

**Prisons take part in The Big Read | [View Clip](#)**

**03/16/2010**

***Herald-Mail***

Maryland prison libraries this year are participating in The Big Read, a national program designed to inspire a love of reading the classics.

The initiative, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, was introduced at a program kickoff event earlier this month at the state prison complex south of Hagerstown, according to Mark Vernarelli, spokesman for the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts allowed prison libraries across the state to purchase copies of "Fahrenheit 451," by Ray Bradbury, as well as study materials that go along with the literary classic, Vernarelli said.

During March, prison libraries will feature art contests, essay contests and film presentations that are designed to introduce inmates to "Fahrenheit 451," the release said.

Maryland is the first state to introduce the program to its prison inmates, Vernarelli said.