

Mid-Hudson Library System

103 Market Street | Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 | 845.471.6060 | fax 845.454.5940

<http://midhudson.org>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Josh Cohen, Executive Director
Mid-Hudson Library System
845.471.6060 x17

February 18, 2004

LIBRARIES: LEFT OUT IN THE COLD

Once again libraries and library systems in New York State will be left out in the budget cold if the Governor's proposal to cut state aid to libraries is not reversed by the Legislature. Cutting \$4.4 million in library aid, as the Governor has proposed, will send libraries back to funding levels not seen since 1997-98. The cultural soul of New York State will be forced into hibernation.

The New York Library Association and the Mid-Hudson Library System are asking the Legislature to add \$13.7 million to the 2004-05 state budget in order to prevent libraries and the 14 million people they serve from entering yet another deep freeze of insufficient funding. Currently, the library community receives *less than one tenth of one percent* of the state budget, or approximately \$89 million. That money is shared by the libraries and library systems in this State which serve millions of our citizens.

Libraries, public, school, academic, and special, work together to offer their patrons a wealth of programs and materials. Through the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) patrons have unprecedented access to over 1.6 million items, all requestable online to be delivered to the library of their choice. MHLS is also providing remote access through the Internet to hundreds of newspapers, magazines, journals and reference resources through HomeACCESS – this includes access to the NOVEL databases provided through New York State. (NOVEL = New York Online Virtual Electronic Library). This means your library's resources are available 24/7 from any computer connected to the Internet!

Everywhere in New York State, libraries enhance lives as librarians go about the business of helping people find the information they need. For students, their school libraries are doorways to a limitless world of information and a means to equalize opportunities for an excellent education. For senior citizens with health issues, parents with young children, business entrepreneurs, and many others, public libraries offer free access to books and learning, both print and electronic. For university students, information and ideas flow through their academic libraries and permit them to pursue advanced study and research.

Without sustained and increased state funding, library services for people in the Hudson Valley and in all of New York State will erode. For the millions of library users in New York State, access through libraries to print and electronic resources will be reduced. And as for our cultural heritage, under-funded libraries will bring a period of hibernation when sleep is the order of the day, when ideas are reduced to dreams, and when stories remain untold.

For more information, contact Josh Cohen, Executive Director of the Mid-Hudson Library System (jcohen@midhudson.org ; 845.471.6060 x17), Rebekkah Smith, the Coordinator of Member Information at MHLS (rsmith@midhudson.org; 845.471.6060 x39) or the New York Library Association at 1.800.252.6952.