

For Immediate Release:
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Jesse White Awards Nearly \$340,000 in Radio Information Service Grants
Funds Provide Support for Radio Stations for Residents with Print Disabilities

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White awarded almost \$340,000 in Radio Information Service Grants (RIS). The RIS grants totaling \$338,048 support a group of 10 radio stations whose mission is to ensure that residents of Illinois, who are unable to read standard print material due to a print disability, have equal access to the information that is published in newspapers and magazines.

“By providing audio versions of printed material, residents who have a disability, are able to access printed information for educational, informational and recreational purposes,” said White. “The service allows people to remain engaged in their local communities by providing detail reporting usually only found in print or over the Internet.”

Many informational service programs are broadcast daily and include hours of local programming. Local newspapers are read and usually include additional news reports as well as comics, grocery ads and obituaries. RIS stations also produce public affairs programs and listener call-in shows.

Due in part to the grant from the State Library, thousands of Illinois residents are able to use the RIS stations each day to listen to broadcasts of local news. These programs are broadcast on a special radio called a sideband receiver. These receivers are distributed at no cost to qualified recipients. Anyone who has a visual or physical disability which impairs his or her ability to read may be eligible to obtain a sideband receiver. The stations can also be accessed through Internet streaming on computers, smart phones and tablets.

Radio stations receiving grants are as follows:

- MindsEye Radio in Belleville: \$51,777
- Southern Illinois University in Carbondale: \$21,353
- Chicago Lighthouse in Chicago: \$68,599
- Northern Illinois University in DeKalb: \$28,273
- Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey: \$17,438
- Western Illinois University in Macomb: \$36,968
- Wabash Valley College in Mount Carmel: \$27,185
- Augustana College in Rock Island: \$27,700
- University of Illinois at Springfield: \$28,384
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: \$30,371

For more information about the RIS grants, contact Sharon Ruda at 217-782-9435 or SRuda@ilsos.gov. Information also is available at <http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/TBBS/ris.html>.

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