's success in promoting universal telecommunications service in Wisconsin. *Ameritech* provided generous support and funding for this report.

Supplying Universal Service Funds to Wisconsin Nonprofits

For the first time in the Wisconsin Public Service Commission's (PSC) history, six Wisconsin nonprofit organizations shared approximately \$193,645 in direct grant assistance from the Universal Service Fund (USF).¹ Funding, distributed through the recently created Non-Profit Access Grant Program (NPAG)² is designed to encourage affordable telecommunications services provision to underserved consumers statewide. The program, which received final approval in May 2000, marks a bold step for Wisconsin's universal service fund. It represents the end product of months of challenging work undertaken by industry, community and PSC representatives on the USF Council.

This document is a supplement to Vol. XXVI, no. 1, of *The Public Eye* a biannual newsletter published by the Center for Public Representation, Inc. (CPR), a combination law firm, training center, watchdog and publishing house dedicated to speaking up for the unrepresented.

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The Non-Profit Access Grant Program is one of two grant programs created in 1999 and enacted in 2000 by Wisconsin's PSC. These new programs were created in response to growing concerns over under-spending of USF funds. Rules creating these programs were written into the PSC Administrative Code in an effort to create permanent and forward looking funding mechanism for underserved consumers. Getting the programs to this point, however, was not an easy task.

After considerable debate and deliberation over unspent USF monies, the USF Council, made up of industry, community and PSC representatives, concluded that greater accountability and innovation was needed to protect and promote universal service in Wisconsin.³ Acting on this directive, the Council created two innovative grant programs to help remedy shortfalls in the provision of telecommunications services. The first new program, the NPAG program, provides matching funds to nonprofit organizations. The intent is for non-profit organizations to assist underserved consumers⁴ in obtaining access to basic or advanced telecommunications services.⁵

The second program, the Medical Telecommunications Equipment Fund (MTEF),⁶ targets organizations that provide health care services to the underserved. This second program, while important, is not discussed in this report. Please see endnote 6 for a brief summary of MTEF funding results. Both of these programs, while broad, attempt to reach targeted groups that traditionally struggle to gain access to telecommunications services.

These grants symbolize an important step in promoting universal service⁷ in Wisconsin. The Non-Profit Access Grant Program is unique. It is unlike any other grant program currently being administered in the country. This program, if successful, provides an important model, illustrating meaningful collaboration among private industry, community organizations and a governmental regulatory body.

PSC 160.125: A Brief History - Deregulation and Universal Service in Wisconsin

In recent years, the telecommunications industry has experienced an explosion in service use and an increase in competition. In the 1990's, telephone service penetration rates reached above 95 percent nationwide and fluctuated between 96 and 98 percent in Wisconsin.⁸ At the same time, competition from wireless, cable and satellite service providers grew rapidly. Growing competition had considerable impact on the quality and quantity of services being offered to consumers. Industry regulation, however, did not keep pace. High penetration rates indicated ubiquity of service but at the same time masked a problem of low service rates in high-cost rural and urban areas.⁹ In Wisconsin these changes and problems did not go unnoticed.

In 1994, Wisconsin Act 496 (Act)¹⁰ set in place a template for telecommunications industry deregulation. The Act created a regulatory structure designed to promote competition, encourage the rapid deployment of an advanced telecommunications infrastructure, and, in addition, to protect universal service.¹¹ These goals emerged from a 1993 Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force Report,¹² which addressed Wisconsin's place in the growing 'information marketplace.' Among its other findings, the report concluded that the best way to promote investment in and deployment of an advanced telecommunications infrastructure was to "unleash the forces of innovation and competition."¹³ Following that bold directive, Wisconsin Act 496 was created. The Act partially deregulated the state's telecommunications industry but also provided support for universal service. Universal service like infrastructure investment was held to be an essential component in the delivery of telecommunications resources to everyone in the state.

To assure that universal service was protected, the Wisconsin Legislature directed the state Public Service Commission (PSC) to create the Universal Service Fund Council (USFC).¹⁴ This council, made up of both industry and community interests, was empowered to advise and assist the PSC in the development of rules for promoting and implementing various programs.¹⁵ These rules define essential¹⁶ and advanced¹⁷ telecommunications services, describe the various USF programs¹⁸ and specify how supporting funds are to be secured. The rules also articulate the ultimate objective of the universal service fund: "to further the goal of providing a basic set of essential telecommunications services and access to advanced service capabilities to all customers of the state."¹⁹

In addition to promoting competition and investment in the telecommunications infrastructure, the Wisconsin Legislature adopted basic standards to measure the state's quality of telecommunications service.²⁰ The quality standards provide a baseline definition for 'basic' service. In reality, however, the standards

did little to assure accessibility to affordable, quality telecommunications services. To supplement basic quality mandates, the PSC created various programs to fill in where the provision of 'essential' telecommunications services fell short.²¹ These programs, funded through assessments²² levied on Wisconsin telecommunications providers, serve populations who traditionally went without or with less than adequate telecommunications services. In spite of these efforts, however, reports showed persistent shortfalls in the provision of telecommunications services to some of the state's most underserved populations.

Non Profit Access Program Grant Enactment

Aggravating reports of under-provision of services, a 1997 audit of Wisconsin's Universal Service Programs showed that expenditures for USF programs was not meeting set allocations.²³ This information troubled many. Legislators were unhappy that collected funds were not being utilized; telecommunications providers were unhappy about paying charges that went seemingly nowhere; and, consumer groups were displeased that monies were not reaching intended beneficiaries. An explanation offered by the PSC was that low expenditures were a consequence of the robust economy, which contributed to low program enrollments.²⁴ While this explained under-spending, it did little to explain the lack of outreach being done to promote USF programs. Consequently, the USF Council, the Center for Public Representation and other community groups took action to address the underperformance issue.

Finding the authority to act within the original universal service statute,²⁵ the USFC commenced creation of two new programs for recommendation to the PSC (recommending new programs is considered to be within the purview of the Council).²⁶ In reviewing its existing programs, the USFC noted that it was not reaching an important segment of the population. Most USF programs were designed to meet the needs of individual consumers. This, however, left out organizations that serve some of the state's most needy consumers. The USFC concluded that non-profit organizations were uniquely situated to assist in the delivery of telecommunications services. Providing funding to non-profit groups was determined to be a sound way to further the ideals of universal service.

Finding support for new grant programs, however, involved identifying flexibility in the universal service statute, which did not occur without considerable debate. Concerns were expressed over duplicating services or overlapping with existing programs.²⁷ Ultimately, the creation of new grant programs was found to be in keeping with the broad mandate and intent of universal service. The intent of the universal service fund, it was noted was "to assist...high cost...and low-income...and disabled consumers in obtaining affordable access to a basic...telecommunications services."²⁸ In spring of 2000, the Wisconsin PSC approved administrative rules creating two new grant programs.²⁹ Both programs promote broad provision of telecommunications services statewide.

Ostensibly, these grant programs support new modes of assuring delivery of telecommunications services to underserved groups. Funding under these programs is guided by three simple rules. First, USF grants projects are required to address a public need (in a least-cost manner),³⁰ which is not currently being met by other USF programs. Second, programs or projects must assist customers located in areas of the state that have relatively high costs of telecommunications services or must serve low-income or disabled customers.³¹ Finally, projects are required to support the state's modern telecommunications infrastructure and/or encourage deployment of advanced service telecommunications capabilities.³²

Implementation – Learning on the Go

Since the Universal Service Fund rules did not become effective until May 1, 2000, the first grant application period was somewhat abbreviated. A strong effort, however, was made to promote the programs; and the PSC moved quickly to assure that funding could take place in fiscal year 2000. Funding had been allocated to the program and disbursement needed to occur by the end of the calendar year.

Extra efforts were made to inform the public about the USF grant programs. One such effort was undertaken by the Center for Public Representation (CPR), with funding support provided by Ameritech. CPR held two free informational workshops in June and July. These workshops were designed to help inform nonprofits about the preparation of grants for these programs. At these workshops, lecturers supplied attendees with numerous resources and recommendations on how best to organize and compete for grant funding. A wide variety of organization participated in these preparation workshops. Not all who attended the workshops, however, completed the USF grant application process.

Application forms for the grant program were made available in June 2000. The grant application consisted of a basic application requesting information on the proposed project and the communities to be served. The application period for the first round of grants closed September 1, 2000. This short lead-time most likely contributed to a lower than hoped for number of applicants in the first round of the program. Ten total applications were received by the close of the application period.³³ The process of reviewing application then commenced.

The USF staff used a two-step process to choose grant recipients. Grants were first screened to assure compliance with statutory requirements. The PSC then reviewed and rated all applications based on objective criteria specified in the regulations.³⁴ Reviewers looked for projects designed to fulfill the intent of the program, and each project was assessed as to how well it might provide access to essential telecommunications services or encourage deployment of advanced services capabilities. Before making final grant determinations, the PSC, as required by statute, also sought public comment. Following the public comment period, reviewers selected recipients and presented them for approval to the Commission. The Commission made final determinations on recipients and amounts of reimbursement for each program in mid-November and grant recipients were notified in late November, with funding commencing in December.

First Results – An Assortment of Programs

The first round of grant applications was a qualified success. In late November grant funds were awarded to six out of 10 applicants who submitted proposals.³⁵ The PSC received a total of 10 grant applications for this first round of funding with total support requests equaling \$548,645.³⁶ While this amount exceeded the \$500,000 fiscal year spending cap,³⁷ several programs were not awarded funding and a couple of projects requested funding over multiple grant periods. In the end, six projects were fully or partially funded and stood to share \$193,645 in funding. This left a surplus for the fiscal year of slightly more than \$312,000. The groups chosen to receive funding were:

- Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee
- Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups

- Community Advocates, Inc.
- Cornucopia, Inc.
- DANEnet, and
- Transitional Housing, Inc.³⁸

Grant requests covered a wide variety of projects including:

- Free telephone lines
- Long-distance calling cards
- Internet computer access
- Internet based information source access, and
- Provision of videoconferencing capabilities.³⁹

The Non-Profit Access Grant projects will help community non-profits finance important innovative telecommunications projects. The NPAG program was not, however, without challenges.⁴⁰

Assessment – Challenges

Challenges concerning the allocation of funds are a concern for the USF Council. Preserving flexibility in the administration of the grant programs is essential to its long-term success. Challenges that were raised to the program occurred during the required public comment period. Two commenters, who also happened to be Council participants, expressed concerns with the types of programs seeking funding. First, a concern was expressed over the definition of qualifying non-profit organizations. Second, a concern was voiced as to whether all grant requests fit within the reimbursable expenses⁴¹ limits of the program. The commenter's provided a welcome check for the program and served to highlight areas for improvement for subsequent grant periods, and the challenges are easily addressed.

First, the definition of a qualifying non-profit organization is a non-issue. PSC administrative rules define a "non-profit group" as "an organization described in §501(c)(3) of the internal revenue code that is exempt from income tax..."⁴² The NPAG application form had a check box for applications to indicate this status, which all applicants checked. In addition, there is another check in the process to assure that all grant seekers meet this requirement. Grant recipients are required to produce their Federal Identification Number before grant funding will be awarded.⁴³ This number identifies and confirms an organization's 501(c)(3) status. The commenter's issue appears to have been that most applicants did not submit, with their initial application, proof of 501(c)(3) designation. Since verification is provided for later in the process, the commenter's concerns are ill founded. Clarification of this requirement, however, will be made through a slight modification of the application form.

The second concern, regarding reimbursable expenses, raised a more important issue for the USF Council. By definition reimbursable expenses include up to 50 percent of the following:

- The costs of telecommunications services equipment used by the program or project;
- The cost of training for those who are served by the program so that they can utilize the services;
- The administrative costs directly attributable to the program or project; and
- The cost of technical expertise required to complete the program or project.⁴⁴

While parties filing comment encouraged a narrow reading of reimbursement coverage, a more broadly encompassing reading was followed by the PSC. The intent of the program, as seen by the PSC, is to provide for expanded use of the universal service fund to fit with the changing needs of the advancing technology intensive society and economy. While not without limits, program funding was not unnecessarily limited, as is evidenced in the Commissions final decisions. Funding decision remained within the PSC mandate, which broadly states “partial funding may be available to non-profit groups for the facilitation of affordable access to telecommunications and information services...”⁴⁵ The key distinction in funding allocations centered on whether a project aided in the provision and production of information. For example, Internet access programs received funding, but assisting the production of web sites did not. This distinction provides adequate room for encouraging innovation without needlessly limiting funding, and is in keeping with the intent of providing services to the underserved.

Low participation in the first grant application period also poses a potential future challenge to the program. In the first round, grant requests exceeded allocated spending limits, but awards fell short of awarding to that goal. An increased emphasis on publication and dissemination of information to potential grant applicants is being considered to address this problem. Identifying, informing and assisting non-profits through the process, however, will be a definite challenge as the program moves forward.

Conclusion

The Non-Profit Access Grant program addresses an important need in an often-overlooked area that existing USF programs do not reach. Providing funding to organizations to directly assist groups of un- or under-served consumers is a reasonable and practical way to advance the ideals of universal service. Moreover, the Non-Profit Access program provides an excellent supplement to roughly eighteen other USF programs that provide funding to individuals.

In the final analysis, the grant program’s first cycle was a qualified success, although improvements can be made to better inform organizations about the program. Universal service has been expanded in new and creative ways to populations who traditionally have been un-served or under-served by the telecommunications industry.

Endnotes

¹ Phone interview with Anita Sprenger, Wisconsin Public Service Commission, November 28, 2000.

² See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.125 (2000) (hereinafter PSC 160.125).

³ See Wis. Stat. § 196.218(5) (1999).

⁴ See id. at (5)(a)(1-2). (Identifying target groups as “high-cost,” “low-income” and “disabled” consumers).

