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September is Library Card Sign-up Month

CHARLESTON, WV. Libraries across West Virginia are celebrating Library Card Sign-up Month this September to encourage potential patrons – especially children – to take advantage of the services offered by libraries in their communities.

“A library card is the most important school supply that parents can make sure their children have,” said Karen Goff, Secretary of the West Virginia Library Commission. “It’s easy for a child or parent to do. Just go to your local library and fill out an application for a card.”

Library Card Sign-up Month is sponsored by the American Library Association. The observance was launched in 1987 to meet the challenge of then Secretary of Education William J. Bennett who said: "Let's have a national campaign...every child should obtain a library card - and use it." Since then, thousands of public and school libraries join each fall in a national effort to ensure every child does just that.

Libraries play an important role in the education and development of children. Studies show that children who are read to in the home and who use the library perform better in school and are more likely to continue to use the library as a source of lifetime learning.

Librarians are literacy experts. Libraries offer a variety of programs to stimulate an interest in reading and learning. Preschool story hours expose young children to the joy of reading, while homework centers provide computers and assistance to older children after school. Summer reading clubs keep children reading during school vacation and have been shown to be the most important factor in avoiding the decrease in reading skills that educators refer to as "summer learning loss."

In addition to books, magazines, CDs and DVDs, computers, software and other multimedia materials, West Virginia libraries offer access to e-books. Nationally, seventy-six percent of libraries offer access to e-books, an increase of 9 percent from last year. West Virginia is in step with this national trend.

West Virginia’s public libraries are thriving technology hubs that millions rely on as their first or only choice for Internet access and digital content. Public libraries offer free classes and one-on-one instruction on technology, Internet and resource use. They help people start businesses, create resumes, search for jobs and apply for jobs online. Libraries help people connect with government and their communities, complete online forms and use online government services.

For more information about Library Card Sign-up Month, visit your local library. Additional information is available at <http://atyourlibrary.org/library-card-sign-up-month>.

The West Virginia Library Commission serves the people of West Virginia and encourages lifelong learning, individual empowerment, civic engagement and an enriched quality of life by enhancing library and information services for all West Virginians. More information is available at www.librarycommission.wv.gov.

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