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28 October 2004

Record Breaking Attendance At Library of Congress' Book Festival

Roughly 85,000 book lovers visited the large white pavilions spread over part of the National Mall for the National Book Festival in America. The free one-day event sponsored by the Library of Congress and hosted by First Lady Laura Bush featured more than 70 award-winning writers, illustrators, and poets who signed books and spoke to fans from across the country.

As one of the charter sponsors, the Institute of Museum and Library Services again hosted the Pavilion of the States, where each state, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories had representatives who discussed the local authors, libraries, and library heritage that make their state unique.

Some of the event's top authors and illustrators appeared at their states' tents to connect with readers. Among them were biographer Ron Chernow, who signed books at the New York table, and children's book illustrator Floyd Cooper, who was at the New Jersey table. In addition to more than 15 popular children's books, Cooper created the design for the festival's poster this year. The Nebraska table was pleased to show off the state's newest literary luminary: Ted Kooser, who recently was named the Library of Congress poet laureate.

The festival had many activities for children. In the Pavilion of the States, kids could pick up a "Discover Great Places Through Reading" brochure. Developed by the Library of Congress and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, the brochure had a map for collecting the state stamps that were handed out at each state and territory table.



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