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Northwest Georgia News and Notes

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Chattahoochee Valley news and notes

Mildred L. Terry Public Library, a branch of the Chattahoochee Valley Libraries, has more than doubled the amount of computers at its branch - significantly expanding residents' access to the Internet - thanks to a \$200,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

With Knight Foundation support, the Mildred L. Terry Public Library has been able to create a "community center" environment where patrons have access to the Internet and an ever-growing range of activities and applications. "The communities served by the Mildred Terry Public Library have already benefited greatly from the new technology," says Claudya Muller, director of the Chattahoochee Valley Libraries. "In addition to helping individual library users, local businesses have been taking advantage of the computers, copiers, printers and projection systems in the meeting rooms as well."

"The library has always been about information and making it accessible to everyone. Today's libraries are the greatest providers of free Internet - offering residents access to the critical news and information they need to make decisions about their lives," said Beverly Blake, Macon program director for the Knight Foundation. "Through this partnership with the Chattahoochee Valley Libraries, we hope to augment libraries' roles as vital community centers while helping to create engaged and informed communities."

The \$200,000 grant is part of a \$5.5 million Knight Foundation initiative benefiting library users in 20 communities across the United States. The effort reinforces the sweeping recommendations by the Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy, a project of the Aspen Institute. In a report issued earlier this year, the commission asserts that democracy in America is threatened by the lack of equal access to quality information. Funding public libraries, as centers of digital and media training, is one key to filling the gaps, the commission says. Its report is available at www.knightcomm.org. ►►

Cobb County news and notes

The Merchant's Walk Library closed Jan. 22 and re-opened as the East Cobb Library, Feb. 1 in its new location. A ribbon-cutting ceremony took place March 9.

The Cobb County Public Library System's East Cobb Library is located at 4880 Lower Roswell Road in Marietta



Left: East Cobb resident Nancy Clark volunteered to unpack books Jan. 21 at the new East Cobb Library opening Feb. 1. Clark, a volunteer with the Cobb County Public Library System for four months, said it is her way to give back to the community. Right: Marcy Nader, the former Merchant's Walk Library branch manager, now a library volunteer, shelves books Jan. 21 in the new East Cobb Library. Nader said, "It is so nice to move into a nice, clean, spacious library, and I am so glad to be a part of it." (Photos by Erika Ruthman/CCPLS)

in the Parkaire Shopping Center, less than two miles from its previous location.

The East Cobb Library, designed to meet the current and future library needs of the community, is 16,684 square feet. The facility includes a multipurpose room, children's activity room, teen space, study rooms, vending area and self-checkout.

For information, visit the Cobb County Public Library System Web site at www.cobbcat.org. ►►

Northwest Georgia news and notes

More than 3,000 people from Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Alabama recently attended the Department of Labor's (DOL) North Georgia Career Expo and Job Fair at the Northwest Georgia Trade and Convention Center in Dalton. Tags from as far away as Houston County in Georgia were spotted in the parking lot. Deputy Regional Director Nick Fogarty and Dalton-Whitfield Public Library Manager John McPhearson represented Northwest Georgia Regional Library at the event, which the DOL called one of the largest ever held in North Georgia.

"During the four-hour event, we talked with nearly 300 people, ranging from as young as high school students to as mature as retirees looking to supplement their retirements," said Fogarty. "There was no 'typical' job seeker. The need for a job has cut across all ages and professions. Although we were there to discuss using library computers and resources for job searching and applications, there were those that expressed interest in library careers - both professional and support staff."

By the time the job fair opened its doors, the parking lot was full, and traffic was backed up to the I-75 exit, about one mile east of the Trade Center. The number of job seekers visiting the library booth far exceeded anticipated numbers, and more pathfinders and maps to the library had to be delivered by staff to the library booth.

One comment that was repeated time and again was from job seekers who stated that they started their careers when they didn't need a college degree and worked their way up in their industry. They are finding that their skills are not in great demand in today's economy.

Although DOL didn't intend for this event to become a multistate expo, DOL Commissioner Michael Thurmond was gratified that so many people hadn't given up hope in finding a new job or new career. Thurmond said DOL held the job fair in Dalton because the area is one of the hardest hit by the recession in Georgia. The Dalton metro area lost nearly 6,000 jobs in the 12-month period ending October 2009.

The Dalton-Whitfield Public Library is working with the Dalton-Whitfield Chamber of Commerce in encouraging job seekers to register for the Georgia Work Ready assessment. Fogarty is a member of the Chamber's work force development committee. "We want to be a part of the committee taking action to help our residents find jobs. We knew that, for many, the public library is their only access to computers for job searching. Hearing it firsthand from job seekers at the job fair was very sobering. People thanking us for 'being there' was very gratifying," he said. ►►

Friends of Georgia Libraries news, notes

The Friends of Georgia Libraries (FOGL) spring membership meeting and workshop will be held at the Coweta County Central Library in Newnan on Friday, April 23. "We are preparing an excellent program," said Bede Mitchell, FOGL president. "It will feature Lynne Bradley from ALA's Washington Office and author Amanda Gable, as well as the award presentation to our 'Best Friend of 2009.'"

The FOGL board of directors has also voted to present an additional award — the first 'FOGL Fabulous Friends Award' — at the meeting. This award will be presented to an organization that has achieved exemplary success in supporting its local library. The award includes a plaque, as well as \$150 for the organization and a free registration to the membership meeting. ►►



Librarian Ken Kozel (right) just returned from the American Library Association (ALA) Mid-Winter Conference in Boston. He was chosen as an ALA 2010 Emerging Leader. One hundred librarians from around the country were picked to participate in the program. Kozel's group will create a wiki and podcast for the International Committee on Archives, Libraries, and Museums and will serve on the D.C. Committee. Kozel will attend the ALA annual conference June in Washington, D.C. to present the group's project. Kozel graduated from the Valdosta State University MLIS Program in August 2009. He is currently head of the Randolph County Public Library in Cuthbert, part of the Kinchafoonee Regional Library System.

Resource sharing group nets 100 members

LYRASIS announced that LYRA, the new resource sharing group created in November to serve the entire LYRASIS area, including the New England, Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, has reached the 100-participant mark.

LYRA, an opt-in group open to all LYRASIS members, represents a major increase in free lending opportunities for members and now covers more than 22 states. Members of the group agree to borrow and lend returnable items (books and other resources) to other LYRA members for free.

"The excitement around LYRA and its rapid growth reflects the eagerness of LYRASIS members to collaborate with each other on a larger scale than ever before, across geographic boundaries and among very diverse libraries and cultural heritage institutions," said Russell Palmer, LYRASIS educational services librarian/LYRA coordinator.

LYRASIS members interested in participating in LYRA may contact LYRASIS Member Support at 800-999-8558 or e-mail membersupport@lyrasis.org. ►►