

## INTRODUCTION

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Several years ago in the ILA *Focus* the Government Documents Division of the Indiana Librarians Association issued some short articles describing the usefulness of government publications. However the format of *Focus* could not permit lengthy discussion of the many issues and topics related to documents of interest to Indiana librarians. This issue of *Indiana Libraries* marks the beginning of a forum for discussion of issues devoted to documents or government publishing. Future issues can be focused on documents, we hope, and can provide the opportunity for documents librarians around the state to express opinions, ideas, and concerns.

Several months ago, the Subcommittee on Government Documents of the Network Coordinating Committee of the Indiana State Library Advisory Council began working with Daniel Callison on devoting an issue of *Indiana Libraries* to the topic of government documents. Many of the articles included in this issue were already in progress at that time.

This issue consists of six articles. First, Ruth Davison presents the results of extensive research she conducted during the summer of 1986 while on sabbatical leave from Indiana University. Ms. Davison visited 231 non-depository public libraries throughout Indiana to assess their needs for and uses of government documents; to ask that they complete a survey concerning these needs and uses; and to provide each library with some basic information about documents as needed. Ms. Davison's research is unique because of the ex-

tensive contact she made with librarians throughout the state. Her recommendations will prove invaluable in the next few years in implementing documents programs for continuing education. The positive response to this project shows that one of the best sources for ideas are the individuals who directly use the information.

The second article reports on the progress being made on the establishment of the Economic Development Information System. Carol Rogers summarizes the content and future of the statistical program under development by the Indiana Business Research Center of the Indiana University School of Business. Most Indiana librarians are familiar with STATIS (Statistical Information System) and will be interested in the futuristic steps being taken to expand and improve our access to statistical information.

Jeff Barnett also refers to access to statistical information in his article on the Indiana State Data Center Network. He presents historical background as well as a full description of the current services provided by the center. Additionally, the article gives a list of Data Center affiliates as well as contact information for the State Data Center.

Byron E. Swanson has worked with Indiana documents for a number of years, and most documents librarians in Indiana are aware of his efforts to improve the *Checklist of Indiana State Documents*. He reports on the status of the Indiana depository system, the frequently-encountered problems, and the expectations for the future. The Subcommittee on Documents has discussed improvements which might be made in the depository program for Indiana documents. Mr. Swanson's article provides the necessary background for librarians in the state, allowing them to raise additional issues and to communicate their ideas to the Subcommittee.

The article by Mary Krutulius and myself compares major reference documents produced by the U. S. government and by the Indiana state government. Its intent is to familiarize librarians with state reference tools and to provide guidance for their possible use. Ordering information is included. It is not comprehensive, but hopefully includes the major reference works for both federal and state levels.

The final article represents an effort began many years ago by documents librarians in Indiana to improve networking operations. Judith Violette and Andrea Singer organized the compilation of information concerning the Indiana libraries holdings of large microfilm (often commercially-produced) backfiles. Ms. Violette recently up-dated and revised the information making it valuable in providing interlibrary loan operations.

Throughout this introduction, many references have been made to the Subcommittee on Government Documents and Information. Its establishment marked the implementation of the Indiana State Plan for Depository Libraries. Since its work is just beginning, some explanation and historical background might be helpful.

In the Fall 1981 meeting the Depository Library Council of the U. S. Government Printing Office passed a resolution recommending "that the Public Printer of the U. S. encourage each state to develop a plan for the Federal Depository Program." The Public Printer, in early 1982, encouraged depository libraries to prepare state plans for the purpose of improving public access to federal information; coordinating collection development; coordinating collection development and sharing resources; expanding programs for user instruction and awareness, staff training, and continuing education; and improving communication among librarians concerned with documents' issues.

Indiana documents librarians discussed the idea of a state plan at various ILA Government Documents Division meetings during 1982. The State Library appointed the Task Force on the State Plan for Federal Depository Library Service Indiana in 1982 with the specific charge to develop a state plan. The Task Force was chaired by Judith Violette and Barbara Kasper and consisted of three committees: Collection Development, Service (Documents Delivery) and Consultation, Training & Public Relations. Each of these groups developed goals and objectives. The committees came together to discuss these and other issues which should be covered in the state plan. The final draft was submitted to the State Librarian for approval and implementation in August, 1983.

On May 18, 1984, the Task Force met to discuss implementation of the state plan. The State Librarian recommended some major changes which after discussion were accepted by the Task Force. The *Indiana Plan for Depository Library Services* was issued in March, 1985.

Donald E. Fossedal, then U. S. Superintendent of Documents, commented that the plan was the best he had seen and complimented the state for the "excellent job of promoting Government publications and Indiana Depository services." The plan was unique at that time for its incorporation of state documents into the plan since most states developed goals and objectives only for their federal depository program.

Indiana's plan called for the establishment of a Subcommittee on Government Documents and Information, under the Network Coordinating Committee of the Indiana State Library Advisory Council (ISLAC). ISLAC advises the Indiana State Library on library services provided in the state and on policy matters

relating to the administration and distribution of state and federal funds. The State Library appointed the subcommittee in October 1984. The charge of the Subcommittee included: 1) Advise the State Library Regional depository on matters of concern to the depository libraries; 2) Assist in further development and implementation of the goals and objectives of the Indiana Long Range Plan for Library Services and Development 1985-1990 incorporating service objectives of the Indiana Plan for Depository Libraries; 3) Act as a forum for depository issues and for identifying problems and recommending solutions; and 4) Advise the State Library, Library Associations, ALSAs, INCOLSA, and other providers of continuing education concerning the education and staff development needs of librarians in regard to government publications.

Several matters have been brought before the Subcommittee, including many covered by the state plan. They have reviewed the goals and objectives, discussed the priority which might be given to each and begun work on many of them. For instance the subcommittee made recommendations and revisions in the process for disposal of federal documents. They have also organized and staffed a booth for the Information Fair, held in Indianapolis during 1986. Currently, they are planning a preconference on documents for the upcoming MFLA conference, to be held in November, 1987. Recently the Subcommittee sent a resolution to the Network Coordinating Committee concerning improvements in the distribution of Indiana state documents.

The meetings of the Subcommittee on Government Documents and Information are open. As of this writing, committee members are Barbara Fischler (chair), Harriet Cohen, Bridgie Brelsford, Doug Conrads, Lou Malcomb, Judith Violette, and Robert

Zilliox. Several members of the Indiana State Library usually attend the meetings, including Gail Winsmore, Loring Prosser, and Byron Swanson. Members encourage librarians from around the state to contact them concerning issues or topics which the subcommittee should discuss or act upon.

This issue represents our first effort to report and publish information on government publishing. Thanks are due to all who responded to my telephone calls and requests for assistance. If I have overlooked anyone, I hope they will contact me so that they may participate in the future. The contributors to this issue deserve a particular mention, for without their efforts the topic of documents might still be languishing in the arena of discussion. Hopefully, these articles will inspire future contributions in the field of documents.