

Visit us on the web at www.griver.org

Great River Regional Library Celebrates 40 Years of Service to Central Minnesota

The Originals

Fourteen libraries were part of the original agreement that created Great River Regional Library (GRRL). They were: Albany, Annandale, Belgrade, Buffalo, Cold Spring, Delano, Howard Lake, Kimball, Melrose, Richmond, Royalton, St. Cloud, Swanville, and Waite Park.

The current roster of 32 GRRL libraries was reached in 2001. Here are the additional libraries and the year in which they began offering service as GRRL libraries:

1971 Pierz
1972 Elk River
1973 Monticello
1974 Foley
1974 Long Prairie
1976 Cokato
1982 Eagle Bend
1984 Becker
1984 Big Lake
1986 Little Falls
1988 Upsala
1989 Rockford
1989 St. Michael
1990 Sauk Centre
1992 Paynesville
1993 Grey Eagle
1997 Staples
2001 Clearwater

On Sept. 25, 2009, Great River Regional Library (GRRL) celebrated the 40th anniversary of its organizational meeting on Sept. 25, 1969.

In GRRL's first annual report, Merle Lennartson, the newly appointed regional director, described the process by which the new regional library system came about:

In the fall of 1967 members of the Morrison County Commissioners met with Stearns County Commissioners to broach the possibility of combining to form a regional library setup.

About the same time METRO in the St. Cloud area representing St. Cloud Township, St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids and Waite Park asked the State Director of Libraries, Mr. Hannis Smith, to appear at one of their meetings to discuss regional library service.

In the summer of 1968 Mr. Smith prepared a feasibility study on the existing library service of this area, what was needed to extend service, and how a regional setup could be financed and governed.... During the winter of 1968-69 representatives of the governmental units concerned met frequently to work out an agreement which would govern such a regional library in this area. During the summer and fall of 1969 this agreement was accepted by the County Commissioners of Benton, Morrison, Stearns and Wright Counties and by the St. Cloud City Council. Each unit appointed its representatives to a regional library board of twelve trustees.

The organizational meeting of the new regional board was held on September 25, 1969.... St. Cloud Public Library was designated as Headquarters Library where administrative work, purchasing and processing of library materials would be done and all walk-in and reference service given. Merle Lennartson was chosen as Director and Mary Baker as Associate Director in charge of bookmobile and branch service.... The Great River Regional Library was selected as the name of the new setup.

Gerald Thoreen was the first President of the GRRL Board of Trustees. He still lives in



GRRL's first administrators, Mary Baker, Associate Director, and Merle Lennartson, Director, attended a dedication at the Elk River Public Library. Lennartson retired in 1975.



The Carnegie Library in St. Cloud was the original headquarters for the Great River Regional Library. Built in 1902, it was torn down after the City of St. Cloud built a new library that opened in 1979.

St. Cloud and uses the current library. He remembers the 1960's as an interesting time for library services in the St. Cloud area.

"There were two bond referendums in 1964 and 1965 for a new library in St. Cloud," Thoreen explained. "It was a close thing, but they failed. One of the reasons for the failure was that people in St. Cloud believed if they built a new library, people from outside the city would use it. So there was a move to find something where everybody would pay their fair share."



Thank You Summer Reading Program Donors!

Thank you to the following organizations who donated \$250 or more to the GRRL 2009 Summer Reading Program:

- American Legion Post #323, Beatty-Humphries, Clearwater
- Brenny Transportation, Inc., St. Joseph
- Central MN Noon Optimist Club, Inc.
- Community Connection of Sauk Centre
- Frandsen Bank & Trust, Foley
- Friends of the Library, Sauk Centre
- Heartland Title & Abstract Co., St. Cloud
- J&B Group, St. Michael
- Lions Club of Cokato
- Long Prairie Packing Company, LLC
- Melrose Lions Club
- Rotary Club of Buffalo
- Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict, St. Joseph
- St. Cloud Lions Club
- St. Cloud Optimist Club
- St. Cloud Westside Sertoma Club
- Tech Logic, White Bear Lake
- Zonta Club of St. Cloud Area.



Deputy Director Retires after 27-Year GRRL Career



After working at Great River Regional Library (GRRL) for nearly 27 years under four directors, Verne Oleksowicz retired as Deputy Director July 31, 2009.

When Oleksowicz arrived in 1982, the library system had 21 branches, instead of the current 32. Library Bookmobiles (discontinued in 1987) made 88 stops across the region. Oleksowicz was hired

as the extension services librarian, responsible for managing services beyond the regional headquarters library in St. Cloud. He had to ensure that patrons of all branch libraries received a comparable level of service to those who used St. Cloud Public Library. There was no Internet, and therefore no regional catalog access. Patrons at all libraries browsed the shelves. Items checked in and out with the old card system. The growing video collection was available only at St. Cloud. The years since his arrival have seen the original goals accomplished. Users of all 32 libraries within the system now have access to the same materials and online services.

Oleksowicz came to GRRL after being director of a small library in North Carolina. He has a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts and is a graduate of the Columbia University School of Library Science.

Oleksowicz is passionate about music, an automobile enthusiast, and enjoys camping. He said that he will take some time to relax but then will look for opportunities to serve the community.

40th Anniversary cont.

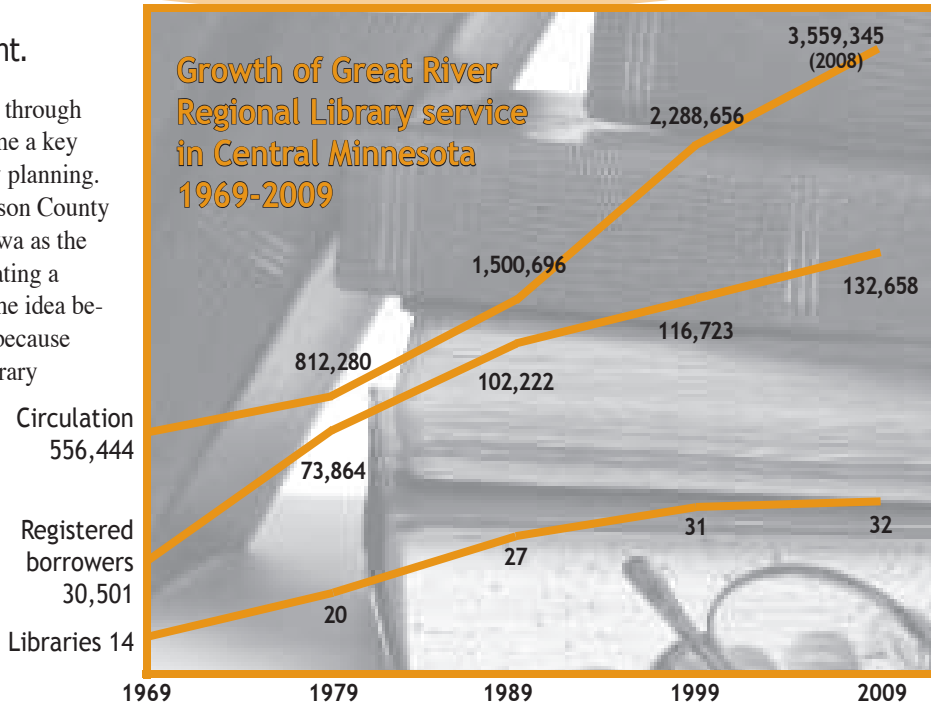
The fair share concept through regional tax support became a key concept in regional library planning.

Thoreen credits Morrison County Commissioner Felix Kujawa as the first person to suggest creating a regional library system. The idea became a successful reality because all the city, county and library entities involved cooperated with the intent of going beyond talking to making something happen, Thoreen said.

The original system had 14 libraries. In 1970 it had 30,501 registered borrowers. Most branches were open fewer than 15 hours a week, some only for 4 hours.

Today's system of 32 libraries has more than 130,000 borrowers and its 32 libraries are open for a total of 1,008 hours weekly.

Growth of Great River Regional Library service in Central Minnesota 1969-2009



Numbers in All Areas Show Service Increases

Two basic statistics of library usage are for circulation (items checked out) and registered borrowers (both shown above).

Some additional comparisons for the years 1993-2008 include:

Interlibrary loans: 1993 - 6,204 items exchanged between GRRL and other libraries; 2008 - 35,526 items exchanged (increase 472 percent)

Programming: 1993 - 794 programs attended by 17,471; 2008 - 1,968 programs attended by 40,135 (increase 129 percent)

Total collection: 1993 - 637,191 items owned; 2008 - 973,751 items owned (increase 52 percent).

Teen Read Week Puts Spotlight on Teen Books

Teen Read Week was celebrated Oct. 18-24.

The theme for this nationwide celebration was *Read Beyond Reality @ Your Library*, encouraging teens to read something out of this world, just for fun.

If you know a teen, encourage them to read. Research shows that teens who read for fun have better test scores and are more likely to succeed in the work-force.

TOP TEEN READS

Here are some top teen books, as recommended by the American Library Association's Young Adult Library Services Association:

Graceling by Kristin Cashore

Untamed by Kristin & P.C. Cast

City of Ashes by Cassandra Clare

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

Truancy: Origins by Isamu Fukui

Paper Towns by John Green

Runemarks by Joanne Harris

Identical by Ellen Hopkins

Daughter of the Flames by Zoe Marriott

Wake by Lisa McMann

Breaking Dawn by Stephenie Meyer

Bloodline by Katy Moran

Evermore by Alyson Noel

Geek Charming by Robin Palmer

Eternal by Cynthia Leitich Smith

Flygirl by Sherri Smith

Wherever Nina Lies by Lynn Weingarten

Absolutely Maybe by Lisa Yee

Elk River Library Receives Environmental Design Award

The Elk River Public Library made history August 3 when it received an award designating it as a LEED Gold Certified building - the first library in Minnesota to achieve LEED Gold certification. KKE Architects and the US Green Building Council (USGBC) presented a plaque to the library at an Elk River City Council meeting.

The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System is a voluntary rating system by the USGBC that is recognized internationally for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings.

The key focal point that drove the entire design for the Elk River library was the emphasis on daylighting, said Sheri Brezinka, Executive Director of the Mississippi Headwaters Chapter of USGBC in St. Paul. "Over 95% of the spaces have access to natural lighting and outdoor views, and this is a remarkable amount of space."

KKE Architects, who designed the two-year-old library, submitted the application to the USGBC for certification. USGBC then evaluated the criteria and approved the certification.

The Elk River Public Library joins nearly 3,000 other LEED-certified building projects in Minnesota. By incorporating green building standards, Brezinka said, Elk River raised the bar for green building expectations and "realized important economic, environmental, community and productivity benefits for generations to come."



Elk River receives a plaque for its LEED Gold Certification at an August Elk River City Council meeting. Pictured: GRRL Elk River Branch Manager Mick Stoffers, Elk River Mayor Stephanie Klinzing, US Green Building Council's Sheri Brezinka, KKE architect Jennifer Tuttle, and library board members John Dietz and Mike Hangaard.

John Dietz, Elk River Library Board president, said the project struggled at times to meet all the LEED criteria, but it was completed for approximately the same amount of money and "well worth it."

KKE Architects is also the architect for the new public library in St. Michael, which will break ground this fall. The project will strive for similar sustainability benchmarks through the State of Minnesota's sustainable building guidelines required for all projects using state dollars. The city of St. Michael has been awarded \$400,000 from the State for its new library, expected to open fall 2010.

Thanks to Donors for their Contributions to GRRL Services

Thank you to these generous donors who donated \$250 or more to GRRL or the "Library Plus You" fundraising campaign June 25 through Sept. 30.

