



Jesse White

SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

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White Nominates Six Public Libraries To Serve As Gates Computer Grant Training Lab Sites

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White announced today that he has nominated six public libraries to serve as training lab sites to assist with implementation of computer grants being offered to Illinois libraries by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation State Partnership Program.

White said public libraries in Decatur, East Moline, Edwardsville, Aurora (main branch), West Frankfort and Elmwood Park have been recommended to the Gates Foundation for training lab grants. Last month, White announced that more than 700 Illinois public libraries have been declared eligible to receive Gates grants to place computers, Internet access and other digital information in their facilities.

"These training labs will be located in every region of the state and allow library staff who receive Gates grants to learn how to use information delivery tools such as the Internet, search engines and electronic reference tools," White said. "More importantly, library patrons will be able to attend classes at these labs to become familiar with information technology, and use the computer facilities when the lab is not being used for training purposes. During the next year, when Gates Foundation personnel travel to Illinois to help us implement the program, the labs will serve as regional training sites where Gates personnel will help train our local librarians in how to use their new computers.

"The staff members of these six public libraries are very

excited about the possibility of becoming a training lab site, and they share my commitment to making the Gates computer program an overwhelming success in Illinois. Like me, they welcome the opportunity to help bridge the Digital Divide by providing computer and technology access to citizens who might otherwise not have the chance to use such tools."

White said the six libraries nominated to serve as training lab sites must apply with the Gates Foundation for a separate training lab grant. If their grant application is approved, each site will receive 10 public access computers for trainees, one trainer computer, a laser printer and an applications server.

White said the more than 700 public libraries recently declared eligible to receive full or partial Gates computer grants will receive their applications from the Gates Foundation in the mail next week. White reiterated that eligible libraries must return their applications to the Gates Foundation by the date listed on the application if they want to receive computers and other equipment.

"Bill and Melinda Gates are offering public libraries an incredible gift by creating this program," White said. "My staff at the Illinois State Library, together with staff at our regional library systems, is ready to assist local libraries in completing their applications. I strongly encourage eligible libraries to return their applications to the Gates Foundation. Working together, we can ensure that every citizen of Illinois has access to the wonders of computer technology through their local public library."