



East Baton Rouge Parish Library

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 20, 2008

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LIBRARY RECEIVES BIG READ GRANT

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) continues its drive toward making the Big Read the largest federal reading program in U.S. history. As such, the NEA has awarded the East Baton Rouge Parish Library another \$20,000 grant for “The Big Read: One Book/One Community” program. 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 designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. The Big Read brings together partners across the country to encourage reading for pleasure and enlightenment. The Big Read also addresses the national decline in literary reading as documented in the NEA’s 2004 landmark survey Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America.

In its inaugural year 2007, the NEA launched The Big Read nationally in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest. More than 70 organizations participated. This year the library is one of 208 libraries, municipalities, and arts, culture, higher education, and science organizations to receive a grant to host a Big Read celebration. “With this latest round of grants, I am proud to say that The Big Read has supported more than 500 public library partnerships,” said Anne-Imelda M. Radice, Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the NEA’s lead federal partner for The Big Read. “Through this program,

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public libraries continue to demonstrate their value in communities as centers of engagement, literacy, and lifelong learning. I am particularly delighted by the innovative public programming born out of library and museum collaborations.”

The Big Read: One Book/One Community program is sponsored by The Big Read, the East Baton Rouge Parish Library, and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, who have partnered with libraries, school systems, religious and community organizations, and key leaders of industry and commerce throughout the nine-parish area. *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Fahrenheit 451* were the selected titles for the 2007 and 2008 programs. *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines is the chosen title for the Spring 2009 program. This book includes themes and characters with which our entire population can relate and as such, is perfect to promote a positive dialogue in our very diverse region.

Teachers, librarians, and community organizers can pick up discussion guides and related materials at the Main Library on Thursday, November 13, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. These items may also be picked up on Saturday, November 8, or Saturday, November 15 by contacting Andi Abraham at (225) 231-3745.

For more information on participating in the program, and for businesses and organizations who wish to partner with the East Baton Rouge Parish Library and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, contact Mary Stein at (225) 231-3710 or mstein@ebr.lib.la.us. Additional information will be posted at www.ReadOneBook.org.

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