⁵ See PSC 160.125.

⁶ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.115. (2000) (The Medical Telecommunications Equipment Fund (MTEF) program is not discussed in this report. The following are the results from the first round of grant applications.):

MTEF grant recipients were: Stockbridge-Munsee Community, Home Health United Visiting Nurse Service, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative, Madison Department of Public Health and Beloit Area Community Health Center.

- ²³ See Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, Audit of Universal Service Fund, No. 98-10, Table 1, p. 7, July 1998.
- ²⁴ See Annual Report on Universal Service to the Joint Committee on Information Policy, p. 3, July 1999.
- ²⁵ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.19(1).
- ²⁶ See *id.*
- ²⁷ An existing grant program run through the Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunications Foundation, serves a portion of the non-profit sector.
- ²⁸ Wis. Stat. § 196.218(5)(a)(1).
- ²⁹ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.115 & 160.125.
- ³⁰ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.125(2)(c).
- ³¹ See *id.*
- ³² See *id.*
- ³³ Some consideration was made, late in the process, for grants received after the September 1 deadline.
- ³⁴ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.125.
- ³⁵ Phone interview with Anita Sprenger, Wisconsin Public Service Commission, November 28, 2000.
- ³⁶ See Public Notice, Administration of the Universal Service Fund Grant Program for Access Programs or Projects by Non-Profit Groups, Docket 05-GF-107, September 6, 2000.
- ³⁷ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.125(2)(f).
- ³⁸ Phone interview with Anita Sprenger, Wisconsin Public Service Commission, November 28, 2000.
- ³⁹ See *id.*
- ⁴⁰ See Comments submitted during open comment period by WATF & Verizon. (On file at PSC).
- ⁴¹ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.125(2)(c)(5)(a-d).
- ⁴² See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.02(9).
- ⁴³ Phone interview with Anita Sprenger, Wisconsin Public Service Commission, November 28, 2000.
- ⁴⁴ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.125(2)(c)(5)(a-d).
- ⁴⁵ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.125(2)(a).

Grant seekers sought funding for: a digital dictation and transcription network, technology for a congestive heart failure home monitoring system, enhanced telecommunications capabilities for videoconferencing, and equipment for two separate automatic dialing systems.

Total funding request for the first round totaled \$458,806. Eight organizations applied for funds and 5 received full or partial funding. A total of \$159,637 is planned for December 2000 distribution. This distribution uses roughly 35 percent of the total available funds. (See note 1.)

⁷ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.02(13): "Universal Service is a state-wide rapid, efficient, communications network with adequate, economically placed facilities to assure that a basic set of essential telecommunications services is available to all persons in this state at affordable prices and that the advanced service capabilities of a modern telecommunications infrastructure are affordable and accessible to all areas of the state within a reasonable time."

⁸ See 1999 Annual Report on Universal Service to the Joint Committee on Information Policy, p.6, July 1999.

⁹ See *id.*

¹⁰ Now codified at Wis.Stat. § 196.218.

¹¹ See Wis. Stat. § 196.218(5).

¹² Convergence, Competition, Cooperation: The Report of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Telecommunications Infrastructure Task Force, Volume 2, 1993.

¹³ See *id.* at 5.

¹⁴ See Wis. Stat. § 196.218(5).

¹⁵ The first USFC rules, codified at Ch. PSC 160 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, took effect in May of 1996.

¹⁶ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.03(1). (Essential telecommunications services include, among other things, single-party, voice-grade line with directory service, timely repair and access to pay telephone service.)

¹⁷ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.035. (Advanced telecommunications capabilities are essentially two-way broadband access.)

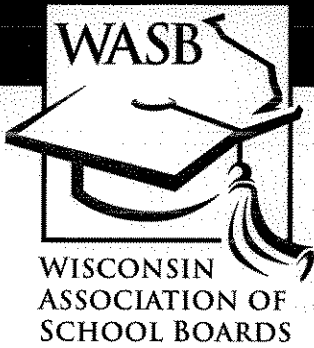
¹⁸ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.05. (Programs to promote access include, among others, reduced rates for low income-income customers, toll blocking, and assistance to persons with disabilities, voice mail for the homeless, rate ceilings for customers in high-cost areas, and a rate shock mitigation program.)

¹⁹ Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.01(1).

²⁰ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.03(2)(a)(1-15).

²¹ See Wisc. Admin. Code § PSC 160.05(1)(a-s).

²² See Wis. Stat. § 196.218(3). (Wisconsin obtains funding for USF programs by assessing a percentage fee on revenues generated by telecommunications providers from their business activities within the state).



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KEN COLE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Members of the Joint Committee on Information Policy and Technology
FROM: Pam Rewey, Director of Legislative Services
DATE: March 1, 2001
RE: Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunications Foundation (WATF)

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB) strongly supports the continuation of the WATF. The Foundation has supported, as intended, projects in public and private schools, universities, state entities and others. The criteria for awarding grants has focused on advanced telecommunications projects that would have no other base of funding. We hope that this fund can continue to provide venture capital to improve learning and to enhance Wisconsin's economy.

The WATF was established at the time of the telecommunications industry deregulation. The WASB Executive Director, Ken Cole, was aware that when the states of Maryland and Utah went through the deregulation process provisions were enacted to benefit school districts. They were not voluntary. Once aware that the industry does contribute to schools in others states, the provision to establish the WATF was enacted in our statutes. The Wisconsin plan is voluntary and as noted applies to many more entities than just public school districts. Also, schools with low per pupil costs are given preference here.

The voluntary contributions were agreed to in good faith. Many in the industry contributed generously. Some contributed one dollar and others did not contribute. Two funds were established. The Fast Start Fund was outside the foundation and used in the first couple years to get projects going. The Endowment Fund is invested money and the growth in the fund is intended to provide grants in the future.

To date, the WATF has supported 182 projects throughout Wisconsin.

The WASB believes that the WATF serves a valuable purpose. The Foundation is doing good work that will benefit our state long after we are gone. We believe the money should stay in the foundation for the purpose intended and should be allowed to grow to the level needed to continue to provide significant awards to worthy projects.

WISCONSIN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Affiliated with the National Education Association

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Great School!*

**WEAC AND WFT TESTIMONY OPPOSING THE WISCONSIN ADVANCED
TELECOMMUNICATIONS FUND DISSOLUTION
BY
TRICIA YATES, WEAC LEGISLATIVE CONSULTANT
JOINT COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION POLICY AND TECHNOLOGY
March 1, 2001**

Good afternoon, Co-Chairpersons Jauch and Pettis and Members of the Joint Committee on Information Policy and Technology. My name is Tricia Yates, and I represent the Wisconsin Education Association Council. I am here today to offer testimony on behalf of WEAC and the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers opposing the dissolution of the Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunications Fund (WATF), favoring redirection of all WATF funds back to their statutorily directed purpose, and urging the Legislature's rejection of Senate Bill 55 provisions that use WATF funds to pay for executive budget items.

The WATF represented of the few opportunities for creative teachers, schools and others to approach unique telecommunications projects OUTSIDE the revenue caps and the 2/3 funding calculation.

The WATF had a truly different mission than TEACH – TEACH has provided the infrastructure – WATF was to be for cutting edge, innovative, experimental, high tech projects. I have heard it said that WATF was not able to find projects to fund that fit its criteria. However, a few years back WEAC and a whole group of partners offered a proposal to WATF for funding of an on-line teacher training program, which was not funded, and its rejection was never explained.

Terry Craney, President
Michael A. Butera, Executive Director

The WATF should not be dissolved – it should exist and should become even more aggressive in funding proposals, especially those that had the support of the entire education community. Certainly, WATF should not dissolve itself and make a gift of the money to DOA to pay for a variety of budget items with funds left over. WEAC and WFT oppose the use of WATF funds to pay for any executive budget item.

The WATF came about as a result of deregulation of the telephone companies, which benefited telephone companies, investors and utilities. The Legislature's quid pro quo for this deregulation was that in exchange for this flexibility, it would provide some groups such as schools with some benefits for taking the risks associated with deregulation.

The WATF also represented the first of what have become many public/private partnerships – and we have put faith in those arrangements. A deal was made involving a public trust, praising it as a public-private partnership. Many entities have lived up to their part of the deal – Ameritech and GTE have done this and surpassed their share of the deal, for example.

The dissolution of this partnership in this manner violates this public trust, and improperly directs funds away from schools. The WATF endowment fund by statute (section. 14.28 (3) (b) 2. and 3., Wis Stats) gave special priority to funding applications received from school districts with less potential revenue increases and money per pupil than other districts. That was a noble intent and one that has been directly contradicted by the WATF's dissolution action.

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It is not fair to these and other school districts – particularly under revenue controls – to have this money arbitrarily “gifted” to the Department of Administration. WEAC and the WFT urge the Committee to take action to stop this dissolution, to direct all WATF funds back to their statutorily directed purpose and to send a resolution to the Joint Committee on Finance rejecting DOA’s funding of items in Senate Bill 55 with WATF money and requiring DOA to identify alternate funding sources.

Thank you.

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Great School!*



South Central Library System

Administration Office

5250 East Terrace Drive, Suite A • Madison, WI 53704-8340

608/246-7970 • FAX 608/246-7958 • TDD 608/246-7974

Thank you co-chairs Jauch and Pettis and Committee members.

My name is Phyllis Davis. I am the Associate Director of the South Central Library System. I am here to tell you about one of the projects made possible by the WATF grant program.

In July, 2000, the South Central Library System and seven other library partners, collectively representing 165 public libraries and serving more than 2.3 million people, began a pilot project to deliver web-based electronic books to Wisconsin citizens in libraries or at home, work or school. With \$189,000 from the WATF and \$63,000 from our Wisconsin Public Library Consortium partners we have created access to a shared collection of 5,500 electronic books. On February 1st, we made them available to the public from Polk County to Kenosha and from Green County to Green Bay. By the end of the year we will more than double the number of electronic books available.

In the process we have encountered and addressed a number of technical problems with authentication, browser versions, software plug-ins and the software that gathers use statistics. We have worked closely with netLibrary, our vendor, to change both the user interface and the types of materials offered. Librarians have worked together via email and file exchanges to select titles for this shared collection without meeting face-to-face. Though we are not yet half-way through our 18 month grant project, we have shared successes that would not have been possible if libraries had acted as individuals to investigate this new technology.

At the beginning of this year, five additional library systems joined the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium, bringing the total number of participants to 13 of the 17 library systems in the state and the number of residents served to over 3.5 million. We anticipate that the consortium be self sustaining by 2002 and hope it will include all 17 library systems in Wisconsin.

The people of Wisconsin need access to information in every useful format. Public libraries need ongoing opportunities to experiment with new information technologies to deliver this information to our citizens. One of the only places for public libraries to apply for these funds is the WATF. I am here to remind you that our need to move forward in information technology remains, even if the WATF is eliminated. Please don't leave Wisconsin public libraries and the people we serve behind.

Thank you.



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

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John T. Benson
State Superintendent

Steven B. Dold
Deputy State Superintendent

Testimony Before the Joint Committee on Information Policy and Technology March 1, 2001

RE: The Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunications Foundation

Robert Bocher, Technology Consultant, Department of Public Instruction
(608-266-2127, fax 608-266-2529; robert.bocher@dpi.state.wi.us)

Members of the committee, I am Bob Bocher, a library technology consultant in the Department of Public Instruction. My testimony today relates to the dissolution of the Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunications Foundation (WATF).

The Department of Public Instruction supported the state's telecommunication deregulation legislation when it was introduced in January 1994. In fact, I spoke before this committee in support of the legislation. One reason we supported deregulation was the establishment of the WATF as part of the legislation. The WATF was to be a grant program to assist the public and private sector in the deployment of advanced telecommunication services and programs. The need for a grant program of this type existed in 1995, and it still exists today.

Since the first WATF grant program funding cycle in March 1996, Wisconsin's public libraries have received \$623,635 in WATF funds to help them implement a wide variety of programs. Some of these included funding to develop regional, multicounty library catalogs freely available to residents over the Internet and funding to assist our libraries to get direct Internet access. Our public libraries, especially in more rural communities, still have needs for more advanced telecommunications and technology. For example, currently there are over 80 public libraries in the state that have just slow-speed dial access to the Internet. These libraries serve almost a quarter million state residents. As of January 2001, just half of our libraries were in regional online catalog consortia. WATF funds have also been used to help leverage more local funding and broader participation. For example, in the latest grant cycle (November 2000) the South Central Library System was awarded a grant to provide citizens access to electronic books (e-books). This project has now grown to include over half of the public libraries in the state.

Public libraries, unlike our public schools, are not part of the TEACH block grant program. Because of limitations on the TEACH wiring program, they have also been able to make only limited use of the \$10 million public library wiring loan program. Thus they have relied on the WATF as a potential source of funding to assist them with their advanced technology needs and services. The obligation of even our smallest libraries to meet the information needs of their local residents requires a highly networked environment, and the WATF certainly helped libraries attain such networking.

In conclusion, while the Department of Public Instruction would be a recipient of some of the WATF funds, and we are appreciative of this, we are also here to advocate for a technology funding source that can assist public libraries and public schools in meeting the information and learning needs of the people of Wisconsin.

Internet Access in Wisconsin's Schools and Libraries

This paper is designed to provide the Library Information Technology Advisory Committee and the state's library community with more information on the status of Internet access. This paper complements the briefer information found on this subject in the division's technology and resource sharing paper released in January 2001.

Background

The Internet, with such popular applications as email and the World Wide Web, serves as a key component of the evolving electronic library. It also plays the central role as the conduit to provide access to information in electronic form. Thus, reliable, affordable, and convenient access to the Internet is essential for further development of library networking.

