

FRIDAY BULLETIN

NEWS FROM THE ALASKA DIVISION OF LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES & MUSEUMS

2/19/2010

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ERATE NEWS: AN IMPORTANT WIN FOR ALASKA!

Washington D.C. - The Federal Communications System (FCC) has just given school E-rate programs more flexibility to allow community use of broadband services by enabling off-hours public access to school networks. This spreads the benefit of E-rate at no additional cost to the Universal Service Fund (USF).

The new ruling is modeled after a waiver that had been granted to some remote schools in Alaska and that has been championed by the State Library's E-rate Coordinator, Valerie Oliver, and Telecommunication Consultant, Rich Greenfield. Val and Rich and partners spent many hours writing filing comments designed to make this opportunity more widely and freely available. We thank all who wrote comments and worked to make this dream become a reality by the ruling.

Rich Greenfield first notified us of the ruling. He said, "I think this makes all our work on recent filings worthwhile. This is a great win for Alaska. Congrats to everyone who has worked on this issue over the years"!

Valerie Oliver commented, "It has been an uphill battle and I am thrilled with this decision. It is important to note that there is an NPRM seeking comment on whether to commute this decision permanent or not...this decision itself has a sunset. I think that schools, school boards, and superintendents will need to begin a discussion ASAP about this expanded use and will need to make policy decisions that best fit the needs and budgets of their districts and local communities. It is my hope that, as anchor institutions within their local communities, they will find a way to utilize this opportunity to maximum benefit."

The FCC, on February 18, adopted an order that enables schools that receive funding from the E-rate program (more formally, the schools and libraries universal service support program) to allow members of the general public to use the schools' Internet access during non-operating hours. This change attracted broad support in comments received while developing the National Broadband Plan.

This action will leverage universal service funding to serve a larger population at no increased cost to the E-rate program. If a school chooses to allow community access, the general public will be able to use the Internet access already present in schools for purposes such as job searches and applications, digital literacy programs, and online access to governmental services and resources. Increasing community

access to the Internet is particularly critical in communities where residential adoption of broadband Internet access has historically lagged, including many rural, minority, and Tribal communities. Libraries already may provide Internet access to their communities using E-rate support. The order enables schools to provide similar access to the public.

Currently, Commission rules require schools to certify that they will use E-rate funded services solely for "educational purposes," defined as activities that are integral, immediate, and proximate to the education of students. As a result, services and facilities purchased by schools using E-rate funding remain largely unused during evenings, weekends, school holidays, and summer breaks. Waiving the relevant rules will maximize the use of facilities and services supported by the E-rate program by giving schools the option to open their E-rate funded facilities to members of the public during non-operating hours.

The waiver of the Commission's rules is effective from adoption of the order through funding year 2010 (which ends June 30, 2011). This waiver is subject to the following conditions: (1) schools participating in the E-rate program are not permitted to request more services than are necessary for "educational purposes"; (2) any community use of E-rate funded services at a school facility is limited to non-operating hours, such as after school hours or during times when the students are out of school; and (3) consistent with the Communications Act, schools may not resell discounted services or network capacity. This order and notice do not permit or require any changes to E-rate applications due on February 19, 2010.

In addition, the Commission adopted a notice of proposed rulemaking, which seeks comment on revising the Commission's rules to make today's change permanent. The Commission also seeks comment on conditions that should be established to guard against potential additional costs being imposed on the E-rate program and to reduce the likelihood of waste, fraud, and abuse.

The E-rate program commits \$2.25 billion in funding annually to schools and libraries for eligible telecommunications services, Internet access, internal connections, and basic maintenance of internal connections.

To read more about the ruling, including comments from FCC Commissioners, please go to the FCC website <http://www.fcc.gov/>

MORE BTOP ROUND 1 AWARDS

More Round 1 Broadband Technology Opportunity Program grant awards were announced February 18. NTIA continues its prioritization of libraries and other anchor institutions in the disbursement of broadband stimulus funding. Seven of the 10 awards announced include investments in community anchor institutions and libraries including:

- The State Library of Louisiana received funds to provide 720 computer workstations to libraries, set up four mobile computer stations, and establish wireless hotspots.
- The New York State Education Department will deliver over 860 computers to 30 libraries and deploy five mobile training stations to disadvantaged communities.
- The State of Wisconsin Department of Administration (BadgerNet) will install an additional 203 miles of new fiber connections to connect 385 libraries, 74 school districts, and eight community colleges.

To read more: http://www.ntia.doc.gov/press/2010/02182010_Locke_BTOP_Announcement.pdf

GRANTS FOR LIBRARIES THAT SUPPORT NATIVE AMERICANS & NATIVE HAWAIIANS

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has upcoming deadlines for three grants programs that provide support for Native Americans and Native Hawaiians.