Dr. Bernice Berns, St. Cloud

Jill and John Bishop, Annandale

Central MN Noon Optimist Club Inc, Kimball

Kim Christianson and Paul Slininger, Eagan

Cold Spring Lions Club, Cold Spring

M. Constance Crane, St. Cloud

Five Wings Art Council, Staples

Friends of the Library, Big Lake

Friends of the Library, Buffalo

Friends of the Library, Delano

Friends of the Library, Elk River

Friends of the Library, Little Falls

Friends of the Library, Richmond

Friends of the Library, Rockford

Friends of the Library, St. Cloud

Michael Gorman, St. Cloud

Grey Eagle - Burtrum Lions Club, Grey Eagle

Insight Eye Care, Waite Park

Jimmy's Pizza, Cold Spring

Knife River Corporation, Sauk Rapids

Joanne and Chris Kudrna, St. Cloud

Donna Kuhl & John Mahowald, M.D., St. Cloud

Janie LaBree, St. Cloud

LarsonAllen, LLP, Waite Park

Lincoln Area Business Assoc, Cushing

Marnanteli's Pizza, Cold Spring

Deborah McCarl & Marilyn Skurdahl, St. Cloud

Sharon & Mike McCarney, Richmond

Paula Monaghan, St. Cloud

Jim and Beverly Pehler, St. Cloud

Rita Philipsek, Waite Park

Marilyn Savage, St. Cloud

Gordon & Yvonne Schrank, St. Cloud

Jim & Yvonne Sexton, St. Cloud

Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict, St. Joseph

Charlie and Maureen Spanier, St. Cloud

St. Cloud Lions Club, St. Cloud

St. Cloud Reading Room Society, GFWC, St. Cloud

Tech Logic, White Bear Lake

Martha Tomhave Blauvelt, St. Cloud

Elk River Patron Praises GRRL

"The library system has provided resources--free of cost--which have helped me to complete a book on Minnesota cartoonists (to be published by the MN Historical Society Press, fall 2010); research old radio plays in order to write and produce a radio play...; get ideas for freelance articles; provide internet access (again free) for research purposes; and fill my voracious appetite for movies, books on CD and literature. The library, quite literally, allows me to be a writer in Elk River, as opposed to the Twin Cities. What GRRL doesn't have, it can borrow from other libraries."

Britt Aamodt, Elk River

Little Falls Reader is Get Creative Sweepstakes Winner

Janaya Heffron, a third-grade student who uses the Carnegie Library in Little Falls, won a \$1,000 scholarship provided by the Minnesota College Savings Plan, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education State Library Services. As host library to the sweepstakes winner, the Carnegie Library also received a check for \$500.

To take part in the sweepstakes, children had to participate in their library's Summer Reading Program and then sign up for the sweepstakes. Each of Minnesota's regional library systems had a winner.

"I was really happy to learn that Janaya was our winner," said Stephen Miller, Carnegie Library Branch Manager. "She's a deserving winner because she's an avid reader. Janaya is homeschooled, and her family uses many of the library's resources."

"We don't watch television. We read as a family and before going to bed, and we also listen to books," said Joyce Heffron, Janaya's mother. Janaya read the "Winnie the Horse Gentler" series over the summer.



Stephen Miller, Branch Manager of the Carnegie Library, Little Falls, presents a ceremonial check to Janaya Heffron, winner of the Get Creative @ Saving For College Sweepstakes. Joyce Heffron, Janaya's mother, and Rich Collins, Morrison County Commissioner and member of the Great River Regional Library Board of Trustees also attended the presentation.

Summer Programs Show Increases in All Areas



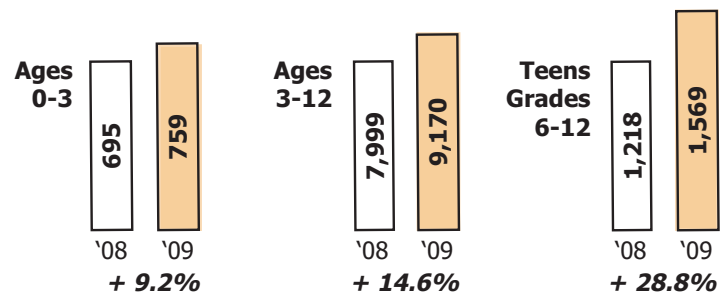
Cold Spring Aide Val Gladitsch explains the Summer Reading Program to Jen and Larry Lahr, holding their 1½ day-old daughter, Ella Rose. Ella was the 22nd baby to be registered at Cold Spring for the "Read to Me" program this summer.

Record numbers of children and teens participated in "Be Creative @ Your Library," the 2009 Summer Reading Program at Great River Regional Library (GRRL).

GRRL offered programs for three age groups at all of its 32 libraries. A total of 11,497 children participated, and each program saw increases.

