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For Immediate Release

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Students get creative with library's Big Read contests

Rapid City, SD – March 21, 2008 – The Rapid City Public Library has invited area middle school and high school students to show off their creativity in a series of three contests taking place in conjunction with this year's Big Read program.

The Big Read is a national program to promote literacy and inspire reading and discussion. 127 communities across the nation are participating, including eight from South Dakota: Madison, Martin, Pierre, Rapid City, Ridgeview, Scotland, Sioux Falls and Spearfish. Ray Bradbury's classic science fiction novel, Fahrenheit 451, is the book chosen by the South Dakota communities for this year's Big Read.

Fahrenheit 451, a National Book Award winner, is the tale of a futuristic society where the government has rendered its citizens insensible through drugs and home video walls that have replaced life experiences and diminished social interaction. Books are forbidden as they are deemed to promote independent thinking and controversy. Fire departments exist to ferret out and burn any remaining books hidden by defiant book-lovers.

Tapping into those themes, the library has originated the following three contests for students:
Essay Contest: "If I Could Save Only One Book, It Would Be _____." (800 words or less). First place: \$75 Borders gift certificate. Second place: \$50 Borders gift certificate. Third place: \$25 Borders gift certificate. Essays will be judged by members of the Black Hills Writers Group.

Video Contest: a video of 15 minutes or less on the theme of "Freedom To Read." First place: a digital camera. Second and third places: MP3 players. Videos will be judged by Milt Lee, a Black Hills filmmaker who has created Many Kites Press with his wife, author Jamie Lee. Many Kites Press (www.manykites.com) offers books, CDs and films that celebrate the human spirit.

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Art Contest: Original artwork inspired by Fahrenheit 451. First place: A Derwent set of fine art pencils in a wooden case. Second place: Reeves watercolor set. Third place: set of drawing pencils and large sketchpad. Art entries will be judged by Victoria Ledford, education curator at the Dahl Arts Center

Entries for each contest need to be received by the library no later than Friday, April 4th. Find contest and submission details, and an entry form, at the Rapid City Public Library website: rapidcitylibrary.org. Click on the Teens link.

The library will host a variety of events around the Big Read program in April, including a Fahrenheit 451 book discussion on Sunday, April 20th at the downtown library and a viewing of the classic 1960's Fahrenheit 451 film on Monday evening, April 28th at the Elks Theater. For a full list of events and details, check the library's Big Read webpage: www.rapidcitylibrary.org/BigRead

The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment For The Arts in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Arts Midwest. It is also sponsored by the South Dakota Humanities council's Center For the Book. Find out more on the national program at www.neaBigRead.org, and on the state program at <http://sdhc.sdstate.org/center.html>

About RCPL: *The Rapid City Public Library has served the Rapid City area since 1879, and now has two locations, the downtown library at 610 Quincy Street and the north library within General Beadle Elementary School at 10 Van Buren St. Both offer print and electronic resources for adults, young adults and children as well as computers and internet access and a variety of programs and events. In March 2008, USA Today selected the Rapid City Public Library downtown as one of the nation's 10 greatest places to "Find a Nook and Read a Book."*

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