1. Native American Library Services: Basic Grant and Basic Grant with Education/Assessment Option
 - Deadline: Monday, March 1, 2010: <http://www.ims.gov/applicants/grants/nativeAmerican.shtm>
 - Estimated Grant Amount Range: \$6,000 to \$7,000 for a grant period of one year

This is a non-competitive grant and funds are distributed in equal amounts among eligible applicants. The Education/Assessment option is supplemental to the Basic grant and is also non-competitive and must be requested.

2. Native American Library Services: Enhancement Grant
 - There are two (2) deadlines for the Enhancement Grant: <http://www.ims.gov/applicants/grants/nativeEnhance.shtm>
 - a. March 1, 2010 for Basic Grant (+ Education/Assessment Option). To be eligible for an Enhancement Grant, an entity must have submitted an application for the Basic Grant in the same fiscal year.
 - b. May 3, 2010 for actual Enhancement Grant
 - Grant Amount: Up to \$150,000 for a grant period of up to two years
3. Native Hawaiian Library Services
 - Deadline: May 17, 2010 <http://www.ims.gov/applicants/grants/nativeHawaiian.shtm>
 - Grant Period: One year
 - Grant Guidelines: Check IMLS website for FY2010 guidelines approximately 90 days before grant deadline (www.ims.gov)

All applicants must apply via www.grants.gov. For more information about these IMLS grant programs, contact: Alison Freese, Senior Program Officer, Phone: (202) 653-4665, E-mail: afreese@ims.gov

WINTER SCIENCE EVENTS @ STATE MUSEUM

On Saturday, February 27, Fairbanks geophysicist and author Dr. Matthew Sturm will present two winter science events in Juneau. Both events are free and are co-sponsored by the Juneau Economic Development Council-Springboard and the Friends of the Alaska State Museum.

- “Chill with the Family: A Celebration of Winter,” youth-focused hands-on activities related to winter, will be held at the Alaska State Museum from 1 to 4 p.m.
- Dr. Sturm will lecture on the importance of Arctic snow on climate at the University of Alaska Southeast Egan Lecture Hall at 7 p.m.

Dr. Sturm has conducted wide-ranging geophysical studies on snow in high latitudes. His work has taken him from the Antarctic to the Arctic, where he has led more than 30 expeditions. He is based at the U.S. Army Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory in Fairbanks.

He recently released a children's science-based book about snow, called “Apun: the Arctic Snow,” along with a companion guide for educators. Copies of the book will be available at the museum store, and Dr. Sturm will be on hand to autograph them.

“Chill with the Family” activities include: “Science on a Sphere” multi-media exploration of winter weather and climate change, viewing ice crystals through polarized light, seeing cold with infrared technology, snowflake formation, art using winter hues and light, Inupiaq snow goggles and other winter survival technology, cold water safety and a visit from PFD Otter, avalanche safety and control, Arctic animal fur identification, and several others, including shaved ice and ice cream!

STATE MUSEUM OFFERS LUNCHTIME LECTURES THROUGH MARCH

The Alaska Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums will hold a “brown-bag” lecture series at the Alaska State Museum in Juneau every Wednesday from noon to 1 p.m., beginning February 17 and running through March 31.

The series will feature recent research on the state’s collections by division staff members and by visiting scholars. In operation for over a century, the division houses a world-class collection of materials central to the study of Alaska history, Native cultures, and art. Admission to the lectures is free.

“An exciting attribute of the series will be the mini-exhibits accompanying each presentation,” said Steve Henrikson, Curator of Collections at the museum. “We’ll bring out an exhibit case or two of artifacts, historical documents, or photographs to help illustrate the subject.”

The first lecture in the series was held February 18th and featured an historical review of the Division and its collections. The lecture was given by Steve Henrikson. Future brown bag lecture topics scheduled are:

- February 24: Archie Cavanaugh Jr., artist and carver, on Tlingit Art
- March 3: Bob Banghart, Chief Curator, Alaska State Museums, on “Sustainable Shelter: Modern use of traditional architectural concepts in sustainable housing design”
- March 10 Daniel Cornwall, Information Services, Alaska State Library, “Exploring Alaska Statehood History”
- March 17: Mary Ellen Frank, doll artist, on Alaskan Art Dolls
- March 24: Anastasia Tarmann, Alaska State Library Historical Collections, discusses “The Men Behind the Masks: Letters of Alaska Native Mask Carvers from the Donald Burrus Collection”
- March 31: Ellen Carrlee, Conservator, Alaska State Museums, on “Fur, Fuzz, and Fibers: Materials ID at the Museum”

MUSEUM OF THE NORTH HIGHLIGHTS RECENT ACQUISITIONS

A new exhibit at the University of Alaska’s Museum of the North brings together an unlikely assortment of artifacts and specimens, including an Asian elephant, a swan from Denmark, a seventh-grade science fair project, and archaeological artifacts from Interior Alaska.

“A Gathering of Gifts: Relationships That Build Our Collections” uses some of the museum’s most recent acquisitions to highlight the variety of donors that help enrich the museum’s research collection. The special exhibit runs through May 8.

See <http://museum.uaf.edu>.

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