

Thanks to ACRL legislative network

By now, many of you who have agreed to be part of the ACRL Legislative Network have been called into action a few times this year to help fight the most serious threat in decades to continuation of a federal role in support of academic and research libraries, and library education and research.

At this writing, the House passed on May 26 a supplemental appropriations bill (HR 2244) which would defund the college library technology program, library research, and library literacy projects. The targets were programs the Clinton Administration proposed for elimination in FY94, but which had not yet obligated funds for FY93. Despite the fact that grants were within weeks of being awarded, the House rescinded these three library programs and 11 other education programs to help pay for a scaled-down version of the Clinton economic stimulus package.

The Senate is about to take up this bill, and it is not yet clear whether Senators will follow the House lead or return to the Administration's recommended financing—a cut of 0.45 percent on all programs. Meanwhile, a House subcommittee is about to make recommendations for FY94, for which the President recommended zero for all Higher Education Act library programs.

Many of you made great efforts to get your legislators to sign a joint letter recommending restoration of these funds spearheaded by Rep. Dale Kildee (D-Mich.). This was a major campaign begun on Library Legislative Day on April 20. The letter was delivered to the House appropriations subcommittee on May 6 with 84 signatures. This is a good showing in less than two weeks time.

Many of you have gone to work again and again on behalf of these programs. Although the outcome is not yet known, a round of applause is due to all of you who responded. Your efforts are appreciated, and really do make a difference. The funding subcommittees each have a total amount of money to allocate, as determined by the earlier congressional budget process. The question is whether library

Washington Hotline

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programs will be part of that total, or whether library funds will go to some other program within the subcommittee's jurisdiction. The squeaky wheel...etc. Thanks to all of you who squeaked loudly!

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If you have been following alerts and news through ALAWON, the ALA Washington Office Newline

available on the Internet, you've been getting lots of detail on late-breaking developments such as the library program funding emergencies referred to above. If not, here's a reminder on how to subscribe:

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GPO electronic access bill passed

Fortunately, there is good news to report as well. S. 564, the Government Printing Office Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993, is on its way to the President's desk, following House passage on May 25, 1993. The Senate passed the bill in March. This measure will provide direct electronic access to public information through an online system estab-

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lished at GPO—free of charge through depository libraries, and at the incremental cost of dissemination to others.

Rep. Gerald Kleczka (D-Wis.), who moved S. 564, said the bill:

1) provides for online access to the Congressional Record, the Federal Register, and other publications distributed by the Superintendent of Documents;

2) provides for the establishment of an electronic directory of federal public information stored electronically;

3) provides for an electronic storage facility;

4) requires the Superintendent of Documents to distribute agency electronic information at the request of the issuing agency;

5) requires that fees for access to the directory and the system, including information

stored in the electronic storage facility, are to approximate the incremental cost of dissemination of the information. The one exception is that depository libraries will be able to access the directory, and system provided for in the bill, including the information stored in the electronic storage facility, free of charge;

6) requires the Public Printer to report on the directory, the system of access, and the electronic storage facility not later than December 31 of each odd numbered year.

The report is to include an analysis of cost savings in comparison with traditional forms of information distribution.

No increase in funding was authorized in the bill. GPO is to implement the system of access, the electronic directory, and the electronic storage facility within its current budget. ■

(Datafication cont. from page 400)

- Access and communication may be discriminatory if only Internet technology is utilized.

- Authentication of information/data is more of a problem with the Net than with printed materials.

- Government agencies in particular need "Welcome Centers" to provide immediate information/documentation for a plethora of public needs which could be facilitated by the Internet.

- There are real barriers to ubiquitous access, particularly for the over 50% of public libraries that serve populations of under 10,000.

During the conference references to various Internet resources and lists abounded. Registration packets included printed information from many of the presenters and a listing of all attendees with e-mail addresses for easy fol-

low-up. In addition to network personnel, the conference was well attended by systems people and librarians, with several entrepreneurs in evidence. It was very rewarding to see several Internet luminaries in attendance and to realize that these folks continue to share their vision and expertise on the Net without regard for financial profit.

From the perspective of this reporter, the rural datafication conference was an unqualified success. Of course, persons with a rural background like myself may have to change our understanding to accommodate the inclusion of any underserved community as a potential audience. In closing the meeting, Michael Staman, president of CICNet said that the conference proceedings would be published and that another rural datafication conference would be held next year. ■

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