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## Georgia Library Spotlight - Winder Public Library

Beth McIntyre

*Piedmont Regional Library System*, [bmcintyre@prlib.org](mailto:bmcintyre@prlib.org)

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# GLA SPOTLIGHT

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## Winder Public Library

Built in the late 1980s, the Winder Public Library has served Winder for more than 30 years. The building also served as the headquarters for the Piedmont Regional Library System (PRLS) until September 2014, when regional administrative offices moved to Jefferson, Georgia. Regional offices serve all 10 public library locations in Banks, Barrow, and Jackson counties: Winder, Auburn, Statham, Jefferson, Commerce, Braselton, Maysville, Talmo, Banks County, and Harold S. Swindle in Nicholson. The move of PRLS regional offices left over 3,000 square feet vacant. The extensive renovations have increased the library's public area, providing more room for books, computers, and patrons.

With almost 100,000 visits, more than 42,000 computer sessions, and more than 139,000 checkouts per year, Winder is the busiest library in the tricounty region. Athens architect Joe Smith and interior designer Cortney Orme of Vivre Interiors in Gainesville, Georgia led the renovation, which included additional computer stations, study rooms, improved meeting space, energy-efficient lighting, and more efficient use of space for both staff and patrons.

Over 200 people attended the Winder Public Library grand reopening that was held Sunday, January 21 at 1:00 p.m. Local donors were present and recognized. State Librarian Julie Walker presented the Georgia Library Champion of the Year Award to Representative Terry England for his tireless support of public library service in Georgia. The audience also enjoyed live performances of stories and songs by beloved children's author Carmen Deedy and multiple-Grammy-nominated folk musician John McCutcheon.

Carmen Deedy and John McCutcheon performed at the Winder Public Library as a part of North Georgia Kids Read program. North Georgia Reads promotes collaboration among neighboring library systems and brings bestselling authors to a community of 46 libraries in the region. Library systems currently participating in North Georgia Reads include Gwinnett, Cobb, and Hall counties, and Piedmont Regional Library System.

Public library funding in Georgia is a group effort. The Winder Public Library building is owned by Barrow County. Winder Public Library receives funds from federal, state, county, and



city levels, and from the Barrow County School System. The renovation project spanned three years. The state of Georgia funded 90% of the project (approximately \$600,000) using Major Repair and Renovation (MRR) Re-Purposing Construction funds. Re-purposing current library buildings is more cost-effective than new construction. Local matching funds came from Piedmont Regional Library System's fund balance and local donors. The library offered six study room sponsorships with naming rights for \$5,000 each. Four of those rooms have been

sponsored by: Bob and Shirley Lanham; Jane Thompson and Cheryl Brownstein; The Barrow County Historical Society; and Senator Frank Ginn, whose mother was a librarian.

Visit the Winder Public Library website at <http://winder.prlib.org/> to learn more about the programs and services of this beautiful library.

*Photo by Ben McDaniel*