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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Promoting Idaho's Literary Heritage at the National Book Festival

The Idaho Commission for Libraries will promote Idaho's literary heritage at the 12<sup>th</sup> annual National Book Festival. The Festival, sponsored by the Library of Congress, will be held Saturday and Sunday, September 22–23, on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Last year more than 200,000 festival goers explored the Festival, which features authors, poets, illustrators, and a variety of pavilions. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) sponsors the Festival's Pavilion of the States to promote reading and the literary traditions of the 50 states, District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. At Idaho's table in the Pavilion, two Commission staff members will visit with attendees and distribute information that demonstrates how Idaho promotes early childhood literacy, reading, books, and libraries.

The Commission has chosen *The Birthday Box* for Idaho's featured book this year. In this bilingual board book, written and illustrated by award-winning Ketchum author Leslie Patricelli, Baby receives a toy puppy and launches into grand adventures with the puppy and the box it came in. "When my son was a toddler, I felt compelled to buy him the newest must-have educational toys, even though I knew he would be perfectly happy (and educated) playing with something as simple as a box," said Patricelli. "While I was pondering this conundrum, my book, *The Birthday Box*, arrived almost fully formed in my mind, with a slight difference. In my original idea, the baby opens the birthday present and discovers a fancy bells-and-whistles toy, then throws the toy aside to play with the box instead. But, in watching my son play, I came to the conclusion that kids have fun with both ready-made toys and plain brown boxes, and that both have value to a child in different ways. I decided to have a stuffed dog inside the box, which allows the present to be incorporated naturally into the baby's play. Even though the baby mistakes the box for the present, both the box and the toy become treasures."

State Librarian Ann Joslin said, "We are pleased to promote early literacy at the Festival and feature *The Birthday Box*. We look forward to the opportunity to answer questions about other Idaho writers and books, distribute literacy materials, and share information about Idaho libraries and literacy projects. It is always a pleasure to see thousands of families visit the Festival's Pavilion of the States and deepen their excitement about reading."

Commission staff attends the Festival through a grant from IMLS administered by the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA). See more about the National Book Festival at [www.loc.gov/bookfest](http://www.loc.gov/bookfest).

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The Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICfL) assists libraries to build the capacity to better serve their clientele. To learn more about ICfL, visit <http://libraries.idaho.gov/>.