Most advances in resource sharing technology, and the use of specific (e.g., BadgerLink, WISCAT) and general Web-based information resources require direct Internet access for optimal use. The benefits of direct access are also readily apparent as more libraries move towards Web-based OPACs. Direct access provides a high speed, "always on" connection to the Internet. Compared with direct access, dial access to the Internet is much slower and less reliable and the connection process can be cumbersome and time consuming.

WiscNet is the largest Internet provider for the state's library and education communities. In 1991, the UW and a group of private academic institutions established WiscNet. In addition to academic libraries, WiscNet provides access for 80% of the state's 426 school districts and about 55% of the state's 381 public libraries. Besides WiscNet, there are over 100 other Internet Service Providers (ISP) active in the state, including half the local phone companies. The latter often serve the populace in smaller communities. Some school districts and libraries get their Internet service from these other providers.

In 1994 the division issued an "Internet Policy Statement and Plan." At the time, 6% of public libraries and about 10% of schools had Internet connectivity, most through a single dial-up line. The goal of the 1994 policy statement was for all the state's public libraries and public schools to have direct Internet access by 2000. We have not yet reached this goal for our public libraries, although schools are very close to 100% connectivity.

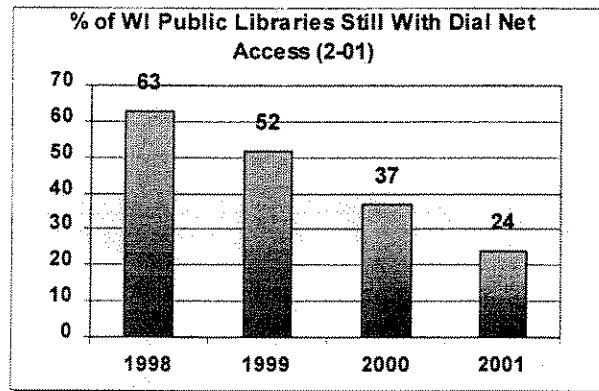
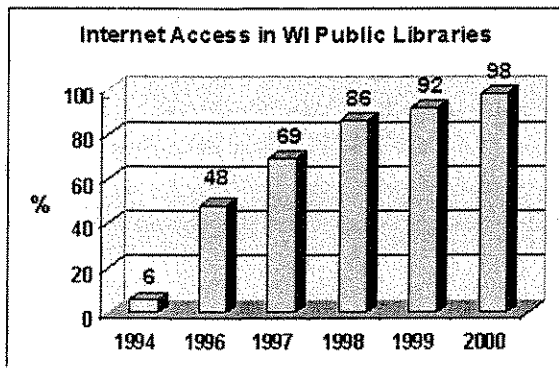
As part of a 1995 federal TIIAP (Telecommunications Information Infrastructure Access Program) grant, a partnership of WiscNet, the DPI, and the DOA established the *BadgerDial* program to provide Internet access to school and public library staff that were a long distance call from an Internet provider. *BadgerDial* peaked at almost 600 subscribers in 1997. It was discontinued in 2000 when local access to the Internet became widely available through other service providers.

Approximately \$800,000 in LSTA funds has been allocated in the past six years for public library Internet access, and school access has been facilitated by TEACH block grant funds. The major financial incentive for public libraries to get direct access has been the TEACH program's

provision of a DS1 line for every public library in the state at \$100/month. (With 273 lines, public libraries constitute the largest category of TEACH data line users). The TEACH telecommunication access program, which provides an 86% discount off the state contract rate of \$710 a month per line, results in an annual total savings for libraries of \$1,998,360. The savings are even greater when compared with open market rates. The TEACH discounts have dramatically increased direct Internet connectivity and have fostered the parallel development of public library system WANs that are used both for Internet access and for transmitting shared automated system data. The TEACH data line subsidy includes installation and the CSU/DSU, but it does not include the router or actual cost of Internet service. All 17 library systems in the state now operate WANs, although not all member libraries are attached to the WAN.

The TEACH DS1 discount is also available to every high school in the state, and TEACH telecommunication discounts also help support many K-12 distance education networks. Over half of the schools get direct Internet access via their participation in distance education consortia. This is done by taking advantage of the extra bandwidth available for Internet traffic on the DS3 video networks.

Most of the public sector Internet traffic at some point transits over BadgerNet. BadgerNet is a state government telecommunications network managed by the state's Department of Administration, Division of Information Technology. It is available to all sectors of government and the education community.



As the tables above show, 98% of the state's public libraries currently have Internet access, but only 76% have direct access. In an example of the digital divide, 100% of our state's public libraries in communities larger than 10,000 population have direct Internet access but this figure drops to 39% for libraries in communities under 2,500 population. Unfortunately, considerably more libraries in smaller communities in Wisconsin use dial-up access compared to the national average. (See the McClure and Bertot report, *Public Library Internet Services: Impacts On The Digital Divide: Stage I Final Report*, August 20, 2000.)

In an example of the limiting nature of dial access, a BadgerLink use survey showed that libraries with direct connections to the Internet reported more frequent use of BadgerLink (77% daily use) compared with those libraries with dial-in connections (34% daily use). In a November memo sent to the DOA budget office, the division estimated that first-year start-up costs to get the remaining public libraries direct Internet access would cost about \$612,800.

Ninety-eight percent of public schools now have direct access. Eighty-five percent of all school classrooms have Internet access. Currently all academic institutions in the state have direct Internet access. The division has no reliable figures on access by special libraries.

The division plans to

- Continue using LSTA funds to promote direct Internet access by public libraries
- Encourage the further development of library system WANs as an economical means of providing direct Internet access to member libraries
- Continue working with TEACH, our library systems, and federal programs like the E-rate to reach the goal that all Wisconsin public libraries and schools have direct Internet access.

Issues

The following are some of the issues related to Internet access and use in Wisconsin's school and library communities.

- What incentives are needed to move the 24% of public libraries that still have dial access to direct access?
- How will technical support be provided for direct Internet connectivity, especially in smaller libraries of all types?
- How will the local networking infrastructure (wiring, LAN topology, security, etc.) be developed to ensure the best use of direct Internet connectivity?
- How can adequate bandwidth be provisioned to support increased Internet use and the increase in bandwidth-intensive applications like streaming video and audio?
- How will libraries and schools address the requirements of recent federal legislation mandating that many of them install Internet filters on library and school workstations?
- How will realistic Internet use policies be developed and enforced that support the mission of libraries and schools?
- How to address the possibility that the E-rate and TEACH programs may not always provide support for Internet connectivity.

For more information

For more information on Internet access, contact Bob Bocher on the Division staff and see the Web sites referenced below.

WiscNet <<http://www.wiscnet.net>>

TEACH Wisconsin <<http://www.teachwi.state.wi.us>>

BadgerNet <<http://enterprise.state.wi.us/static/badger>>

See <<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dltcl/pld/netauto.html>> for more information on Internet access in Wisconsin public libraries.

Automated Systems in Wisconsin Libraries

This paper is designed to provide the Library Information Technology Advisory Committee and the state's library community with more information on the status of Internet access in the state's libraries. This paper complements the briefer information found on shared automated systems in the division's technology and resource sharing paper released in January 2001.

Background

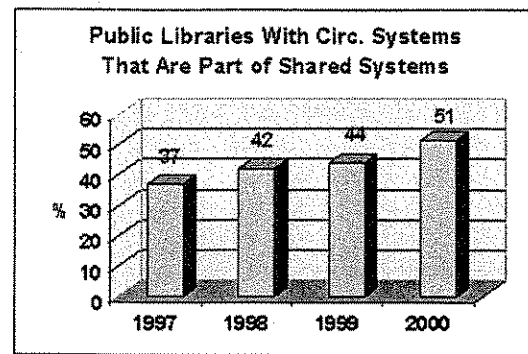
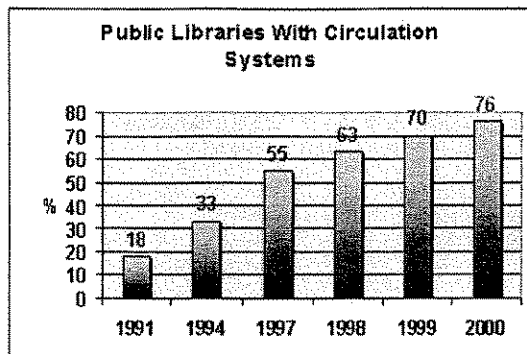
The traditional core components of an automated library system include modules for circulation management, online public access catalog, cataloging, serials control and acquisitions. However, the first automated systems focused primarily on computerizing a library's circulation processes. This was primarily because of the labor-intensive nature of circulation. Also the immaturity of the technology, lack of local infrastructure (i.e., little or no LAN development) and costs often precluded libraries from quickly automating other library functions.

The first automated circulation systems in the state were installed in the Polk Library on the UW-Oshkosh campus in the mid-1970s and a large shared automated system was locally developed for the public libraries in Milwaukee county about the same time. The 1980s saw a dramatic increase in automated systems in libraries of all sizes. The relatively low costs of microcomputer-based systems allowed even very small libraries to automate.

In the academic community, most libraries have been automated for at a decade or more. The UW campuses have been automated since the late 1980s. In 1998-99 the UW system campuses migrated to the Endeavor system, with each campus implementing separate systems. For many campuses this was their third or fourth system. All the online catalogs from the major campus libraries are available on the Web and the campuses are exploring methods to enhance ILL. All fourteen main campuses of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) have automated systems. Three WTCS campuses share an automated system and the others have stand-alone systems. Most libraries in private academic institutions have automated systems. The Milwaukee area SWITCH consortium links six private academic institutions via a single shared automated system. However, most private academic institutions operate separate, stand-alone systems.

Many schools media centers have automated systems. The vast majority of these are PC-based (or Mac) systems available from various vendors. Very few school districts have a shared automated system linking all the schools in the district. Burlington is one of the few communities in the state in which the local public library and the school district share the same automated system. The division is currently surveying schools on their use of technology, including the status of automation in school media centers. The results should be available in March.

Considerable progress has been made in getting many of the state's public libraries automated over the last decade. This can be seen on the charts below.



Within the context of automating public libraries, there is an increasing number that are becoming part of shared automated systems. In the mid-1980s only two public library systems, Milwaukee County and South Central, had shared automated systems. But in 1999, for the first time, a slight majority (51%) of libraries that have automated systems are in shared systems. There are now shared automated systems in existence, or in active development, in 15 of the state's 17 library systems. This increase reflects considerable activity over the past two years in shared systems in more rural areas of the state. This activity has been greatly influenced by the availability of subsidized data lines through the TEACH Wisconsin program. Under the TEACH (Technology for Educational Achievement) subsidy, libraries, regardless of their location, pay just \$100/month for a DS1 line. The library DS1 circuits are designed to form a virtual library system wide area network (WAN). This WAN is used to transport automated system data traffic and it also provides the telecommunication circuit for Internet access. (The primary purpose of the TEACH lines is to provide Internet access.) There is no doubt that without the TEACH discount, there would be little interest in shared automated systems in many rural areas of the state. The telecommunication costs would simply be too prohibitive. Not all libraries in systems that operate shared automated systems are part of the shared system. While there has been a steady increase in shared system development throughout the state, 62% of all the state's public libraries (automated and non-automated) are still not in shared systems. This percentage increases to 76% for libraries in communities under 2,500 population. In a memo sent to the DOA budget office in November 2000, the division estimated it would cost about \$10.2 million (first year costs) to bring libraries now not part of shared systems into shared systems.

Over the past three years the division has awarded the library systems almost \$1 million in non-competitive LSTA technology block grants. Some of this funding has been used to develop new shared systems, to add more libraries to existing shared systems and to provide system upgrades. In 2001 seven libraries or library systems received a total of the \$170,000 from a competitive LSTA category for shared systems. LSTA funding aside, most costs for shared systems or stand alone systems have been borne by participating libraries and library systems.

In the area of automated system upgrades, one of the major issues confronting libraries is the move from older, text-based, systems to true graphical-based (GUI) systems. Often another upgrade that parallels the GUI upgrade is the move to a Web-based online catalog. In some instances, with many patrons familiar with the GUI interface at their place of employment or at home via their use of the Web, the library's monochrome, text-based catalog appears as an anachronism. The GUI and Web upgrades can often mean substantial investments in system hardware/software upgrades, end user workstations, local and wide area network enhancements and a commitment to staffing and training.

Another potential upgrade cost is the move to make automated systems Z39.50 compliant. Such an upgrade can make it possible to search other libraries' Z39.50 compliant online catalogs.

Similar to the GUI upgrade, making an automated system Z39.50 compliant can require considerable investment.

With many libraries providing access for their patrons to Web-based information resources, increasingly, automated systems have become just one component of what is often termed the "virtual," "digital" or electronic library. The intent of the electronic library is to provide access to far more information, from both inside and outside the confines of the physical library, than just brief bibliographic information in the library's online catalog. The information often includes access to abstracts and full-text periodicals (e.g., BadgerLink) and access to the vast information resources on the Web. From the traditional perspective, where the online catalog was the only resource available in electronic form, the online catalog is now often just one menu pick on the library's Website that lists many menu selections to a host of other information resources.

For shared automated systems, the division plans to

- Advocate the continued development of shared automated systems in public libraries
- Make it a priority to continue LSTA funding for shared systems in 2002
- Work with TEACH and other programs (e.g., the State Trust Fund) to make more funding available
- Encourage schools and other types of libraries to review the merits of shared automated systems

Issues

- What incentives are needed automate the 25% of the public libraries still are not automated?
 - Is there a need for all 25% to be automated?
- What are the best means for the division, with limited resources, to help libraries that want to be automated?
- Should initial and ongoing costs of automated systems remain primarily a local expense?
- How much emphasis should the division place on shared automated systems?
- Should emphasis be placed on encouraging more cooperative shared systems between different types of libraries?
- How do libraries fund the transition from text-based automated systems to GUI, Web-based systems and fund other system enhancements, like Z39.50?
- Will TEACH telecommunication discounts always be available?

