

Proceedings of the 2nd Annual Federal Depository Library Conference, 1993 May 19-26, 1993

Welcome and Remarks

by Judith C. Russell, Director, Library Programs Service

Good morning. I want to join Wayne in welcoming you to the Second Annual Federal Depository Conference. We are delighted that so many of you were able to be here with us today.

How many of you were here last year? I am glad that you were able to come back -- and that you found it worthwhile to come back. I think you will see that we have incorporated many of your suggestions into the conference program.

Those of you who are here for the first time are also welcome. We hope that all of you will enjoy the conference and find it beneficial.

I hope that all of you will use the evaluation form and provide us with your comments and suggestions, so we can continue to improve the conference and make sure that it meets your needs.

Before we continue, I want to take a moment to thank Sheila McGarr and her staff. They have worked extraordinarily hard to put together this program and to handle the myriad of organizational details that a conference of this size requires. Much of their work is invisible -- things flow smoothly and, it appears, effortlessly, but only because of the preparation that has gone before. This "thank you" would normally be done at the end of the meeting, but Sheila will not be with us on Friday because of her sister's wedding, and I wanted to give you an opportunity to join me in thanking her.

Last year our theme was PARTNERSHIP -- stressing the roles of GPO and the depository libraries as partners in delivery of information from Federal agencies to the public. This year our theme is NETWORKING -- sharing information and resources to fulfill our common mission of getting Federal government information to the public.

This meeting provides a unique opportunity to renew and strengthen existing relationships and to establish new ones -- in a word, to NETWORK! Although we have a full agenda, you will have many opportunities before, during, between and after sessions for informal contact with GPO staff and with one another. It will be an intense few days, but I know it will be valuable for you and for us.

We are here to provide you with information that you need and to answer your questions, but we are also here to LISTEN and to LEARN from you -- the real experts on delivering depository library services to the public -- so that together we can improve the quality of our services to you and utilize our resources more effectively.

This update session is just the beginning of the process. We will have three sets of Information Exchanges -- two this afternoon and one tomorrow afternoon. In these smaller groups, you will have an opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions ... and obviously you will have other opportunities to talk with us as well.

GPO takes very seriously its responsibility to increase public access to government information through the

depository libraries. We expect to go back to the office next week challenged by new ideas and renewed in our commitment to serve you and through you the public.

We hope that you will return to your libraries energized by this conference program and by your colleagues -- with new tools and techniques for managing your programs and serving the public.

As Wayne has pointed out, we are facing substantial challenges in the next few years. This is particularly true with respect to the availability of Federal information in electronic formats.

The Federal Depository Library Program is over 150 years old. In 1995 it will have been administered by GPO for 100 years. GPO was the logical choice for the FDLP because Federal printing is done by or through GPO, but agency information dissemination is changing. Federal information products and services now routinely include CD-ROMs, diskettes, bulletin boards, and online services.

Although GPO is working with agencies on many electronic products, we are increasingly seeing electronic information that is not produced or procured through GPO and does not get into the depository program. We are seeking appropriate, practical ways to ensure that as much information as possible gets into the program, but we need your help.

Wayne noted on Monday that we cannot do everything and do it well. That we should PLAN, PRIORITIZE, and FOCUS, so that we can target the most important things and make sure that we invest adequate resources to do those things very well.

The strength of this program is its diversity -- diversity of federal information content and formats; diversity of types and sizes of libraries; diversity of clientele at each library and the resources to serve them -- but that diversity also creates a challenge. It is difficult to set priorities and arrive at consensus. It is difficult to achieve a balance between the competing needs and interests of your libraries and the various constituencies that you serve.

We know there will be no perfect or easy solutions, but we want to work with you to identify and evaluate options that are practical, that will satisfy as many of your competing needs and interests as possible, and that will position GPO and the FDLP for the future. This conference is an excellent place to move ourselves forward on this journey.

In a moment we will begin the traditional "GPO UPDATE" -- a run down of the major functional areas of the Library Programs Service and key activities that have taken place or will take place later this year. We hope that these presentations will give you a greater appreciation of "who does what" at GPO. We have tried to anticipate and answer some of your questions. This update should help you to decide which of the Information Exchange sessions you should attend.

Some of these individuals -- Sheila, Gil, Carl -- you will already know. Others you will be meeting for the first time. Every one of these individuals has many years of service at GPO. They represent over 100 individuals back in the red brick building on North Capitol Street who work hard every day to acquire, process, distribute and catalog materials for your libraries and otherwise support the program.

This team of managers has worked closely together during the past year to improve the productivity of LPS and to manage our internal costs more effectively, so that as many of our appropriated dollars as possible can go into the publications that we send to your libraries. I hope that you know, or will know by the end of this week, that this is a dedicated team of individuals who are doing a good job and who are eager to find ways to improve our service.

We know we are not perfect. We know that we can do more and do it better. We know that we sometimes make mistakes. When we make mistakes, we want to know about them, so that we can correct them.

This conference is an opportunity for you to help us meet our goals of high quality, cost effective and timely delivery of Federal information to you and your patrons. Constructive criticisms and suggestions are needed, and they are welcome. We are already implementing a number of suggestions for improved service or cost savings that have come from the community. We look forward to these few days as another opportunity to explore options and alternatives, and we promise you that each suggestion will be HEARD. It will be carefully evaluated, and it will be implemented if it is practical and cost effective to do so.

With that, let me begin the Update by introducing Jay Baumgardner. Jay has been with GPO since 1978, spending his first 15 years working in the Documents Sales Program. Jay started as Chief, Publications Order Branch and over the years has held key positions in the Documents Sales Service, including coordinator for the Laurel Warehouse, Chief of the Order Division and Chief of Field Operations Division (that is responsible for Pueblo and the GPO bookstores).

Jay joined LPS early in January, bringing his skills from the distribution of sales publications to help us improve the distribution of depository publications. In his short time with us he is already making a difference in our productivity and efficiency -- and has found a number of ways to save money while improving our service.