

HUMANITIES TALKING POINTS

- **The humanities are essential to democracy.** A government that supports and funds the humanities fosters a better understanding of our history, culture and the world we live in. This enables a well-prepared citizenry to make informed decisions when faced with social, political, economic and technological challenges.
- **The humanities are essential to citizenship in a global society.** As we prepare our students and the public to be citizens in a global society, the humanities play an increasingly critical role in teaching the historical and cultural traditions that define what it is to be American.
- **An agency that responds quickly to need.** On September 7, 2005 NEH made available at least \$1 million for emergency grants to libraries, museums, colleges, universities, and other cultural and historical institutions in Gulf Coast areas affected by Hurricane Katrina. Emergency applications were processed swiftly, helping to preserve priceless books, records, manuscripts, art, and cultural artifacts damaged by the hurricane and the flooding.
- **Federal support for the humanities has historically received bipartisan support.** FY 06 NEH appropriations were increased in a floor amendment voice vote in 2005, and in 2004 an increase was approved by a vote of 241 to 185. In 2005, 110 members of Congress signed a bipartisan Dear Colleague letter signaling their support for an NEH increase.
- **A small investment through NEH goes a long way.** NEH provides seed money for high quality projects and programs that reach millions of Americans each year. This money, and NEH's reputation, leverages millions of dollars in non-federal support for humanities projects.
- **The endowment's competitive peer review process encourages excellence.** In FY2004, the NEH reviewed 4,921 grant proposals, and had the funds to approve only 1,090 or 22% of these projects. This competition encourages high-quality work that has earned nearly 600 awards, including nine Pulitzer Prizes, eight Bancroft Prizes, and six National Book Awards.
- **NEH is critical to addressing the nation's needs in education.** NEH is helping to address these needs through online resources and teacher training. Colleges and universities promote successful partnerships with K-12 schools and other educational and cultural organizations through NEH-supported programs such as summer institutes for teachers, tutoring programs, student competitions, history days, and language days.
- **NEH provides critical leadership in preserving our historical and cultural heritage,** from a 20-year effort to film crumbling books ("brittle books") to programs to assist museums stabilize material culture collections. At-risk objects include: books, journals, newspapers, manuscripts, archival collections, maps, photographs, films, sound recordings, oral histories, archaeological and ethnographic objects, decorative and fine art, and textiles.
- **NEH provides critical support for humanities scholarship,** and facilitates the flow of scholarly research to the public through books, articles, educational television and radio programs, and other media. Examples of works made possible by NEH include Ken Burns' film *The Civil War*, the documentary *MacArthur*, and the award-winning book *Undaunted Courage* by Stephen Ambrose.
- **NEH engages Americans at all levels of learning through public humanities programs,** including exhibits in museums, libraries, and historical organizations; through the programs of the state humanities councils; and a variety of other activities, such as radio, film and television productions.
- **State councils respond to local needs and help to ensure that the best of the humanities reaches Americans in nearly every district of the nation.** State humanities councils address critical needs in the areas of professional development for teachers, family literacy programs, and public humanities programming.
- **What are the humanities?** According to the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act: "The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods."