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## **Federal Grant to Help EIU Introduce Library of Congress Resources to Region**

*Jan-16-2004*

The more Cindy Rich learns about the Library of Congress, the more excited she gets.

"It's an untapped resource," she says. "The teachers of our area need to be made aware of what's available to them."

Now, thanks to the support of U.S. Senator Dick Durbin and an 18-month federal grant in excess of \$400,000, elementary and secondary teachers in east central Illinois will get just that chance. The funding will pave the way for Eastern Illinois University to host "An Adventure of the American Mind," a project designed to train classroom teachers (K-12), college faculty and persons planning to teach how to access, use and produce curriculum utilizing the Internet and materials from the Library of Congress.

The program, established in 1999 in North Carolina, trains teachers to use the vast digitized primary resources of the Library of Congress in the classroom and, in addition, provides them the hardware and software needed to do so. The project's success is evident; seven additional states now offer it.

Durbin's efforts to introduce the program to Illinois teachers has, to date, been welcomed by nine "AAM Partners," most of which are state universities representing various regions of Illinois. Rich, who is Eastern's AAM program director, says the local university's efforts will concentrate on east central Illinois, although "we'll cover the region as far as possible."

Other Illinois "partners" include DePaul, Governors State and Illinois State universities; Loyola University Chicago; Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and SIU-Edwardsville.

According to Durbin, "The Library of Congress has a vast wealth of resources -- resources just waiting to be tapped by students not just in Washington, D.C., but all across the country."

"Thanks to An Adventure of the American Mind,' teachers can receive the training necessary to harness the latest Internet technology and bring the library's digital collections into their classrooms, enhancing their teaching and expanding the universe of knowledge available to all our students."

The Library of Congress - the world's largest library - houses an extensive and varied digital collection of more than 8 million items. Many of those items, including primary source documents such as letters and photos of U.S. presidents, photographs from the Great Depression and recorded folk music, are easily accessible.

Rich, who officially began her job as program director on Jan. 5, anticipates using the Spring 2004 semester to prepare and schedule workshops with various school districts of the area. She also will attend additional training sessions, both at the AAM headquarters in Asheville, N.C., and at the Library of Congress itself.

In addition, Eastern's College of Education and Professional Studies plans to wrap up its search for a digital preservationist to join Rich in this endeavor. This second person, Rich said, will focus on the technological side of the training, assuring that adequate technology support is provided to program participants. The successful candidate also will assist with the teaching of workshops, digitalize local primary sources, download and develop course-related materials and maintain the program's Web site.

Working with area regional superintendents of schools, Rich anticipates she will begin offering training workshops to area teachers and schools this summer, continuing through June 30, 2005.

For more on the AAM program, see <http://www.aamprogram.org>.