For more information

For more information on Internet access, contact Bob Bocher on the Division staff (608-266-2127 robert.bocher@dpi.state.wi.us)

Wisconsin Public Libraries with Dial Internet Access

(2-01)

1-
1200/4200
- 4,000 / 1.67
2.5 million

Library Name	System Short Name	System Abbreviation
Orfordville Public Library	Arrowhead	ALS
Baldwin Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Balsam Lake Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Cadott Community Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Clarella Hackett Johnson Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Colfax Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Durand Community Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Elmwood Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Fairchild Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Fall Creek Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Frederic Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
G.E. Bleskacek Family Memorial Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Hammond Community Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Hawkins Area Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Luck Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Pepin Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Phillips Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Plum City Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Polk County Library Federation	Indianhead	IPLS
Somerset Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Spring Valley Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
St. Croix Falls Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Turtle Lake Public Library	Indianhead	IPLS
Darien Public Library	Lakeshores	LLS
Genoa City Public Library	Lakeshores	LLS
Walworth Memorial Library	Lakeshores	LLS
Chilton Public Library	Manitowoc-Calumet	MCLS
Kiel Public Library	Manitowoc-Calumet	MCLS
Fox Lake Public Library	Mid-Wisconsin	MWFLS
Juneau Public Library	Mid-Wisconsin	MWFLS
Lowell Public Library	Mid-Wisconsin	MWFLS
Reeseville Public Library	Mid-Wisconsin	MWFLS
Bad River Public Library	Northern Waters	NWLS
Burnett Community Library	Northern Waters	NWLS
Drummond Public Library	Northern Waters	NWLS
Forest Lodge Library	Northern Waters	NWLS
Grantsburg Public Library	Northern Waters	NWLS
Hayward Carnegie Library	Northern Waters	NWLS
Irma Stein Memorial Library	Northern Waters	NWLS
Legion Memorial Library	Northern Waters	NWLS
Mercer Public Library	Northern Waters	NWLS
Plum Lake Public Library	Northern Waters	NWLS
Washburn Public Library	Northern Waters	NWLS
Albany Public Library	South Central	SCLS
Amherst Public Library	South Central	SCLS
Arpin Public Library	South Central	SCLS
Brodhead Memorial Public Library	South Central	SCLS
Monticello Public Library	South Central	SCLS
Nekoosa Public Library	South Central	SCLS
Pittsville Community Library	South Central	SCLS
Poynette Public Library	South Central	SCLS

Wisconsin Public Libraries with Dial Internet Access

(2-01)

Rio Public Library	South Central	SCLS	
Vesper Public Library	South Central	SCLS	
Allen-Dietzman Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Argyle Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Barneveld Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Benton Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Blanchardville Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Bloomington Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Cobb Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Cuba City Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Eckstein Memorial Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Hazel Green Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Hildebrand Memorial Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Lone Rock Community Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Mineral Point Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Montfort Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Shullsburg Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Soldiers Grove Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Viola Public Library	Southwest Wisconsin	SWLS	
Alma Public Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Arcadia Free Public Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Blair-Preston Public Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Galesville Public Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Hatch Public Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Hauge Memorial Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Hettie Pierce Public Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Independence Public Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Kendall Public Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Necedah Memorial Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Norwalk Public Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Readstown Public Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Wilton Public Library	Winding Rivers	WRLS	
Brandon Public Library	Winnefox	WLS	
Kingston Pond Public Library	Winnefox	WLS	
Neshkoro Public Library	Winnefox	WLS	
Oakfield Public Library	Winnefox	WLS	
Dorchester Public Library	Wisconsin Valley	WVLS	
Granton Public Library	Wisconsin Valley	WVLS	
Wabeno Public Library	Wisconsin Valley	WVLS	
Withee Public Library	Wisconsin Valley	WVLS	

Statement of Steven Vedro
Before the Wisconsin Senate Committee on Information Policy
March 1, 2001

To the Committee:

My name is Steven Vedro. I am an independent educational technology and policy consultant. I have worked for telecommunications policy projects in Wisconsin, Missouri, and Arizona; for large-scale educational networks in this state and in Mississippi, Florida, Ohio, and North Dakota; and most recently for public radio and television stations across the country as a consultant to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

From March through November of 1993, I had the honor of serving as Project Manager for the Governor's Blue Ribbon Telecommunications Infrastructure Task Force. This was the organization, consisting of 45 members from all sides of the telecommunications industry, from education, government, healthcare, small business and labor, that by unanimous vote, endorsed a set of principles that formed the basis of Wisconsin Act 496 -- *The Information Superhighway Bill*.

One part of our deliberations involved how the communications industries, in a less regulated marketplace, would continue to contribute to the economic and community development of the state. Once monopoly regulations were removed, it was feared that these industries, without a protected rate-of-return, would no longer have the incentive to support civic projects or provide donated services to Wisconsin's schools, libraries, healthcare institutions and local government-based technology initiatives. The concept of an advanced telecommunications foundation to gather industry contributions, to ask the industry to work together -- even as competitors -- to help the state's economic and social development, was one that all parties endorsed.

I believe that the WATF was hampered from the beginning in meeting its core objectives. Instead of funding a limited number of truly innovative and paradigm-shifting applications, projects that would bring national attention, matching grant dollars, and new telecommunications and human infrastructure investments in the state, the WATF chose to go for quantity: smaller grants to as many recipients as feasible.

This policy was forced upon the WATF by two considerations: politics and need. The first was driven by the Legislature's well-meaning requirement, added to the original Task Force language, that the new Foundation, give special priority in its funding to a specific class of school districts. This requirement made sense in 1993: there were very few technology-funding sources available to Wisconsin schools, revenue caps constrained new investments, and communications costs in rural areas were particularly high.

After a few years, this policy of small grants to as many schools as possible, made less and less sense. The Governor's TEACH Program was created to provide discounts for communications connections and loans for building wiring, the Federal "E-rate" also came along, providing subsidies for rural and low-income schools, libraries and healthcare institutions, and the Department of Commerce "Telecommunications Opportunity Program" also focused on this need.

Despite these parallel programs, the WATF didn't change its approach. As a result, it never generated the kind of excitement that would bring in new industry contributions or prestige from serving on the WATF board. The Foundation's narrow focus and wide reach, in my opinion, has led to its current dilemma of an organization without a unique mission, with little to attract new contributions and the participation of new board members. It is no wonder that such a Board was willing to vote itself out of existence!

As a past consultant to the University, to the Technical College System, and more recently as project manager for a major Internet-2 demonstration involving UW Learning Innovations and the Academic CoLab, I cannot take issue with the proposed distribution of a sizeable portion of the Foundation's endowment. These are indeed worthy projects.

The question remains what is to be done with the remaining funds? What principles should guide the state should it wish create a new program or foundation? I strongly suggest that any new effort focus on supporting a limited number of high-impact applications that relate to economic and community development.

Instead of soliciting proposals from individual institutions, the WATF or its successor should first take input from the collective expertise that exists within the state to define a narrow range of projects that use emerging technologies to address existing needs. There are many organizations that could contribute to this problem-definition process. Organizations such as TEACH Wisconsin, WiscNet, DOA's Bureau of Information Technology Management, the Public Service Commission, the ECB and the University have access to an incredible amount of technical expertise. As was demonstrated a few years ago by the Educational Communications Board's Distance Education Standards Forum, many groups are willing to contribute to such a process.

Once three or four program areas were defined, the new WATF could encourage consortiums to organize to apply for project funding. The state's contribution could, in many cases, be specifically set aside as the "local match" for projects seeking federal agency and/or major foundation grants. If the applicants were not successful in these larger applications, the funds would return to the endowment.

I believe that this approach would:

- Make better use of existing institutional processes, user groups and technical expertise;
- Increase the possibility of leveraging matching funds from other sources;
- Eliminate the prejudicial impact of awarding funding primarily to good grant writers; and
- Significantly reduce the administrative overhead of soliciting, evaluating, awarding and tracking individual small-scale grants.

In order to accomplish the above, the Legislature would have to remove the restrictive language on the WATF's (or its successor's) grant-making ability. Even though this legislation gave preference to institutions with limited resources, the competitive application process often put them at a disadvantage. In addition, these restrictions also weakened the ability of the Foundation to make grants that brought together multiple vendors across larger geographical areas to focus on broad infrastructure development projects. Projects that would extend to more than just Wisconsin's schools, but to its small businesses, community and economic development needs, and government services delivery, need to be encouraged.

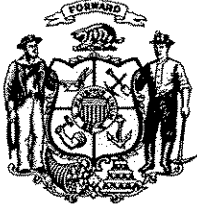
In summary, Wisconsin can be proud of its creation of the Advanced Telecommunications Foundation. At a time when telecommunications is at the heart of the information economy, it does seem short-sighted for the WATF Board to voluntarily eliminate a potential engine for economic and community development. On the other hand, lashing out at the organization's board without changing the rules that drove them to this action is not going to be productive. I urge this body to find a way to recreate and re-empower a new Foundation. I suggest that you start by rereading the Task Force report that urged its creation.

Thank you.

WATF Dissolution Distribution

(Adapted from Michael Blumenfeld's 2-21-00 email)

UW Board of Regents (\$7,250,000)	\$3,000,000 UW Learning Innovations 2,000,000 Infrastructure to provide Internet2 capability at system campuses 1,000,000 Wisconsin Advanced Distributed Learning Co-Laboratory 500,000 Digital mammography machine for the medical school 500,000 Equipment to provide wireless networking capability at system campuses 250,000 Wisconsin Worldwide, to market system courses internationally
Department of Public Instruction (\$1,843,800)	\$ 579,000 Upgrading the Wisconsin Informational Network for School Success 77,800 Upgrading the state school finance information system 526,000 Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (network upgrade..) 161,000 Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped 500,000 National Geographic Society Education Foundation grant program to improve geographical education in Wisconsin
Department of Commerce (\$1,500,000)	\$1,500,000 Grants to UW-Milw, UW-Parkside, Marquette, Milw School of Engineering, & Medical College of Wisconsin to be used for research related to emerging technologies that promote economic development in southeastern Wisconsin.
Higher Education Aids Board (\$168,000)	\$ 168,000 Upgrading technology
Technical College System Board (\$2,000,000)	\$2,000,000 Establish an Internet site that lists all the Internet courses provided by the technical colleges and to assist technical colleges in developing Internet courses.
TEACH Board (\$702,400)	\$ 136,200 Administrative and support services to revolve the outstanding business of the foundation. 566,200 Close out existing grants.
Total \$13,464,200	



Scott McCallum
Governor

State of Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board

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Jane M. Hojan-Clark
Executive Secretary

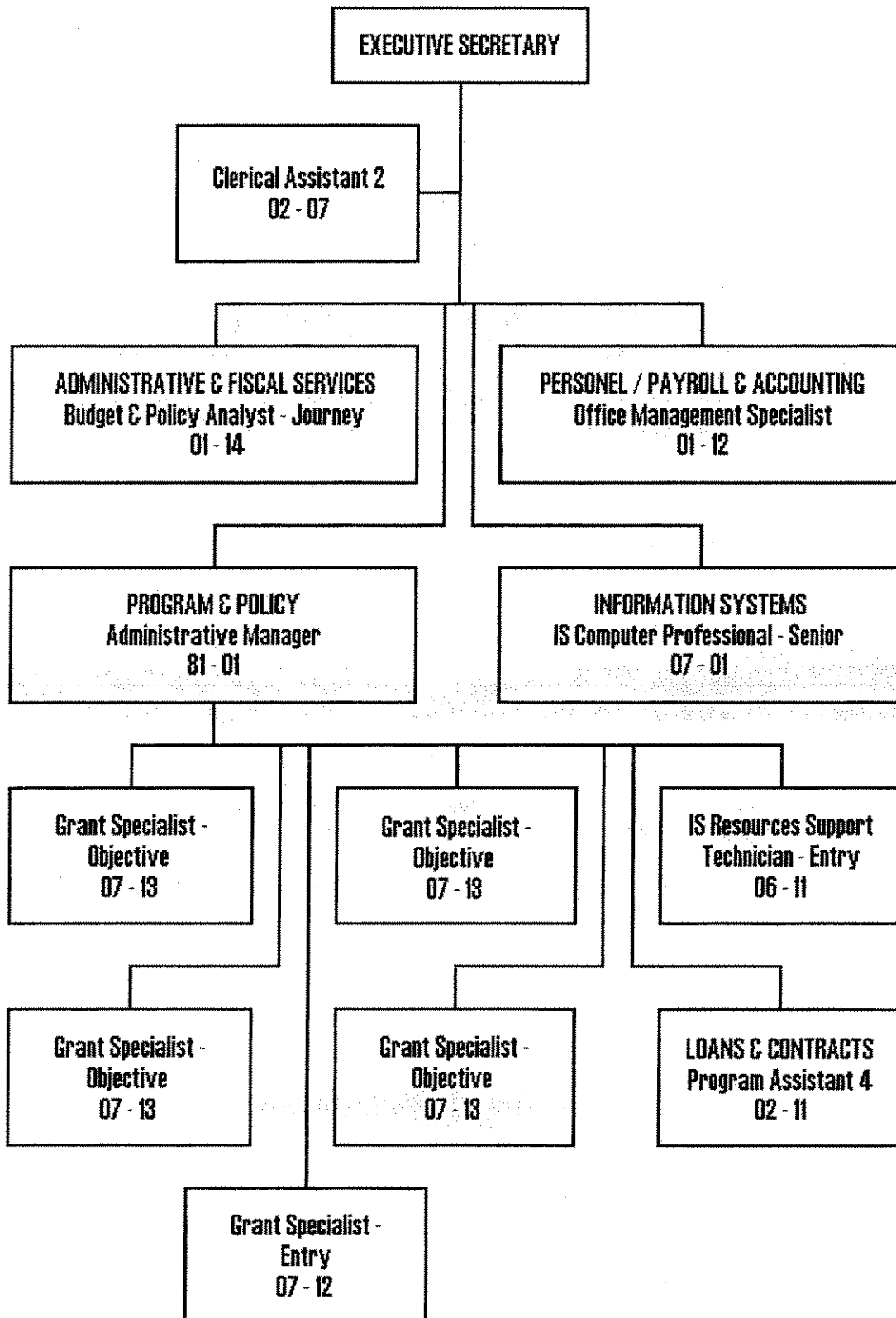
HIGHER EDUCATIONAL AIDS BOARD

The Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) is a part-time independent policy-making board composed of eleven members appointed to serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The Governor appoints one member from the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System; one member from the State Board of the Wisconsin Technical College System; one member who is a trustee of an independent college or university to represent such independent institutions; one student and one financial aid administrator each from within the University of Wisconsin System, Wisconsin Technical College System and independent institutions; one citizen member to represent the general public; and the state superintendent of public instruction.

