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Coastal Plain Regional News and Notes

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Athens Regional Library news and notes

Library Journal has recognized the Athens Regional Library System's Pinewoods Library and Learning Center as one of the top three small libraries in America. In its February issue, the highest-circulated trade publication for librarians named Pinewoods a finalist for 2009 Best Small Library in America, an annual award sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The annual award showcases libraries providing outstanding service to populations of 25,000 or less.

The library has become the primary resource and information center for the nearly 18,000 Hispanic immigrants who live in Clarke County. Pinewoods is often the first stop for many new immigrants who want to learn English and computer skills. Among its specialties are adult education programs, including English as a Second Language classes, family literacy activities and what *Library Journal* describes as "a vibrant volunteer-driven after-school tutoring program."

"The Pinewoods library is a microcosm of everything offered at each of our libraries," Ames said, "so for this branch to be recognized as one of the top small libraries nationwide speaks highly of our system as a whole."

Library Journal recognized the Athens library system just a few days after it received another national honor in the form of a \$94,510 grant to support grassroots financial literacy in the Athens community. On Jan. 21, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) Investor Education Foundation and the American Library Association announced nearly \$882,000 in grants to 12 recipients as a part of the "Smart Investing @ your library" initiative.

According to Ames, the FINRA grant will enable the library to undertake a basic financial literacy initiative helping low-income workers with low educational attainment; to integrate financial literacy education into GED preparation at five community sites; and to expand partnerships with local organizations, including public schools and the Family and Consumer Economics College at the University of Georgia. »

Atlanta-Fulton County news and notes

For the past 25 years, Fulton County and city of Atlanta elementary school children vote each year for their favorite author and then get to meet them in person, thanks to the Milner Award. This year the winner is children's author and illustrator David Shannon, whose award-winning books include *No, David* and *Too Many Toys*.

The Milner Award was created in 1982 by the Friends of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System using a gift from Vera Milner, a former Atlanta schoolteacher. The fact that the winner is selected exclusively by the children makes the Milner Award one of a kind.

Programs reserved for the students who voted were held at Atlanta-Fulton Public Library's Central Library in January. For more information on the Milner Award, visit www.themilneraward.org or www.afpls.org. »

Coastal Plain Regional news and notes

In the current economic downturn, public libraries are helping more people than ever before with job searches. Deborah Moorman, manager of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System's Irwin County Public Library in Ocilla, took that help to a higher level.

"We recently had a man come in who had just moved his family from Atlanta to Ocilla," Moorman explained. "He had lost his job and was looking for another one using one of our public-access computers. He found something suitable and had filled out his application, but he ran into a snag: Even though the application form was online, the company wanted the application faxed to them, and the man did not have the \$5 it would take to pay the faxing fees."



Moorman

The man asked Moorman if she could trust him to pay the \$5 when he got his first paycheck. "I told him we would write out IOU, and he could pay the library when he got paid," Moorman said. "About three weeks later, he came in and paid the fax fees. He had gotten the job, was now employed and wanted to keep his word. It renewed my faith in humanity, and I'm very happy for him." »

Gwinnett County Library news and notes

Prior to the January Gwinnett County Public Library board of trustee's meeting, retired Major Charles Hyder presented Phyllis Oxendine, board of trustees member, an award for her support of veterans in Gwinnett County.

Major Hyder's suggestions and support for the library system helped us identify and further respond to specific customer information needs and enhance access in the branches and online.