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## Gwinnett County Library 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](http://www.themilneraward.org) or [www.afpls.org](http://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.

The Gwinnett County Public Library has also been awarded the 2009 John Cotton Dana Public Relations Award. The announcement was made at the American Library Association (ALA) Mid-Winter Conference in Denver on Jan. 24. Since 1946, the John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award recognizes and honors outstanding achievement in library public relations. It is considered to be the most prestigious of all library awards in the field of public relations and marketing.

"We are very proud and honored to be a recipient of the John Cotton Dana Award. It is a tribute to the success of the Gwinnett Reading Festival and to the hard work of our new public relations director, Michelle Long. We look forward to another great festival this year. This accomplishment was possible because of the enormous support received from library staff and volunteers, partners and sponsors, and the community," said Nancy Stanbery-Kellam, director.

Gwinnett County Public Library recently welcomed two new board members. Both Babs Wagoner and Phillip Saxton were appointed to the Gwinnett County Public Library board of trustees on Jan. 6. Phyllis Oxendine was reappointed and nominated by Charles Bannister, County Commission chair. In addition to Wagoner, Saxton and Oxendine, members of the board include K. Dale Todd and Margaret Tiller. ▶▶

## Mountain Regional news and notes

Because of the tremendous growth in use and maintenance and repair issues with the now 20-year-old Towns County Public Library building, Commissioner Bill Kendall requested that the Mountain Regional Library System apply for a state grant to provide funds to renovate the library and add about 3,000 sq. ft.

Donna Howell, regional library director, prepared the application to send to the state library for consideration. Kendall signed the state capital outlay grant application guaranteeing local funds of \$100,000 to match \$900,000 in state grants that will be required for the project. If the grant application is successful, the funding may be available for the project to begin in July of 2010. The state's capital outlay grant program is a tremendous value for the community and for the state.

The Towns County Public Library is bursting at the seams! The library was completed in 1989; that year, 4,963 people came into the library and checked out 8,385 books. There were no computers; no children's programs; no videos, DVDs or audio books or music on

CD; and very few books on the shelves. In fiscal year 2008, more than 25,000 people used the library; checked out more than 40,000 items; used the 12 library computers more than 8,000 times; and more than 1,300 Towns County children attended library sponsored programs. More than 40 percent of Towns County residents have a library card.

The executive committee of the Mountain Regional Library System board of trustees has approved Jack Bailey of Bailey Associates Architects of Gainesville as the architect for the renovation and addition project for the Union County Public Library. The countywide capital SPLOST passed in February 2008 provides for up to \$900,000 in funding for library improvements. In addition, the Mountain Regional Library System has applied for a state capital outlay grant of about \$1.7 million using the county SPLOST funds as the required local match.

The plan is for the library to remain at its current location but it will be almost doubled in size, and the existing structure will be completely renovated. The Friends of Union County Library have been raising funds, with support from local businesses and individuals, for their LEAF (Library Furnishings and Enrichment) Fund, which will be used to supplement the SPLOST and state grant. If the state grant is approved during the current legislative session, the project could break ground as early as July 1. ▶▶



Front row: Lamar Paris, Union County commissioner; Dr. Jounida Bradley, Mountain Regional Library System board chair; Jack Bailey, architect. Back Row: Joe Forsee, building program consultant and director of the Northwest Georgia Regional Library System; Donna Howell, director of the Mountain Regional Library System; and Susie Brendle, Union County librarian.