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For further information contact: Mary Treacy (612) 646-0475

1998 Freedom of Information Award Recipients Announced

MIGIZI Communications and the Minnesota Government Access Producers Group are the 1998 recipients of the John R. Finnegan Freedom of Information Award. The awards, honoring the organizations for separate achievements, will be presented at a ceremony at noon in Room G 01 (Auditorium) of the Minnesota Judicial Center, 25 Constitution Avenue, St. Paul, MN on Monday, March 16, 1998, Freedom of Information Day.

MIGIZI Communications (migizi.org) is recognized for equipping American Indian learners with the tools of information and telecommunications technology. A nonprofit organization with a twenty-one year track record, MIGIZI provides information to the public, educates elementary, secondary and adult students using the tools of communication, and commits resources to addressing problems in partnership with the American Indian community. MIGIZI serves over 600 students and family members each year. Current programs include the National Native Information Center (<http://www.nnic.com>), the Native Academy (<http://www.nativeacademy.com>) and the Family Education Center.

The Minnesota Government Access Producers Group (MGAP) is recognized for its role in ensuring unfiltered access to government activity. Since 1994, the informal association of government TV coordinators has met at city halls and government access studios throughout the metropolitan area to share production tips, technology solutions and discuss the common problems members face in providing access to government information via local public access channels.

Freedom of Information Day is celebrated each year on the anniversary of the birth of James A. Madison, fourth president of the United States and principal author of the Bill of Rights. 1998 is the tenth year the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information has presented the award. The award is named for John R. Finnegan, retired senior vice president of the St. Paul Pioneer Press and chair of the Minnesota Joint Media Committee, for his dedication to openness in government and his work on behalf of the people's right to know.

The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information is modeled on a national coalition initiated in 1986 by the American Library Association. Members of the Minnesota Coalition include librarians, media and computer professionals, lawyers, community activists, educators and others. -30-