The goal for each program is to keep children engaged with reading

Summer Reading Program Participation Increases 2008-2009



during the summer, because studies show children who do so maintain or improve their reading skills. Children who do not read during the summer are more likely to lose ground in reading.

The largest percentage increase in the children's programs was at the Big Lake Public Library, which saw a 62.2 percent increase to 360 from 222. The largest increase in actual numbers was at St. Cloud, where 388 additional participants increased the total to 1,536. Teenagers who took part in the teen summer reading program recorded 33,929 hours of reading, or 21.6 hours each.

"There is broad agreement that reading skills have a strong impact on life success," said Karen Pundsack, GRRL's Patron Services Coordinator, "Prison populations are filled with poor readers, and there is strong evidence that good readers are more successful in their adult lives."

Coming Soon to a Great River Regional Library Near You! Arts & Culture Programming to Knock Your Socks Off!



Communities across Central Minnesota will enjoy new and exciting arts and cultural programming at their libraries for the next two years, and perhaps for many years to come.

The programming will be made possible through a dedicated fund supported by tax dollars. It's called the Legacy fund, and it will provide

grants so regional library systems can pay for musicians, authors, theatrical groups and other cultural performers to appear at their libraries.

The fund is guaranteed for two years, after which it may be extended in the current form or modified. Great River Regional Library (GRRL) Director Kirsty Smith conducted hearings across the region to gather ideas on what kinds of programming communities would welcome.

"I was looking for ideas that had a 'wow' factor," Smith said. "We have to use this money for new programming, and it is a terrific opportunity to bring to communities programs they would otherwise have to travel to see. I want to expand the vision of what people think is possible for their local library to provide. I want people to say 'Wow!'"

Staff are in the process of scheduling events, so contracts have not been finalized, but here are the options included in the grant proposal.

Author Visits and Musical Performances

Each branch will have up to four author visits and musical performers. They'll be able to pool money to attract well known musicians or authors. Selected artists/performers will likely have Upper Midwest connections.



Guthrie Training Department Sessions

Staff from the famous Guthrie Theater will present classes at various GRRL locations. Offerings may include "Intro To Shakespeare," "Once Upon a Time Kid Storytelling," "Intro to Social Dance - Waltz, Salsa, Tap," and "Acting Games for Beginners."

Laptop Lab - Discovering Your Family History

Genealogy sessions will be provided at branches, using the GRRL mobile laptop lab. Staff will use instruction guides and handouts to help patrons learn how to do genealogy and create a family tree.

Minnesota Zoomobile Seminars

Each of the 32 GRRL branches will have two seminars from the Minnesota Zoomobile. Selections include "Critter Clothes," about the different kinds of coverings animals have; "Tropical Forests," about why tropical forests are so important and worth saving; "Winter Animals," about how different kinds of animals survive long, cold winters; "Minnesota Seminar," about Minnesota plants and animals; "Birds, Bugs, Mammals or Reptiles," about what makes these animal groups unique; and "Wetlands," about what a wetland does to keep an area healthy.

"I was looking for ideas that had a 'WOW' factor."

Kirsty Smith
GRRL Director

Mixed Blood Theatre Touring Performances

The Mixed Blood Theatre is a Twin Cities based, multi-racial theatre promoting cultural pluralism and individual equality through artistic excellence. Their performances will be made available at those branches with appropriate space in their facility or elsewhere in their community. Ten performances will be available across the region. Possible performances include "Minnecanos," about a family's four generations and their Chicano heritage; "Dr. King's Dream," a biography of one of the most influential people in American history; "Daughters of Africa," a musical performance commemorating the accomplishments of African American women from the slave era to Oprah; and "Hijab Tube," a performance about a young Muslim woman's YouTube posting concerning her head covering.

StoryCorps

StoryCorps is an independent nonprofit and one of the largest oral history projects of its kind. StoryCorps records conversations about people's history and hopes, and each conversation is recorded on a free CD to take home to share and is archived at the Library of Congress.

Virtual Art Museum for Central Minnesota

This will be an online source through the griver.org website featuring artists and artwork from all over the region - Central Minnesota's answer to the Louvre!

