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## Library's Opening Draws Nearly Half of Ephesus' Population

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## Library's opening draws nearly half of Ephesus' population

More than 150 library supporters came to celebrate the grand opening of the new Ephesus Public Library in Heard County on June 14, 2009. Mayor Denney Rogers says that planning for the new library began in 2002, and the entire community is excited that the library is finally a reality.

Speakers for the event included Rogers, Rep. Randy Nix (R-LaGrange), State Librarian Lamar Veatch, West Georgia Regional Library Director Jim Cooper, Heard County School Superintendent and library board Chairman Benji Hyatt and Heard County Commissioner June Jackson.

The new library is a 6,100-square-foot facility that includes a meeting room and 10 computers available for public use. The opening book collection includes more than 4,500 children's and adult books, and more are on order. Funding for the \$1.2-million facility included \$650,000 in state funds and \$610,000 in local funds.



The oldest and youngest attendees participated in the Ephesus library's "book opening" ceremony. From left: Kayla McWhorter holding 8-month-old Tessie, Lonnie Rogers, Bernice Rogers, and Ila and Carlton Crenshaw.

"This community of 388 residents is indeed fortunate to have a library of this size and quality," said Cooper. "Through the PINES network, the library is connected to other libraries throughout Georgia, and Ephesus citizens have direct access to over 10 million books for their use."

The branch manager for the Ephesus Library is Donna Alvis. Her assistant is Judy Rogers. Both have lived in Ephesus for most of their lives. "We are so blessed to be in a community that gives so much support to the library," Alvis said.

Mayor Rogers recalled the days of his youth when his late mother, Vivian, set up a small library for the Ephesus community in her home to house books brought by the West Georgia Regional Library bookmobile. Rogers said that his mother "is smiling as she looks down upon this event today."

Rep. Nix expressed his appreciation for being included at the grand opening and emphasized how important the library is to the community. "Even though this project was begun before I was elected as your representative, I am pleased about the library and the resources it will provide."

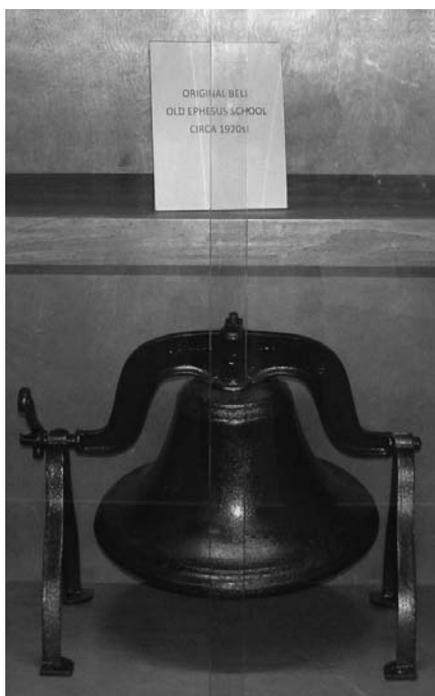
The architect for the building was

Julie Griffin of Austell-based Southern A&E, and the construction contractor was W.O. Kilgore Company of Carrollton.

The building is adjacent to the Ephesus Elementary School, and many of the features of the building complement the school. The tower at the top of the building recalls the bell tower of the old Ephesus school dating from the 1920s. The original bell from that schoolhouse has been restored and is on permanent display in the lobby of the new library.

Veatch said that he is delighted with the new facility. "I can't recall ever attending a grand opening where literally half of the city's population attended the event," he said.

At the conclusion of the program, Mayor Rogers asked for anyone younger than 1 year old or anyone over the age of 90 to participate in a ceremonial "book opening" for the library. Eight-month-old Tessie McWhorter was the youngest participant in the ceremony, and Lonnie Rogers, Bernice Rogers, Ila Crenshaw and Carlton Crenshaw were the participants aged 90 and above. Rogers stated that "the library will be used by all citizens — from the youngest to the oldest and everyone in between." ▶▶



The restored original bell from the old Ephesus schoolhouse is on display in the lobby.