The Executive Secretary is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor. The Executive Secretary makes policy recommendations to the Board; carries out policy directives from the Governor, Legislature and Board; and is responsible for initiating and carrying out all administrative direction and responsibilities of the agency. All 12 other permanent agency staff members are in classified service. The following organizational chart of the agency reflects the most recent structure. The agency is composed of two areas: (1) Programs and Policy (Student Support Activities); and (2) Administration and Fiscal Services.

The board administers the state programs of financial aid, including scholarship, grant, and loan programs; the Minnesota-Wisconsin reciprocity agreement; a contract for dental education services; and the contracts associated with the Medical College of Wisconsin. The agency's activities are organized into two programs. Program One includes the following subprograms which provide financial support to individuals: Academic Excellence Scholarship, Dental Education Contract (Capitation) Program, Handicapped Student Grant, Indian Student Assistance Grant, Minnesota-Wisconsin Reciprocity Program, Minority Undergraduate Grant, Minority Teacher Loan, Talent Incentive Program Grant, Teacher Education Loan, Teacher of the Visually Impaired Loan Program, Wisconsin Higher Education Grant, and Wisconsin Tuition Grant. Program Two includes the costs of administering the activities grouped under Program One along with costs associated with servicing contracts associated with the Medical College of Wisconsin, the Independent Student Grant, Nursing Student Stipend Loan, Paul Douglas Scholarship, Wisconsin Health Education Assistance Loan, and the Wisconsin Nonguarantee Loan.

**STATE OF WISCONSIN
HIGHER EDUCATIONAL AIDS BOARD
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



**STATE OF WISCONSIN
HIGHER EDUCATIONAL AIDS BOARD
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROPOSAL**

1. PROJECT NAME

Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) Mainframe Upgrade Project

2. DESCRIPTION

The HEAB request is to add \$127,815 in FY2002 and \$114,373 in FY2003 for a complete review and upgrade of the mainframe computer programs. This review and upgrade is necessary to continue the efforts of HEAB to support our staff with appropriate information technology, contain costs, improve performance and, more importantly, to keep pace with the changes and upgrades that are expected to be made by our customers.

The requested funding is needed to continue HEAB's efforts to maintain, enhance and add improvements to our core mission systems and the administrative systems that support our staff and our customers. The current HEAB mainframe programs were written in the 1970's and are considered "legacy systems". The updates to the programs since that time have been done in a piecemeal fashion when problems occurred. This has led to a system that is very complex and difficult to monitor and maintain.

For the past three years, HEAB has employed LTE's and IT staff to paste together "fixes" when problems arose. The money spent on LTE's and the comp time given to IT staff over the past three years are equal to a .75 FTE position. The LTE's were necessary as HEAB's IT staff consists of one FTE. In addition, it is estimated that HEAB staff has spent an average of 700 hours per year for the last three years working on mainframe program related problems.

The requested funds will be used to hire 2.00 FTE project positions and to pay for the CPU mainframe time used during the project.

3. MISSION

HEAB's #1 strategic business objective is to serve our customers in the best, most efficient manner possible. Our customers include students, schools, the state legislature, the general public and other state agencies. In the past few years, HEAB has made a great effort to move to a "paperless" environment for our customers and staff. While significant strides have been made in moving to an electronic environment, there is no time available to make the changes necessary to meet the everyday needs of the future.

The upgraded mainframe system will provide an improved work environment for HEAB staff and improved service to HEAB customers. The anticipated benefits are:

1. HEAB IT staff will be able to focus on developing and implementing new and more efficient programs rather than having to focus on maintaining existing, complex programs.

2. HEAB staff will not have to spend time reviewing data to make sure it is correct. This will allow more time to administer programs and respond to customers.
3. HEAB will be able to pro-actively deal with the needs of a continually changing IT environment.

4. PRIORITY

The upgraded mainframe system is the first priority in connection with HEAB's IT priorities. The time spent maintaining existing mainframe programs has severely limited the time spent on upgrading existing programs and developing new programs to better serve HEAB customers and staff. The IT manager has spent a majority of her time in the past three years working on problems associated with the mainframe programs.

Many of the projects on the priority list are connected with fixing problems that are associated with the old mainframe programs. This type of problem must be given priority so that HEAB can continue to meet the needs and expectations of its customers. However, this does not allow HEAB, with its limited IT resources, to work on upgrades much less develop the new programs needed for the future.

5. TIMETABLE

10/01/01	Interview and choose person to fill project position to analyze mainframe computer systems and suggest improvements.
4/01/02	Interview and hire project position Cobol programmer(s) to make changes and updates recommended by analyst.
4/31/02	Final Report from analyst. Termination of analyst employment.
10/1/02	Interview and hire project position CICS programmer(s) to complete changes and updates recommended by analyst.
10/31/02	Termination of Cobol programmer employment
2/28/03	End of project.

6. TECHNICAL FEATURES

There are no special technical features in this proposal.

7. COSTS

HEAB initially considered hiring a consulting firm to perform the tasks outlined above. However, after an initial search, a decision was made that the costs involved with a consulting firm did not fall within the cost containment guidelines set by HEAB. It was then decided that a series of project

positions would serve our needs and the costs involved would be significantly lower than if a consulting firm was hired.

Projected costs are shown in the following table:

PROJECT COST SUMMARY				
Cost Element	PY1 / FY2002	PY2 / FY2003	PY3 / FY2004	PY4 / FY2005
CPU Time	\$81,000	\$72,000		
Salaries & Benefits	\$44,415	\$39,973		
Supplies	\$2,400	\$2,400		
Total Cost	\$127,815	\$114,373		

Note: Projected costs are based on current costs. The cost of CPU time, salaries and support costs could increase due to factors beyond HEAB's control.

8. SAVINGS OFFSETS

Projected savings include:

1. Elimination of 90% of the comp time for current IT staff. Based on FY1998, FY1999 and FY2000 (through July 31st) this would mean a reduction from an average of 180 comp hours per year to an average of 18 comp hours per year. This would mean a savings of 20.25 days in comp time or, based on hourly salary, a savings of \$3,084 per year.
2. Elimination of the costs associated with the LTE's that have been used for the past three years. Based on an average hourly salary of \$12.83, this will mean an average savings of \$25,374 per year.
3. CPU costs are projected to be cut by 50% once the review and upgrade are complete. Based on the average usage over the last three years, this would be a savings of over \$38,000 per year.
4. Elimination of time spent by HEAB staff in dealing with mainframe program associated problems (700 hours per year). Based on an average annual salary \$16.34 per hour, this will mean an average savings of \$11,438 in salary plus time that can be spent on running existing programs more efficiently.

This is a projected savings of \$77,896 per year. Based on this calculation, the total cost of the project would be recouped in 3.11 years.

9. INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

Unmeasured Benefits: HEAB will be able to pro-actively work with its customers in both anticipating and implementing changes to the system. Once HEAB can begin dealing with

customers in a pro-active way, the number of future problems can be reduced. This will cause an increase in customer satisfaction. In addition, HEAB anticipates addition cost savings that are unknown at this time.

Measured Benefits: HEAB will be able to measure the decline in CPU hours used by IT staff. It will also be able to document the hours that staff is not spending on IT related problems. It is also projected that HEAB will not need to hire any IT related LTE's.

10. REVENUE IMPACTS

HEAB is not a revenue-generating agency.

11. OTHER SAVINGS

Time currently spent by HEAB staff in training and re-training of LTE's will be spent in improving the services provided to our customers.

12. COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

A cost benefit analysis shows that this project will show a return on the investment at the beginning of the third fiscal year. Each year after the third year will show savings of \$77,896. Over a ten-year period (beginning with FY2002) the savings are projected to be \$536,772.

PROJECT COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS				
Cost/Benefit	PY1 / FY2002	PY2 / FY2003	PY3 / FY2004	PY4 / FY2005
(Costs)	\$127,815	\$114,373		
Savings Offsets	\$77,896	\$77,896	\$77,896	\$77,896
= Net Budget Savings/(Costs)	(\$49,919)	(\$36,477)	\$77,896	\$77,896
Revenue Gains/(Losses)				
Other Savings				
Avoided Costs				
Total ANNUAL Savings (Costs)	(\$49,919)	(\$36,477)	\$77,896	\$77,896
Total CUMULATIVE Savings (Costs)	(\$49,919)	(\$86,396)	(\$8,500)	\$69,396

Governor McCallum's Budget Request

IT Project Proposal: Mainframe Upgrade

Source of Funds	Agency Request				Governor's Recommendation			
	FY02		FY03		FY02		FY03	
	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions	Dollars	Positions
GPR	127,900	2.00	114,400	2.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
PR-S	0	0.00	0	0.00	88,300	1.00	80,000	1.00
TOTAL	127,900	2.00	114,400	2.00	88,300	1.00	80,000	1.00

The Governor recommends providing \$88,300 PR-S in FY02 and \$88,000 PR-S in FY03, and 1.0 FTE PR-S project position beginning in FY02 to allow the agency to upgrade its mainframe computer programs. The completion of the project will allow the board to proactively anticipate and implement changes to the system, enabling the agency to more efficiently serve its customers. Funding will come from the dissolution of the Wisconsin Advanced Telecommunications Foundation's endowment fund.



Staff photo by Shane Opatz
 with water during a training exercise Sunday to a house on 180th Street in the town of LaFayette so new firefighters could gain experience. e. The Chippewa Fire Protection District ignited Dan and Jen Watke donated the house. They plan to build a new home in its place.

Libraries wired for sharing resources

By Eric Witholm
 Chippewa Falls News Bureau

Finding a certain book, magazine or video at libraries in Barron and Rusk counties has gotten a lot easier recently.

And library patrons in Eau Claire, Dunn, St. Croix and other west-central Wisconsin counties soon will reap similar benefits.

The Barron and Rusk County libraries, collectively known as the Bi-County Library and Information Consortium, recently introduced a shared library catalog system.

The program allows patrons to access one combined catalog of more than 222,000 items housed in eight libraries.

Although residents can't check out items, they can use computers at each library or at their homes to view the catalog. Patrons can place items on hold and then designate a library where the items should be shipped.

Under a new delivery system, items will arrive within a day or two, rather than the week or two it sometimes takes to receive items through interlibrary loans.

"It's amazing," said Mary Bloedow, directors of the Rusk County Community Library. "This just explodes the boundaries of what people can get a hold of."

The Bi-County libraries are the first in the Chippewa Valley to start such an automated system, said Nancy Hunt, new technologies coordinator for the Indianhead Federated Library System, which serves 10 counties.

But L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library in Eau Claire and 20 other libraries to the south and west soon will begin a similar program known as My Online Resource, Hunt said.

The system will connect Eau Claire with libraries in

Library Sharing

The following communities are part of the Bi-County Library and Information Consortium serving Barron and Rusk counties: Barron, Cameron, Cheek, Cumberland, Ladysmith, Mount Senario College, Rice Lake and Turtle Lake.

People can use the system through www.bolic.org.

The following libraries are part of My Online Resource: Altoona, Baldwin, Balsam Lake, Boyceville, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Deer Park, Dresser, L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library, Elsworth, Glenwood City, Hudson, the Indianhead Federated Library System, Luck, Milltown, New Richmond, Osceola, Park Falls, Polk County Library Federation in Balsam Lake, Prescott, River Falls, Somerset and Woodville.

Similar systems have been operating in the southern and eastern portions of the state for years, she said.

"I'd estimate we'd be up in a couple of months," Morse said.

The customers who will benefit the most from the shared systems are the ones who live in smaller communities, said Lori Bock of the Barron County Library Service in Rice Lake.

"Some of these libraries had no computers two years ago," said Bock, who spearheaded the Bi-County effort. "It's opened up a whole new world to some of these little communities."

Rusk County residents are giving rave reviews of the new system, Bloedow said.

"It's just our first step in this incredible movement of making things accessible to people wherever they are."

care and support
 Works.
 The third largest a
 \$436,000, would go to
 transportation programs
 W-2, or Wisconsin Wo
 replaced Aid to Families W
 Dependent Children in Septe
 1997, providing child care f
 and other financial incentives for
 unemployed parents to find work or
 job training.
 State Workforce Development
 Secretary Linda Stewart said the
 additional money would "go a long
 way toward helping employers fill
 job openings in this tight labor mar-
 ket."

Pepin library keeps growing in popularity

By Leader-Telegram staff

PEPIN — The Pepin Public Library has seen a steady increase in circulation and card-carrying users in the three years it's been open.

Librarian Christy Rundquist said 711 people are registered card carriers. Attendance in 1999 topped 8,600 children and adults, averaging 42 people a day.