Walker Art Center Specialist Visit

Staff from the Walker Art Center will do presentations for groups of up to 30 people featuring lively discussions and hands-on activities to develop appreciation of contemporary art and architecture. Options will be available for grades K-4, 5-12, and for adults.

What Are Legacy Funds?

Legacy funding comes from what is known as the Legacy Amendment. In 2008, in order to obtain a steady source of funding for arts in Minnesota, a coalition persuaded the Minnesota legislature to approve a ballot initiative to go to voters.

The initiative increased the state sales tax by 3/8 of one percent to create four dedicated funds for land, water, parks, and arts and culture. It was approved at the November, 2008, elections. Funding for libraries was included in the arts and culture fund.

The arts and culture fund must go to support "arts, arts education, arts access and the preservation of our history and cultural heritage."

It is estimated that the fund will receive about \$45 million a year starting in 2010. Libraries will receive approximately \$4.25 million, and Great River Regional Library's share will be approximately \$400,000. This will be allocated in the form of a grant.

The grant can only be used for new programming (not traditional storytimes), and the amount designated for administrative and marketing cost is strictly limited.

40 Years Ago

Depending on your age, 1969 may seem like yesterday or a lifetime ago. For library users, it really was a different era.

- If you had a question, you couldn't Google it. Your reference librarian was the only search engine available.

- If you wanted to watch a movie you went to the theater. The library had 8mm and 16mm short films, but video wasn't available.

- Movies were also where you'd find computers. There, and in science fiction.

- An audio book was what you got if your spouse read a story out loud.

- To download music, you put your vinyl LP on the turntable, put a microphone by the speaker, turned on the cassette recorder and dropped the needle. (Free clicks and skips included.)

Technologies may change, but information and literacy will always be at the heart of libraries.

Art and Eagle Scout Projects Enhance Albany Library Interior



Avon art teacher Lisa Nicoll and the 3-D mural she created with the aid of local children..

Albany Public Library hosted an Open House Sept. 22 to celebrate two recent enhancements.

Lisa Nicoll, a local artist and teacher at Avon Elementary School, created a wall mural around the Summer Reading Program theme "Be Creative @ Your Library." She included Albany area children ages 9-17 in her work, meeting with them for four sessions as they assisted in creating and painting book sculptures that adorn the side and top of one book shelf. Nicoll used overhead transparencies to outline the mural which features entrances in unusual spaces and ways.

"I used the imagery of doorways, portals and archways to represent the act of opening a book," Nicoll said. One archway features a pencil and instrument handle as its supporting pillars; another entrance is a wooden ladder with worn books as its steps that sits on top the bookshelf and leads one to peer into a painted ship's porthole. The project was funded by the Friends of the Albany Library who chose Nicoll's project from public proposals.



Albany Boy Scout Nick Gersch built laptop computer desks for Albany Public Library as an Eagle Scout project. He's pictured with Albany Branch Manager Karen Pundsack (since promoted to GRRL Patron Services Coordinator).

The second project on display was laptop computer workstations created by Albany High School junior Nick Gersch, a Boy Scout with Troop #30. He was looking last year for an appropriate Eagle Scout project. The library came to mind, since he visits frequently. Discussions with Branch Manager Karen Pundsack led Nick to design narrow counters mounted to an unused wall that would accommodate laptop computer users. Gersch's project involved design, materials matching and selection, volunteer recruitment, precise measuring, moving bookshelves and books, securing permissions, fundraising, and coordinating electrical wiring. "The biggest thing I learned was leadership," said Gersch. "It's not just ordering people around; you have to be organized." Gersch developed a project timeline to keep him motivated and on task. "I knew I wanted it done by the end of summer, so I had to stick with my timeline to get it done." He still has funds to raise and then will need to complete and submit his project portfolio to the Scout board of review for final approval. Only then will he be able to say he has achieved the rank of Eagle Scout.

If you have questions or comments about Great River Regional Library, or want to support libraries and access to information, please call Diane Vosen, Communications and Fund Development Coordinator, at (320) 650-2532. Mailing information can also be updated by calling this number.

1300 W. St. Germain St.
St. Cloud, MN 56301
320-650-2500

