

Three-month FirstSearch Trial Announced for Wyoming Libraries

Libraries in Wyoming are getting the opportunity to learn more about the OCLC FirstSearch Service, and at no cost to them.

Wyoming State Librarian Helen Meadors, BCR's Jim Hensinger and OCLC's Teresa Mullins announced a Wyoming FirstSearch trial at the Wyoming Library Association annual conference in September. Besides information on the FirstSearch trial, the joint announcement provided Wyoming librarians with a demonstration on searching the various FirstSearch databases. Mullins and Hensinger also provided a free, four-hour FirstSearch training session at WLA, a session sponsored by the Wyoming State Library.

The Wyoming FirstSearch trial began October 1 and will continue through December 31. Participating libraries have access to all FirstSearch databases during the trial period. That's access to 60-plus databases, including full text.

The trial period will introduce both librarians and the public to FirstSearch and the sources on it, said Venice Beske, manager of statewide information services at the Wyoming State Library, who is coordinating the FirstSearch trial. "We want to get an idea whether this is something our libraries and the public feel we should try to make available permanently," she explained. OCLC is tracking usage of FirstSearch itself and of the various databases being accessed. When the trial is over both the state library and individual libraries will evaluate those statistics. If libraries' use of FirstSearch and certain databases warrant, the state library will look for funding, she said.

Additional FirstSearch training was arranged for immediately after WLA. Sessions were scheduled for September 29-October 3 at the Wyoming State Library in Cheyenne, Campbell County Public Library in Gillette, Fremont County Public Library in Riverton and Lincoln County Library System in Kemmerer. Beske and OCLC's Barbara Fowler presented the two-and-a-half- to three-hour sessions, which further demonstrated FirstSearch's functionality. Following the demonstrations, those attending had the opportunity for hands-on practice on FirstSearch.

More than 30 public and school libraries in Wyoming have been selected to participate in the three-month, statewide trial. Most Wyoming academic libraries already use FirstSearch.

