

NEWS

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Area Libraries Receive Free CDs

Library staff members throughout East Central Illinois will be making their way to Lincoln Trail Libraries System (LTLS) over the next week to make selections from over 13,000 free CDs. The addition of 13,000 CDs to the collections of LTLS member libraries will increase the number of CDs available to library users in East Central Illinois by more than 30 percent. The CD offering, ranging from Rock/Pop to Country Western, Folk, and Blue Grass to Classical and beyond, resulted from the settlement of a class-action lawsuit over price-fixing by five major record labels and three large music retailers.

The settlement is a boon to many area libraries. Lincoln Trail staff received numerous calls from ecstatic library staff regarding the "Great CD Giveaway." The words of Nancy Reynolds, a school librarian in Watseka, Illinois, reflected the sentiments of many school librarians in LTLS. She said the CDs would enable her to have her very first music collection and that up until now her music teachers have had to "beg, borrow, and steal to include sound recordings in their curriculum." She will be sending her music teachers to make the selections so that the items are aligned with their programming and curriculum needs.

Area public libraries are also pleased at the prospect of adding CDs to their collections. Mary Bissey, Assistant Director at Champaign Public Library, reports that staff members are "looking forward to taking advantage of such a pleasant windfall for users of the Champaign Public Library."

The lawsuit, filed by 43 states in August 2000, claimed the music industry and retailers unlawfully colluded to keep the price of CDs artificially high through what are called "minimum advertised pricing" policies under which the major labels would subsidize advertising if retailers agreed not to sell CDs below a certain price. In the settlement, which was approved last year, the companies agreed to give \$75.7 million worth of CDs to schools, libraries, government organizations and other nonprofit groups. They also agreed to refund \$67.4 million to consumers who purchased CDs from 1995 to 2000 and eliminate policies that set minimum prices for advertised CDs.

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The number of discs distributed to each state is proportional to its percentage of the overall national population. Illinois will receive around 243,500 CDs, of which 158,500 will be distributed to libraries through Illinois library systems.

Defendants included Bertelsmann Music Group, EMI Music Distribution, the Warner-Elektra-Atlantic Corporation, Sony Music Entertainment and the Universal Music Group, Trans World Entertainment, Tower Records and Musicland stores.

General information about the settlement is available at <http://www.musiccdsettlement.com/english/default.htm>. Questions specific to Illinois may be directed to Blake Harrop, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Antitrust Bureau, bharrop@atg.state.il.us, 312-814-1004.

Founded in 1966, Lincoln Trail Libraries System has headquarters in Champaign and is one of 9 multitype library systems in the State of Illinois. The System serves 7 academic, 53 public, 47 school, and 17 special libraries in Champaign, Clark, Coles, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Piatt, and Vermilion counties. Lincoln Trail advocates, collaborates, and facilitates education and cooperation to empower information agencies to improve and expand access to and delivery of information resources.

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