

## INTRODUCTION

This special issue of *Indiana Libraries* is intended as a handbook of useful information about government publications at all levels for librarians working primarily in Indiana libraries. This issue is a project of the Indiana State Library Advisory Council's Subcommittee on Government Publications and Information.

The emphasis of the issue is on non-federal government publications since information about federal government information and publications is readily available in a variety of published sources. Harriet Cohen details many of these sources in her article. A standard help in this area is the recently-revised *Introduction to United State Government Information Sources* by Joe Morehead (Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1992).

A secondary purpose of this issue is to emphasize the wealth of government information available from depository libraries. Unfortunately much government information goes unnoticed and underutilized by non-depository libraries in the state. In addition to the 35 federal depository libraries and fourteen state depository libraries in

Indiana, there are numerous other depositories for specialized government information. Among these are the extensive collections of foreign and international, state and local publications at Indiana University in Bloomington and the publications of the European Communities at the University of Notre Dame. Numerous U.S. Geological Survey map collections are available. Especially notable collections are those at the Allen County Public Library, the Ball State University Bracken Library, the Indiana University Geology and Map Library in Bloomington and the Indiana State Library. Purdue University Engineering Library is a depository for some of the NTIS publications. The Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library is a full depository for U.S. patents. The Indiana State Library, including the State Data Center, is a primary resource for census information.

Above all this special issue emphasizes acquisition and reference use of government publications at all levels. More and more government information is available only in electronic format. At the state level this often means that the information is only available "on demand". But the federal government is moving

quickly, albeit cautiously, to develop means of distributing information electronically. For two years the U.S. Government Printing Office has been distributing information to depository libraries in CD-ROM and floppy diskette formats. In September 1992, GPO began coordinating the access to online bulletin boards for several agencies.

Governments at all levels provide a wide variety of information requested by library users, from information and reports on current topics of the day to information about the government's organization and activities. We hope this special issue of *Indiana Libraries* will help make that information more accessible to all.

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Guest Editor