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**The sun isn't shining everywhere.** Government pressure to seal public documents and to pry into reporters' notebooks only increased in the last year. That's why Sunshine Week needs to burn even brighter in 2007.

This book can help. "Bright Ideas" shows the remarkable ingenuity used by newspapers, broadcasters, civic groups, students and many others to tell the story of openness during Sunshine Week 2006 – through stories, editorials, columns, cartoons, graphics and more. Many participants also tapped the vast potential of the Internet. This book is a trove of brainstorm – from model laws to essay contests, online letter generators to public forums, and blogs to cartoons.

One of the enduring themes of Sunshine Week is that open government isn't just a press issue. It is a fundamental requirement of democracy that has followers everywhere in the country – not just librarians and historians, not just scientists and other researchers, but among Americans of all political brands and all walks of life. Keeping records open doesn't just help us understand the workings of government; it helps us buy a house, choose a car, select a school and make good voting decisions. "Bright Ideas" shows how to expand the horizons of openness.

The values and spirit of Sunshine Week can't be a once-a-year phenomenon – not if we expect to make headway against the forces that want to close off the public's business. But Sunshine Week gives us all an opportunity to make a raucous statement of our beliefs and principles, and to show how open governments can strengthen our communities and our nation.

Hundreds of news organizations produced thousands of stories and other material last year. Let's make Sunshine Week 2007, March 11-17, an even louder expression of our commitment to a free flow of information.

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**The success of Sunshine Week** is a direct result of the enthusiasm, creativity and commitment of its participants. Though begun by Florida newspapers and now led nationally by the American Society of Newspaper Editors in conjunction with the Coalition of Journalists for Open Government, Sunshine Week continues to grow each year, as new audiences start marking the week among themselves and with partners both longstanding and newfound.

The results are a public opinion groundswell against unnecessary government secrecy. State and local lawmakers seeking to meet privately or seal information are increasingly being thwarted; other officials are showing new energy in their efforts to promote openness. At the federal level, where the culture of closure has been firmly entrenched, there are bright spots, with leaders of the new 110th Congress putting open government high on their action lists.

Now is not the time to sit back and survey all that Sunshine Week has set in motion. Rather, we must build on the momentum, encourage others who have not joined and shore up those who may be lagging. In short, we must all keep the Sunshine shining.

Thanks to the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation for its continued support for Sunshine Week. And special thanks to all the participants who make it happen.