The library, next to Pepin Village Hall, was built in 1996 for about \$200,000. About \$100,000 was raised by private donations and local fund-raising events, and the other \$100,000 was billed to property taxpayers.

Rundquist filed an annual report with the Pepin County Board last week, stating the library loaned 17,106 books, magazines and videos in 1999.

That compares with about 16,000 items loaned the previous year.

The library owns more than 12,000 books, nearly 1,000 videos and more than 200 audio materials.

"I certainly am very pleased with the usage at the library," said Mary Feyerweather, village clerk and a Library Board member. "Everyone else in the community is also pleased to see how people in the area have responded to the new library."

■ The Pepin Library is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesdays, 3 to 7 p.m. Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursdays and 9 a.m. to noon Saturdays.

L.E. Phillips, smaller libraries expected to share resources

LIBRARY
from Page 1B

Each library helped fund a certain portion of the project, which began in July 1997 and cost between \$150,000 and \$200,000, Bock said.

All the money was raised through fund-raisers, and each community library paid a percentage based on the size, she said.

But the libraries received most of the funding through substantial donations from two private companies and Indianhead grants.

The Jeld-Wen corporation, the Oregon-based parent company of Norco Windows in Hawkins, gave \$48,000, and Rhinehart Foods of La Crosse gave \$50,000. The founders of Rhinehart Foods are originally from the Rice Lake area, Bock said.

The main Bi-County computer system is in Rice Lake, Bock said. Each library then bought a certain number of 40 available user licenses to access the system using computers and a high-speed communication line.

Residents need a new library card to use the system, she said, because all materials in each library have been bar-coded.

That was the toughest task, Bock said, because the seven libraries outside Rice Lake still had materials marked in a card catalog.

Library workers had to sort the items and bar-code them by hand. The My Online system will link L.E. Phillips with smaller libraries as far away as Ellsworth, Dresser and Park Falls, Hunt said.

Most collections in the system will go from a few thousand to more than 400,000, she said. Thus far Boyceville is the only

library in Dunn County participating, and no Chippewa County libraries are included, Hunt said.

Chippewa Falls librarian Rosemary Kilbridge said funding was an issue, and the Library Board saw no immediate need to participate in the program. She estimated it would cost \$60,000 to join.

Memomnie is undergoing a building project and planned to wait until that was completed before deciding whether to join, Hunt said.

Widholm can be reached at 723-0303 or eric.widholm@ecpc.com.

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[R] Eve 7:05-9:05
HERE ON EARTH
[PG-13] Eve 7:15-9:15
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12/13	WTBS	Fresh Pr.	Fresh Pr.	"Enchino Man" ** (1992)	Sean Astin 35008512	"Twins" *** (1988, Comedy)
14	WGN	Full House	Full House	"Runaway Train" ** 1/2 (1985)	Jon Voight 719883	News [R] 812319
16	AAE	Law & Order	PG 5:55-6:06	Biography: Don 767777	Investigative 776425	City Confidential [R] 756661
17	LFE	Intimate Portrait	7:43-222	Beyond Chance [R] 384593	"All She Ever Wanted" (1996)	Marcia Cross 304357
18	FAM	Boss 5:13-9	Boss 5:05-5:39	"Lean on Me" ** 1/2 (1989)	Morgan Freeman 532203	Famous Families 377203
21	CNBC	Business	Upfront Ton.	Hardball 4360319	Rivera Live 4379067	Brian Williams 4359203
22	DISN	"Toothless" ** 1/2 (1997)	G [R] 3:79-7:80	"Escape to Witch Mountain" [R] 73205133	"A Kid in Aladdin's Palace" (1	
23	MTV	Road Rules	Road Rules	"Who le Julia?" ** 1/2 (1986)	Mare Winningham 1532303	Life and Times 120715
24	TNN	Matt Houston [R]	6:33-8:54	Thornberrys Thornberrys	Brady 246609	Hillbillies
25	NICK	Hey Arnold!	Bugrats 'Y'	Paramedics PG 12:59-9	Paramedics PG 1:02-3:19	Trauma Center 115893
26	TLC	Trauma: Life	6:28-8:32	On the Inside 772809	Are You Being 7:13-3:57	Invisible Places 'G' 7:15-3:3
27	DISC	Wild Discovery	5:30-3:38	World Today [R]	31:60-6:07	Figure Skating: World Championships (Taped) 114661
29	CNN	Moneyline	Crossfire [R]	Sportscenter [R]	9:25-8:54	WVF Raw '14' [R] 31:08-9
30	ESPN	Sportscenter	[R] 9:25-8:54	WVF Monday Nitro (Live)	PG [R] 7:24-1	"Body Armor" ** (1997)
31	TNT	ER '14-V'	[R] 6:28-5:74	Texas Ranger 301135	WWF War Zone [R] 45:56-2:03	Far
32	USA	JAG "The Prisoner"	10:88-64	Hollywood	"Marmie" *** (1994, Suspense)	Tippi Hedren, PG 8:35-9:9
33	AMC	(4:00) "The Chase"	2:28-9:70	Call for Help	News	Screen Savers
34	ZDTV	Hardball	6:14-6:33	China Files 3658098	Talk Soup	Scandals
35	MSNBC	Fashion & Search		True Hollywood Story	"Farrah Fawcett" PG-D' 5:36-5:57	Headliners 5:57-9:70
36	EI	Genluses	Sidelines	Sports	Go!t Deep (R) 10:55-9:3	Inside Winston Cup 12:35-7
37	MSC	Hunting	Sportsman	Motor Trend Auto Racing	SCCA Trans-Am 8:13-3:16	Auto Racing 5:17-3:08
38	OUTDR	Winston Cup	5:27-8:45	Animals-Time 38777	Call of the Wild PG 4:7-4:25	Animal 9:30-9
39	SPEED	Animals	You Lie-Dog	Auction	Collect	Home Country
40	AP	Old House	Workshop	7th Heaven	"Who Nose"	Buffy the Vampire Slayer
41	HOME	Friends PG	Comer Pyle	Emergency! 5:55-6:06	Behind the Music 9:10-57	Best-Divas '99 1:16-3:1
42	WB	Griffith	Rock 'n' Roll	Pillars of Faith 7:53-3:19	Saints	Praise-A-Thon 7:54-2:03
43	TVL	List 5:38-8:3	Rock 'n' Roll	Hollywood	Feud 1:53-1:39	Match Game 3's a Crowd
44	VH1	Daily Mass	5:53-3:48	Ducktales [R]	Bonkers [R]	Aladdin 'Y'
46	EW/BN	Indy	Newlywed	NYPD Blue '14' [R]	3:53-7:16	X-Files '14-V' [R]
47	GAME	Indy	Newlywed	NHL Hockey: New Jersey Devils at Florida Panthers (Live)	4:53-2:41	Masters [R]
48	DTON	Timon	Tale Spin 'Y'	Masters 1997 5:14-2:16	Masters [R]	Crime Stories 4:38-6:57
49	FX	M*A*S*H [R]	M*A*S*H [R]	Cops 8:30-1:35	Cops 9:44-2:47	Homicide: Life 4:38-6:59
50	ESPN2	NEL 5:42-7:8	NHL Hockey	Outer Limits '14'	9:18-7:39	Outer Limits [R]
51	GOLF	Golf 5:08-15:2	Golf 5:07-2:84	Outer Limits '14-V'	9:17-8:22	Outer Limits '14-V' 9:17-8:22
53	COURT	Mingshot (R)	6:48-4:22	Ed Ed	Tom-Jerry	Bugs & Daffy 4:24-6:57
54	SCFI	Outer Limits	4:48-1:80	"Blood and Wine" *** (1996)	Jack Nicholson 7:23-57	Profiles "Cher" PG 8:18-5:3
55	TOON	Dexter's Lab	Dexter's Lab	Shroud of Turin [R]	89:30-4:25	Killed Kennedy 89:18-4:5
56	BRAVO	Moonlighting	27:66-80	"Cheech & Chong's The Corsican Brothers"	5:09-6:22	Strangers Upright
57	HIST	20th Century PG	9:38-6:53	College Basketball: NCAA Champ. - Fla. vs. Mich. St.	18:33-9	News 6:56-1
59	COM	Daily 5:07-6:50	Ben Stein	"Picture Perfect" ** 1/2 (1997)	Jennifer Aniston [R]	2:56-1
-5	KSTP-5	News 5:56-1	News 9:24	"Picture Perfect" ** 1/2 (1997)	Jennifer Aniston [R]	2:56-1
-9	WSAW-7	News 9:47-5	Home Imp.	King 1:68-0	Raymond	College Basketball: NCAA Champ. - Fla. vs. Mich. St.
-11	KARE-11	News 9:47-5	Hollywood	"Picture Perfect" ** 1/2 (1997)	Jennifer Aniston [R]	2:56-1
71	HBO	News 9:47-5	Ent. Tonight	Dateline [R]	6:38-45	Twenty One 'G' [R]
72	HBOP	The Pick-Up Artist	3:46-6:0	"No Alibi" (1999, Suspense)	Dean Cain	Sopranos 'MA' [R]
73	HBOP	Lethal Weapon	[R] 24:18-24:1	Chimps-Like Us 8:36-4:3	1:35	"Ms. Bear" ** 1/2 (1997)

LETTERS

*"There are reasons females may be paid less.
They are more likely to take what they get.... They take
lower pay in hopes of moving up within the same organization..."*

Knee-jerk on gender bias

As a male, 1999 GSLIS graduate, I want to comment on "Better Pay, More Jobs," by Vicki L. Gregory & Sonia Ramirez Wohlmuth (*LJ* 10/15/00, p. 30-36). I am as willing as a female to take any job anywhere to get the experience I need. However, why should I take a lower-paying job just because it's offered? I moved cross-country with my librarian spouse (who makes more than I do) to take the job I have now....

As a former public elementary school teacher—a female-dominated field—it seems to me that there are reasons females may be paid less. They are more likely to take what they get. They are less willing to move to take a better-paying job. They take lower pay in hopes of moving up within the same organization, whereas males may move from place to place, as is often the case in academia, to get those pay increases.

I know there is no easy answer, but to continually infer...that pay differentials are solely based on overt gender differences—bias on the part of employers—avoids the entire issue of self-selection for pay on the part of applicants. Why some people are paid more than others—which is always the case among males—seems to have more to do with supply and perceived demand. Some people, and perhaps more of them are males, demand more pay—and get it....

I changed jobs because the pay is higher at my present institution. Others remained. Many of these former colleagues have stayed for more than ten years. In one move, I have increased my salary more than one former colleague's increments over nine years of service! We are in different states, but this is a case where a newly minted male librarian is paid more than a tenured, experi-

enced female librarian in a similar academic institution....

This topic needs more reflection than just knee-jerk response....

—Garry Church, Laredo, TX

Sharing helps everyone

"Technology and Teamwork" (John Berry, *LJ* 9/1/00, p. 160-163) resonated with the Barron and Rusk County public librarians who worked for two years to bring technology to their rural Wisconsin libraries. This has been done many places, but few have developed a team that has so easily put aside local traditions to promote the best solution for all concerned. Each librarian feels strongly connected to a unique public library and to a consortium called BCLIC.

BCLIC consists of seven public libraries, one college library, and one county library service. The libraries purchased their Dynix system with generous foundation grants and community support....

Many of the 60,000 people in Barron and Rusk counties have no computer access at home. Libraries experienced a dramatic increase in use as a result of the new system....

BCLIC libraries individually own from 5000 to 50,000 items, but with the new system each patron sees the 230,000 items available in the entire consortium. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of books being reserved and sent from one library to another. During our first month, 198 books were shared. In September, the number had risen to 1,604.

The number of patrons at the Chetek library increased from 810 in September 1999 to 1,611 in September 2000. Circulation at Rice Lake increased by 2000 in August and by 1000 in September over 1999. Turtle Lake experienced record high circulation in August 2000.

While other libraries in shared systems struggled to standardize policies, the libraries of BCLIC worked together

to make this happen with little difficulty. The primary consideration of each librarian is what will work best for all. Each library managed to maintain its autonomy and independence while standardizing loan periods and fines.

—Lori Bock, Dir., Barron Cty. Lib. Svc., Rice Lake, WI

Interlibrary déjà vu

I experienced déjà vu when I read "Technology and Teamwork" (John Berry, *LJ* 9/1/00, p. 160-163). Our member libraries here at the Lewis & Clark Library System have been performing self-initiated interlibrary loan since 1992. The increase in use of interlibrary loan has been immense.

We serve over 140 libraries in ten counties located in southwestern Illinois.... Our multitype member libraries lend books, videos, DVDs—anything not cataloged as reference or local history. They even lend individual magazine issues to other libraries and other patrons. Last fiscal year our members lent/borrowed over 200,000 items....

Congratulations to Westchester.... Interlibrary loan backed by a strong delivery service is a wonderful thing....

—Charm Ruhnke, Consulting Mgr., Lewis & Clark Lib. Syst., Edwardsville, IL

Sighted "site" cited

Internet use and reliance on spell-check programs may be partly to blame for the unique situation in *How Do You Manage?* (*LJ* 10/1/00, p. 68-70). Both respondents to the case study "Whose Life Is It Anyway?" used the word "site," popularized by the Internet, when they meant to use another word. The spell-checker didn't pick up on the "image in plain site" in Analysis I, nor the "document that sites the..." rule in Analysis II. Thankfully, "hit the site..." in the last paragraph was exactly right!

—Pam Gilchrist, Admin. Asst. III, Dept. of State, Tennessee State Lib. & Archives, Nashville

LJ welcomes letters and will publish as many as possible. Those that exceed 250 words may be excerpted by the editors. Write to: Letters, *LJ*, 249 W. 17th St., New York, NY 10011; FAX 212-463-6734; E-mail: berry@lj.cahners.com

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The visually impaired in Barron County can enjoy their community newspapers through tape recordings provided by the county Library Service and volunteer readers.



