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## **Small-town library innovation spaces aim to help youths 'to find their future in their own backyard'**

By Martha Stoddard / World-Herald Bureau Oct 14, 2017

LINCOLN — A new state project will give residents of 30 small Nebraska cities a chance to learn and create with temporary “makerspaces” over the next three years.

Gov. Pete Ricketts joined Nebraska Library Commission officials and the founder of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Nebraska Innovation Studio to unveil the project Friday.

Ricketts said the goal is to foster innovation across the state and show youngsters the kinds of hands-on careers that are possible in manufacturing.

“We want to encourage young people to find their future in their own backyard,” he said.

Through the project, local libraries will host specialized equipment and technology, including 3-D printers, laser cutters, a large heat press and a combination embroidery and sewing machine.

The project is supported through a \$530,732 grant awarded by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services to the Nebraska Library Commission.

Commission Director Rod Wagner said libraries are a natural place to host this new kind of learning experience.

“Whether the materials and tools are high-tech or low-tech, digital or analog, art or science, the focus is to create, invent, tinker, explore and discover using the tools, materials and knowledge available,” he said.

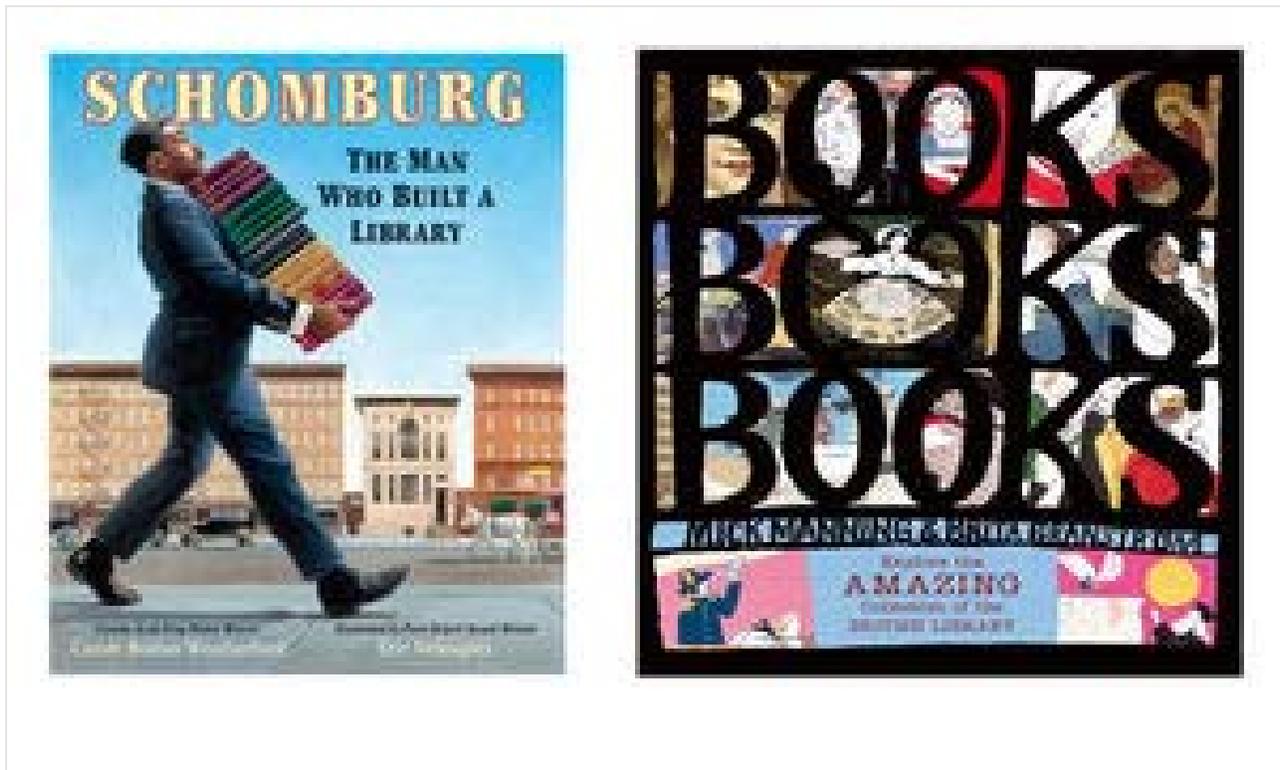
Eighteen libraries will host the makerspace equipment initially. Twelve additional libraries will be chosen in May for the next round. Each library will have equipment available for 20 weeks.

Mary Jo Ryan of the library commission said that although the project is temporary, it will give communities a chance to see if they want to create their own, more permanent innovation space.

The initial libraries are in: Ainsworth, Ashland, Bridgeport, Broken Bow, Central City, Crete, Geneva, Loup City, Nebraska City, Neligh, Norfolk, North Platte, Plattsmouth, Ravenna, Scottsbluff, Sidney, South Sioux City and Wayne.

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