

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
October 18, 2006

Mr. Fred Kirby  
213 East Wall Street  
Benton Harbor, Michigan 49022

Dear Friends:

I would like to express my sincere regret that I can not be with you today to honor the hard-work and well-deserved recognition of the Benton Harbor Public Library.

As you all know there are now over 1,250 libraries participating in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and I am extremely proud that this year the FDLP in conjunction with the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) has given the Benton Harbor Public Library the prestigious distinction of the 2006 Federal Depository Library of the Year. For over 140 years, the partnership of the FDLP and the GPO has worked to provide Federal government documents and information packets to the American public, with the belief that an informed citizen is an empowered citizen.

The Benton Harbor Public Library was chosen for this prestigious honor due to its outstanding and innovative public service. The library's staff has worked tirelessly to provide both the community's leaders and members with vital statistical information from Federal Government documents. Such information has been essential to the work of community planners, business persons, and other professionals. Additionally, the library's extensive collection has helped support a local task force, established by the state of Michigan, to study and make recommendations on such issues as housing, education, employment, criminal justice, parenting, and family life.

In addition to making its contents available to area libraries and its patrons, the staff has worked diligently to make government documents accessible through an online catalog. The library's ability to provide physical primary texts, rather than copied or book versions is a tremendous honor and source of pride for the Benton Harbor Public Library.

The library's resources have not only been beneficial to the working members of the community, but also its youngsters. The staff has created colorful and dynamic signage in the library to direct its patrons and worked diligently to facilitate relationships with each visitor to provide a comfortable and welcoming environment. The staff of the Benton Harbor Public Library is a true testament to the first class library we are so fortunate to have in Benton Harbor.

I want to commend the Federal Depository Library Program and the U.S. Government Printing Office for selecting the Benton Harbor Public Library as the 2006 Depository Library of the Year. This honor will serve as a great source of pride to the folks of Southwest Michigan. I applaud everyone who has worked and continues to work with the Benton Harbor Public

Library; their dedicated work has undoubtedly had a positive influence on our community and its citizens.

Very truly yours,

Fred Upton  
Member of Congress