By Pamela Powers
Menomonee News Bureau

Call the Barron County Library Service in Rice Lake at (715) 234-6637 for more information.

Above: Wendy Strook of Rice Lake is part of a

Menomnie News Bureau

RICE LAKE — Gwen Jump didn't like relying on others to tell her about the news published in her local paper. Legally blind from macular degeneration, Jump can't read the Rice Lake Chronotype herself.

"When you rely on other people to tell you what is in the paper, they tell you what is interesting to them," said Jump, 77. "You don't get a lot."

That changed in June, when the Barron County Library Service started creating cassette tapes of volunteers reading portions of the Chronotype, the Barron News-Shield and the Chetek Alert.

"You feel more involved with the community," Jump said. "You don't feel left out when you meet other people and they are talking about something they read in the paper."

The program was the brainchild of Lori Bock, the library service's director, after she learned the

Wisconsin State Journal and Milwaukee Journal Sentinel newspapers were available through a telephone service for the blind.

"I realized if you live in a rural area, you can't get your paper," Bock said. "You can get all kinds of books and magazines from the library for the blind."

Bock's idea also was inspired by her mother, Helen Sanborn of Spring Valley, Minn., who is legally blind from macular degeneration and missed reading the local newspaper after she lost her sight.

Call the Barron County Library Service in Rice Lake at (715) 234-6637 for more information or to volunteer to help read newspapers.

Dick Pomo, executive director of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind, said he is not aware of any other such programs where local newspapers are tape-recorded.

"We're very pleased about it," Pomo said. "It was unique... when they came to us for funding, we thought it might spur on some other communities to do it too."

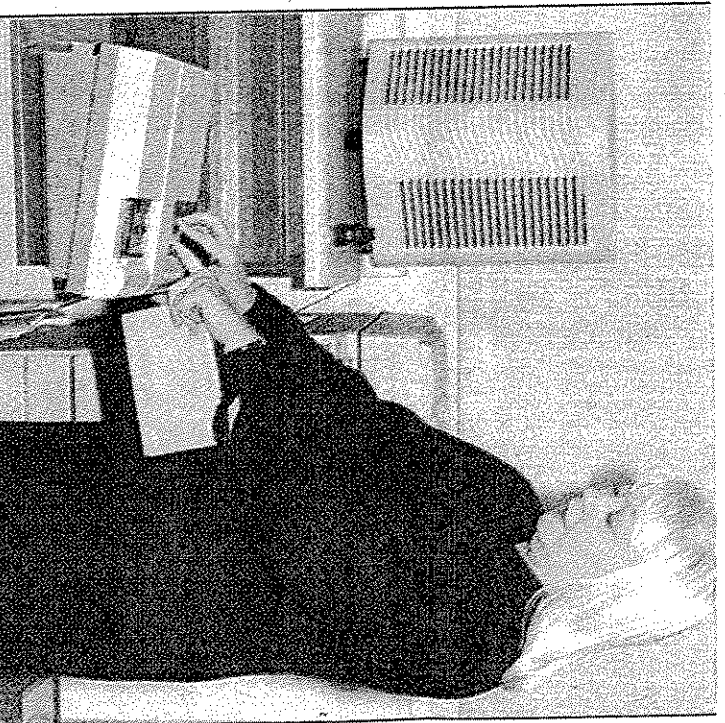
Karen Anderson, a Barron County Library Service staff member, talked to a local support group for the visually impaired to determine what they would like to hear about from the newspapers.

"We do offer the feature articles and the main articles on the front page," Anderson said. "They also wanted the police report and the social column. They wanted to hear positive articles about students, because they felt there was so much negativity in the news."

Jump said her favorite part of the newspaper is the police reports.

"It is just fun to hear the silly things (the police) get called for. I don't mind the letters to the editor either, but I don't always agree with what people think."

The newspapers are read aloud each Wednesday into a tape recorder. The tapes are copied and mailed out to about two dozen visually impaired residents in the county, Bock said. Tapes also are available at the Rice Lake and Barron public libraries.



Staff photos by Pamela Powers
A portion of Rice Lake is part of a volunteer program with the Barron County Library Service to make the newspaper available for those with vision loss. Strok recently read the Chetek Alert into a tape recorder. Left: Lori Bock, director of the Barron County Library Service in Rice Lake, duplicated cassette tapes sent out to area residents. The program provides audio copies of the Rice Lake Chronotype, the Barron News-Shield and the Chetek Alert.

Joyce Scott, 76, of Rice Lake, who is legally blind from macular degeneration, said when the cassette arrives in the mail she sits right down to listen to the news.

"I am so appreciative," she said. "Otherwise you kind of feel like you are left out, in a tunnel. I always say."

Four volunteers read the newspapers each week.

Wendy Stroik of Rice Lake volunteers to read the Chetek Alert. After living in Chetek

for 30 years, she enjoys reading the newspaper for others from her community.

"I love to read," she said. "I've always been an avid reader. This is my way of giving something back to the community. If I couldn't read the newspaper, I would certainly be crying to have it on tape."

Jeff Anderson of Rice Lake, who is a Rice Lake school board member, started volunteer

Reading/Donations started se

from Page 6F

reading in July.

"Enthusiasm helps when you are reading," Anderson said. "I don't take sides. I like that this is providing something for people who probably wouldn't get it otherwise."

The start-up cost of the program was between \$800 and \$1,000, Bock said. The program got started through donations from the VFW, the Rice Lake

Lions Club, the Wisconsin Council of the Blind Regional Library Service. For the future, Bock would like to have Cumberland Advocate on cassette tape. "It would be nice to have a community group program over," Bock said. "I think towns could offer Powers can be reached at (715) 235-9018 or powers@ecpc.com."

Web links libraries to living rooms

by Lynda Olsen
Chronotype staff

Barron and Rusk county readers are using their libraries more than ever since the Bi-County Library Information Consortium completed its shared computer system in April.

The system links catalogs including about 235,000 books as well as books on tape, videos, CDs and magazines in the collections of Rice Lake, Barron, Cameron, Turtle Lake and Cumberland public libraries; Cahoun Memorial Library in Chetek; and Rusk County Community Library and Mount Senario College, both in Ladysmith.

"We have 160,000 unique titles," said Barron County Library Service director Lori Bock. "We knew Rice Lake had the largest collection, and we thought that the other libraries would have smaller sets of the same books. But each library has a specialty."

"Now that we've thrown them together, it makes for a really great collection."

BCLIC's Web site at "www.bcllc.org" allows library patrons to search the catalog, place holds on and renew library materials. Items are delivered to the library that is most convenient for the patron and may be returned to any member site.

The Web site also provides links to each member's Web page; Badger Link, a project that connects the information resources of the state's universities, agencies and government to its libraries; and a newspaper index where volunteers maintain birth, marriage and death records from local newspapers to aid genealogical research.

"We're hoping someday to go back to 1900," said Bock.

systems were already computerized, and workers there had to "unlearn and get used to a whole new way," Bock said.

TECHNOLOGY EXPANDS SERVICES

An average of 306 people visit the Web site each month. Monthly use was highest in October, when 569 patrons placed 110 holds on library materials. About 60 holds are placed each month.

The following statistics do not include interlibrary loans.

In Rice Lake, total items loaned rose 13% from October 1999 to October 2000 and 9% from September 2000 to October 2000. The number of borrowers increased by 13% from October 1999 to October 2000 and by 9% from September 1999 to October 2000.

Changes that were made in Rice Lake "were things that moved us forward," said cataloger Linda Meyers. The grace period ended, but new materials may now be borrowed for 14 days, and other materials are loaned for 4 weeks with a renewal option on most items.

"So that's an added benefit," said Meyers. "People were always trying to figure out when their materi-

als were due. Now they know: it's the date that's stamped."

At Barron, circulation in October 2000 was up about one-third from October 1999 and about 11% from September 2000. Almost 57% more people borrowed from the library in this October than last and 19% more checked out material in October 2000 than in September 2000.

Cameron checkouts rose by 45% from October 1999 to October 2000 and by almost 6% from September 2000 to last month. Borrowers increased by 43% from last October to this one and by 8% from September 2000.

"It's made my small library a big library, because I can borrow from these larger libraries and have it here in a couple of days," said Cameron director Patli Becker. "Our patrons are so excited."

In Cumberland, total items borrowed rose by 11% from October 1999 to October 2000, and borrowers rose by 6% from October 1999 to October 2000.

"We never knew what Rice Lake or Barron owned," said director Diana Ostness. "Our people love it because they can return books here even if they get them at Rice Lake or

Barron. They don't have to make that extra trip."

"In the months I've checked, our patrons per month have just about doubled over last year," said Cahoun Memorial Library director Judy Bishop.

People enjoy using library computers, she said. And summer residents often bring their children to the library on rainy days.

"One will be on the Internet while the other one reads books to the kids," said Bishop.

Mount Senario's membership in the consortium gives library patrons access to a wonderful mix of resources, said Mary Blodow, Rusk County Community Library director.

Circulation there is growing exponentially in response to the new facility and BCLIC's shared catalog, said Blodow. In fact, staff members are so busy they have not removed the old card catalog. Though it has not been updated in months, it is still occasionally used.

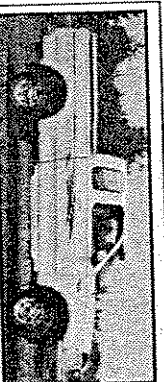
"It's a nice way to 'mean people,'" said Blodow, who demonstrates the new system when patrons cannot find what they want.

Few road projects holiday travel

Hunters and Thanksgiving travelers headed for the highways will find few work zones to slow them down. Most major highway construction and repair projects have ended for the year, but Wisconsin Department of Transportation Secretary Terry Mulcahy said that a few long-term projects may continue to require extra diligence.

"We'll do everything we can to make sure that all available lanes are open to traffic during this, the busiest holiday season of the year," Mulcahy said. "All our road-building equipment will be parked and the orange barrels pulled back, where possible, to ensure that you can go over the river and through the woods as conveniently as possible."

Mulcahy noted long-term projects that motorists may notice include I-94 between Waukesha County; Hwy. T and SS just west of Milwaukee; Hwy. 10 between Waupaca County; Hwy. E and A; and Hwy. 50 east of Lake Geneva, which is closed, requiring a detour. Several large projects, including the west Madison Beltline and Hwy. 10

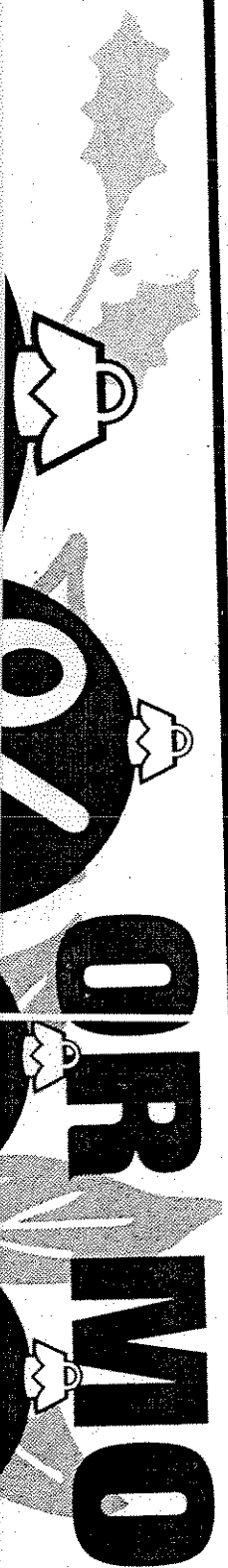


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iron and may be returned to any member site.

The Web site also provides links to each member's Web page; BadgerLink, a project that connects the information resources of the state's universities, agencies and government to its libraries; and a newspaper index where volunteers maintain birth, marriage and death records from local newspapers to aid genealogical research.

"We're hoping someday to go back to 1900," said Bock.

SETTING YOUR SIGHTS

Library communities across the nation are installing shared systems, but BCLIC members showed an unusual "spirit of cooperation" during the 2-year set-up and training process, she said.

The library service is based downstairs in the Rice Lake Public Library. It provides cataloging and computer services for Barron County libraries and some administrative functions for Rusk County Community Library through rural tax dollars.

Policies like fines and loan periods had to be standardized," she said.

"There were a lot of small changes," she said. "But when it's your library and it's your changes, they don't seem small.

"We all worked together, and decisions were based on whatever was best for the group," she said.

"Rice Lake gave up its grace period, and it was hard for the librarians and the patrons," said Bock.

As grants and donations arrived at various libraries, they were pooled to fund implementation of the \$200,000 system at each site.

BCLIC directors, staffs and volunteers also sponsored fund-raisers, including a Walkathon, several bake sales and food booths at the Renaissance Fair last year in Shakopee, Minn.

