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The Knight Foundation Awards Challenge Grants to Two Local Foundations

Knight Community Information Challenge Promotes Community Engagement and Fills Information Voids

(Minneapolis/St. Paul, January 15, 2009) Of the 21 innovative ideas that have received \$5 million from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, two of them will help Minnesota residents lead better-informed lives. Both the Minnesota Community Foundation and The Minneapolis Foundation have received a combined \$600,000 challenge designed to help community foundations support creative ways to use new media and technology to keep communities engaged.

“At Knight Foundation, we firmly believe that you cannot effectively manage the affairs of a community in a democracy without the free flow of information. That’s why we believe that information is a core community need, as critical as any to a healthy community,” said Alberto Ibarguen, Knight Foundation’s president and CEO. “Our goal at Knight is informed and engaged communities. Community foundations were established to meet core community needs, so they are logical partners.”

Knight Foundation launched the challenge, a matching grant program, to encourage community foundations to fund information projects. The challenge is premised on two strongly held beliefs: 1) in a democracy, information is essential for a community to function properly; it is a core need, and 2) since community foundations are established to meet core community needs, they are logical partners in meeting the information needs of communities.

The Minnesota Community Foundation was awarded \$500,000 to create an online community that will host statewide competitions for the best ideas to solve community problems. Winning ideas will become reality, thanks to grants from the community foundation and its partners. Priority issues will be identified through community listening sessions. Minnesota Public Radio will encourage dialogue and participation.

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The Minneapolis Foundation was awarded \$100,000 to support in-depth coverage of key community issues, by matching donations for the creation of crucial beat reporting positions. The content MinnPost creates under this grant will also be made available free of charge to ethnic and community weeklies, to ensure wider distribution of the coverage.

The Knight Community Information Challenge is one of six Media Innovation Initiatives created by Knight. They include:

- The Knight News Challenge, an international contest that funds ideas that use digital media to deliver news and information to geographically defined communities (www.newschallenge.org);
- The Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy, in partnership with the Aspen Institute, which will propose public policy that will facilitate meeting those needs (www.knightcomm.org); and
- The Knight Center of Digital Excellence, a nonprofit consultancy, that helps communities across the United States ensure digital access for every citizen (www.knightcenter.info).

For a full list of winners and their projects, visit www.informationneeds.org.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation promotes excellence in journalism worldwide and invests in the vitality of the U.S. communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. Knight Foundation supports ideas and projects that create transformational change. Visit www.knightfoundation.org.

About the Minnesota Community Foundation

Minnesota Community Foundation is the statewide community foundation helping to create vibrant communities where all people can find hope and opportunity. As a nonprofit organization created by and for local residents, the foundation helps individuals, organizations and communities fulfill their charitable giving goals and create positive change through philanthropy. The foundation provides charitable planning, grantmaking and investment services. Minnesota Community Foundation was established in 1949 and has become the fastest growing community foundation in the state – more than doubling its assets under management in less than five years. Visit www.mncommunityfoundation.org.

About The Minneapolis Foundation

Established in 1915, The Minneapolis Foundation is one of the nation's oldest and largest community foundations. It manages more than \$680 million in assets, administers more than 1,000 charitable funds created by individuals, families and businesses and distributes more than \$35 million in grants each year. The foundation also works with others to improve the quality of life in the region and serves as a catalyst for dialogue and action on critical issues in the community. Visit www.minneapolisfoundation.org.

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