

Ministry of Culture

Minister

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Ministère de la Culture

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Ontario

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April 18, 2006

Dear Library Chair:

As Ontario's new Minister of Culture, it is my pleasure to advise you of some exciting new initiatives. These initiatives strongly affirm that the Ontario government under Premier Dalton McGuinty's leadership values Ontario's public and First Nations libraries as hubs of literacy and learning in communities across the province.

The Province had some additional revenue available in 2005-06 because the Ontario economy performed better than expected. Strategic one-time investments are being made to support key sectors, including culture.

For libraries, that means:

- \$6 million to support family literacy and lifelong learning at nearly 550 small, rural, remote, francophone and First Nation public libraries that serve communities of under 20,000 people. Each library will receive \$10,500. The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries will also receive \$200,000 to market the literacy achievements of Ontario's libraries and conduct research.
- \$8 million to support the Ontario Digital Library in providing all of Ontario's libraries with quality digital information; and
- \$1 million for Ontario Library Service-North to improve services to northern public and First Nations libraries

These investments, totalling \$15 million, will be a tremendous boost for Ontario's library community, and will benefit library users of all ages.

Promoting literacy and learning is one of the most important roles of our public libraries. In many small, rural and First Nations communities, the library is a mainstay of support for family literacy. That is a great responsibility, and one that our libraries have embraced with their customary dedication and passion.

The province's significant investment in libraries is a testament to the contribution they make to strong communities across Ontario. We view libraries as key partners in delivering on our education priorities. The new literacy initiative, along with the other library investments, will help our public and First Nations libraries meet today's needs and tomorrow's expectations.

I look forward to working with you to champion our public library system and ensure its continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Di Cocco'.

Caroline Di Cocco
Minister