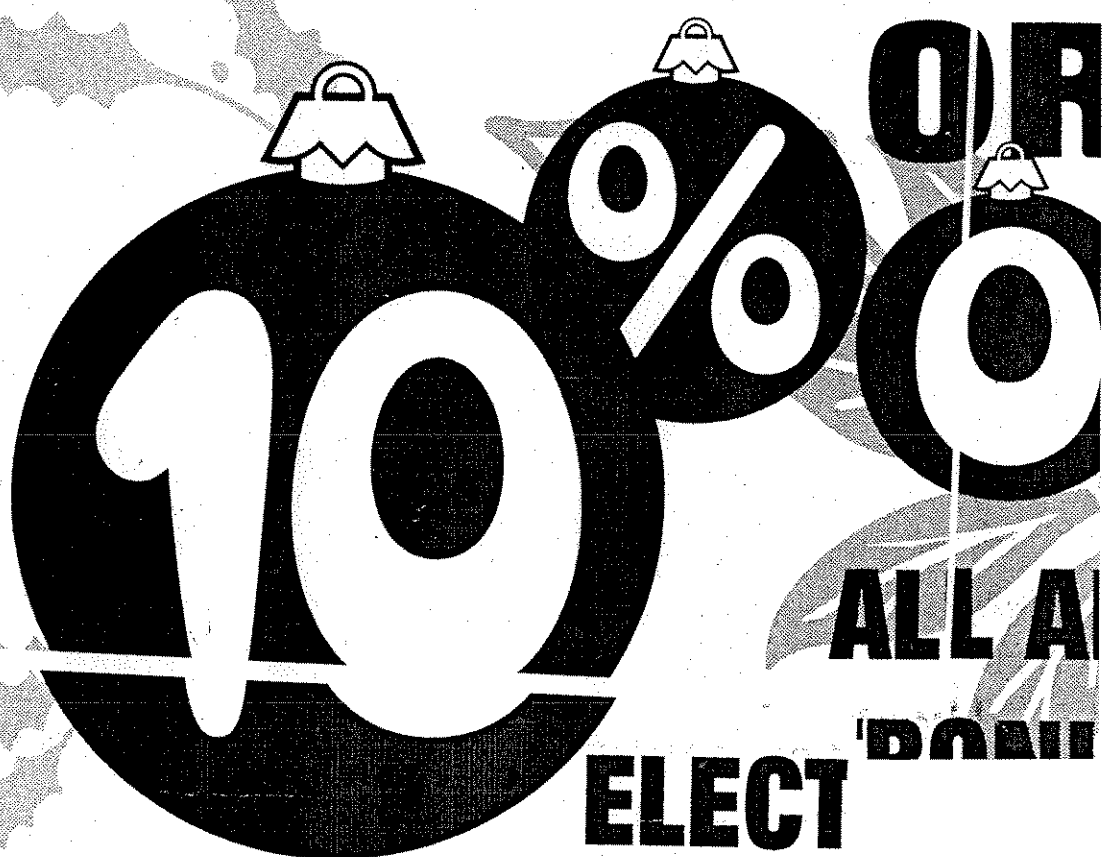
Library employees from each site attended training and then taught other co-workers and volunteers. Rice Lake's catalog and circulation



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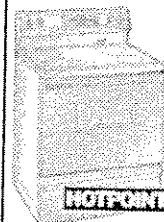
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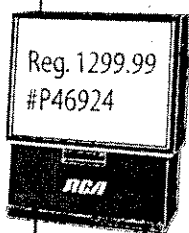
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Technology/teamwork in Barron & Rusk Counties

The September 1, 2000 Library Journal printed an article titled "Technology and Teamwork." The article resonated with our Barron and Rusk County public librarians. These librarians have worked for over two years to bring technology to their libraries. This has been ac-

complished in many communities throughout the country, but probably no where has a team developed that has so easily put aside local traditions and worked together to promote the best solution for all concerned. Each librarian feels strongly connected not only to a unique public library, but to a consortium called BCLIC (Bi-County Library and Information Consortium).

BCLIC is a consortium of seven public libraries, one college library and one county library service serving seven small communities and the surrounding rural area. The libraries were able to purchase their new Dynix system with generous foundation grants and community support. All but two of the libraries were using manual check out methods involving alphabetizing and sorting through hundreds of cards daily when the project started.

Barron and Rusk counties are home to 60,000 people. Many of them with no access to, or experience with computers. The change that this has made for the small, rural communities is remarkable. Libraries experienced a dramatic increase in library use as a result of the new, shared system. The number of patrons coming to the Chetek library increased from 810 in September 1999 before the system to 1611 in September of 2000 after the system was in place. Rice Lake's August 2000 circulation showed an increase of 2000 over 1999 and September increased 1000 over the previous year. Turtle Lake set an all time high circulation record in August of 2000.

The new Dynix system has made it possible for anyone with a BCLIC library card to reserve books from home, or from any computer anywhere. When a request is filled the patron is notified by phone, mail or email and the book is sent to the library most convenient for the patron.

With the old system patrons had access to only the books in their library's collection. BCLIC libraries individually own from 5,000 to 50,000 items. With the new system, each patron sees the 230,000 items available in the entire consortium. With the old system, to reserve a book, a librarian had to go through hundreds of cards, find the appropriate one and paper clip it. With the new system a patron can reserve a book at a computer anywhere with just a click of the mouse. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of books being reserved and sent from

Cooperation . . .

one library to another. During our first month of operation, 198 books were shared. After just over a year, in September 2000, the number of shared books had risen to 1604.

Most of the libraries in the system began with two day per week delivery. After a few months, volunteers were recruited to provide a third day each week. One year after the volunteer service was initiated, the regional library system was convinced that the third day was essential and started providing the service to all BCLIC libraries.

While other libraries in shared systems struggled to standardize policies, the libraries of BCLIC worked together to make this happen with a minimum of difficulty. The primary consideration of each librarian is what will work best for all. Each library managed to maintain its autonomy and independence while standardizing loan periods and fines. Several vendors and trainers have commented on the wonderful atmosphere of cooperation that exists in BCLIC and mentioned that this is not the norm for shared systems.

It is obvious now that being part of a shared system benefits all members. The BCLIC librarians should be commended for being able to endure the hard work, the fund raising, the mind numbing training sessions without losing sight of the goal of improved and expanded service for all.

mary
Sr Review

Volunteers Needed To Deliver Library Materials

by Lori Bock, Barron County Library Service

Barron County public libraries are getting new computers this summer. Some of our library users wonder if this is really a good idea. And frankly, some of the Barron County librarians are scared about this, too. Computers have taken over our lives. They sneaked into our cars and then our kitchens. And, now they will be in every one of our Barron County public libraries.

Maybe not all of this good, but there are a lot of good things that computers will do for our libraries:

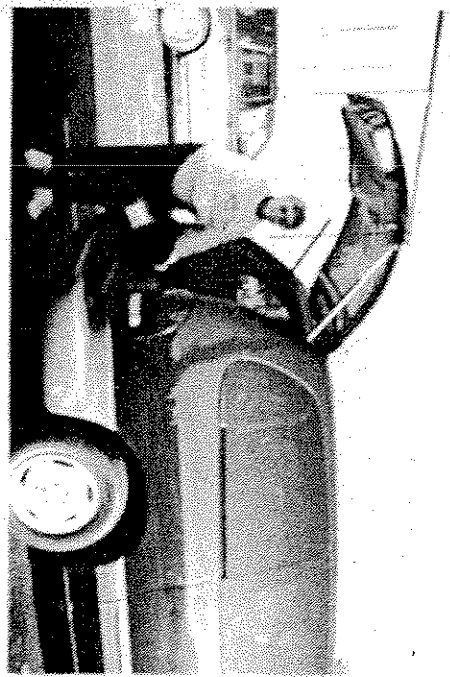
- The state and county are now requiring that libraries keep detailed statistics on library usage to justify funding.
- With the cost of books skyrocketing, libraries need to keep careful track of who has what. Computers can do a lot of practical record keeping.
- And, computers certainly increase the amount of information available and the speed with which people can access it. People even in the smallest libraries can access vast amounts of information from all over the world in just seconds.

A few months ago local library staff were talking about the new computers we will be getting, what they will do for us, and how we should let people know about this. They came up with the idea of having a publicity campaign in the Fall. The theme for the campaign is going to be "Celebrate The Magic." It is a wonderful theme because magic is the perfect word to describe all of the things computers can do for us that we really do not understand at all. And, we really believe it was magic that made this all possible.

Magically, money appeared for the project. Fund raising projects brought in more than expected. Foundations and Barron Electric Cooperative offered grants. Villages and the County appropriated money so this could happen.

Magically, people got excited about the possibility of a library network that would link all the libraries together so that whatever was available in one of them could be used by anyone. Books could be checked out in one town and returned in another. Not all the libraries would have to order copies of every book or magazine. Books could be shared.

Magically, volunteers appeared when we needed them to answer technical questions. Technical consultants and MIS managers from local companies like Rice Lake Weighing Systems and The Turkey Store helped us think about how to build a network.



Karen Anderson delivers books to the Rice Lake Public Library.

Is the magic over now that we are ready to go? We hope not. We still need more magic. We need lots of volunteers like you who would be willing to help us deliver library materials. The new computers will mean that even more people throughout the county will be requesting books from other libraries and returning them at the library that is most convenient. All of these books need to be delivered to the right library within a day or two so patrons do not experience long waits for materials. A trip around the county will have to be made several times per week. Each trip will take about four hours and involve stopping at six libraries with materials. If you would be willing to sign up for at least a couple of days a month to deliver materials, please call the Barron County Library Service at 234-6637. We will begin making trips in April. Trips will not be made in bad weather or on icy roads and you will be compensated for mileage.

Is this library computer project really magic? Maybe it is, or maybe it is just a lot of caring people like you working very hard to accomplish a little miracle. This Fall we invite you to come "Celebrate The Magic." Even if you are afraid of computers or if you have never touched one, come and see what they can do for you.

reopen planned

ginning at 2 p.m. with by County Board Chair Allison, state Rep. Mary Jans, Bob Jauch and Ron local participants in the project. ar library hours will re-nday. is for the raffle sponsored tends of the Library are at the open house. Grand re two Princess Diana Babies and a 1997 Ty Bear.

agree m fit

re said the college has de- n advising system to pro- lents with the support they 1.

ly must students identify ational advisor—a mentor chosen career who under- e skills they will need and e help guide them toward eer goal, but they are also a WTTC advisor who can n translate the skills into ork that is offered at the

another way to provide a service to our students by them an alternative way to

Libraries work to link resources

March 18, 1998—RICE LAKE (WIS) CHRONOTYPE—3

The Barron County Library Service is assisting county libraries in efforts to purchase a computer system that would link the six sites and give county residents access to all county-owned material.

When complete, the system will allow users to borrow and return books at public libraries in Rice Lake, Barron, Chetek, Cumberland, Turtle Lake, and Cameron, as well as at the Mt. Scenario Library and the Rusk County Community Library, both in Ladysmith. Lori Boch, director of the service, said it is hoped that courier service will be able to transport material between libraries within 2 days.

Barron County Library Service is housed in the lower level of the Rice Lake Public Library and supported by taxes from rural residents to give them access to library services throughout the county.

The service purchases books and circulates them among the six Barron County libraries, said Boch. When the rotation cycle is completed, the books return to Rice Lake. Boch said few libraries have had the extra space to store books provided by the county service, but when that changes, as in the case of Barron, those libraries might request that certain books be housed at their sites.

New federal legislation has created a program to provide more people access to the Internet. Under the program, telecommunication services purchased by schools and libraries qualify for discounts reimbursed through the Federal Com-

munications Commission. Boch said the requirement to have a state-approved technology plan has been met and the forms have been filed, which would discount the telephones and wiring for the network that will link the libraries.

Rice Lake must replace its existing system because its vendor will not support it after January 1999, said Boch. They will purchase a system compatible with its existing database, so most references that need to be entered will be notations indicating where information is housed.

The Rice Lake Library may someday purchase additional computers, but the software being considered will work with the existing computers. Boch said when activated, the system will ask whether the search will be local or throughout the entire county library system.

The system that connects the county and Ladysmith libraries will be similar to what Rice Lake has, said Boch, but, "it will be a giant system for the whole county."

Barron County has volunteered to house and maintain the system at its computer center in the courthouse in Barron, but no final decision has been made. If the system is located at the Rice Lake Library, a server with adequate storage space would have to be purchased.

Project supporters hope to purchase a package accessible through the Internet so users can search library materials from home or school. Boch said the consortium is hoping

for a direct link between the libraries and area schools within the next few years.

Boch said it will likely be early 2000 when all eight sites are connected. "It depends on how the money comes in and if we are able to get the grant money we need," she said.

The Cumberland City Council has appropriated \$50,000 this year for the project, said Boch.

In preparation for the system's implementation, Rice Lake Weighing has loaned the Barron County Library Service a printer specifically for printing bar code labels. Datamax, the Florida company that supplies labels for Rice Lake Weighing, donated enough, Boch said, to

provide bar code labels for all the materials owned by Barron County. Fund-raising events may include golf day in each community this summer and local art shows next fall.

A walk is scheduled for March 28 at either the Barron Area Community Center or the Rice Lake Cedar Mall. Registration is at 8:30 a.m., with "lots of wonderful prizes," said Boch.

The fee is \$3 for children 12 and under, \$6 for adults and \$15 for families. Registration forms are available at all county libraries. For information call Lori Boch at 234-6637.

Small business seminar slated

Western Wisconsin Development Corporation will sponsor a small business seminar from 8:30-11:30 a.m. Tuesday at Turtleback Golf and Country Club in Rice Lake. WWDCC is a Small Business Administration certified development corporation located in Almena.

The seminar will cover financing alternatives for new or existing businesses, offer an overview of the corporation and its lending policies and update the new guidelines for the SBA 7a and 504 programs.

The cost of the seminar is \$10. To register or for more information, contact William Bay or Kate Alpert at 357-6282.



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Renaissance volunteers aid automation

These three women, who from left are Linda Thuftin, Jan Willers and Catherine Walther, were among 77 Barron County residents who raised \$1,918 for the Barron County public libraries' automation project by working at the Renaissance Fair in Shakopee, Minn., on Sept. 20 and 26. Volunteers enjoyed movies and refreshments on the ride over and at the fair were assigned to booths, where duties ranged from selling T-shirts and pottery to cooking potatoes and turkey legs. Volunteers were asked to work for 5 hours, then had 2 hours to enjoy the fair before boarding the bus to return to Barron County. Over 40 volunteers have already signed up to go again next year.