



**Pierre Carnegie Library - built in
1905**



R.E. Rawlins Municipal Library - built 1972

Rawlins Municipal Library "History and Vision"

by

Beverly Lewis

Library Director

Hello! It is my great pleasure to talk about our Library's exemplary history, record of contemporary service and vision for the future.

Rawlins Library has a fine history of providing library services beginning in March 1903 when the well-known library philanthropist Andrew Carnegie agreed to donate \$10,000 to erect a free public library in Pierre, South Dakota. However, a cost estimate indicated more money would be needed and in November of that same year, Andrew Carnegie agreed to increase his donation to \$12,500, providing the City of Pierre would guarantee not less than \$1,250 for annual maintenance. The City Commission agreed and subsequently the library was constructed at a cost of \$12,151.

On March 10, 1905 the library was officially opened and Governor Samuel Elrod and Mayor A. W. Ewert gave welcome addresses.

For the next forty-plus years, the library flourished and was a source of pride to area citizens. Adults and children used the collection extensively and the library was always a beehive of



activity after school.

However, the building was in some disrepair and in need of modernization so that by the early fifties it was necessary to obtain additional funding. Therefore, the Library Board presented to the City Commission a petition for an election to approve a levy not to exceed two mills for a Library Building Fund. On April 15, 1952, voters unanimously approved the levy and it went into effect on the appropriations budget in September. Truly, it was an outstanding expression of citizens' support for their public library.

For another twenty years, the library continued to operate in what was becoming a more and more crowded environment. Then in 1972, by utilizing money from the Library Building Fund, it was possible to construct a new, modern library for a total cost of \$475,000, of which just \$185,000 was financed in bonds.

The new library was named in honor of R. E. Rawlins who served as Superintendent for the Pierre School System from 1918 to 1948. It opened in November 1972 and Mayor Clinton Gregory gave the welcome address.

The building is located at 1000 East Church Street and commands an excellent view of the South Dakota State Capitol and Missouri River hills. It's a handsome modular design with windows all around thus ensuring a light and spacious interior.

The Library continues to be very busy providing a wide variety of meaningful library services with a growing collection of materials, resources in both print and electronic formats, and programs for adults, teens and children. We are committed to adhering to the historical premise upon which the library was founded; and that is, to provide free public library services to area citizens. And I believe we must provide excellent free public library services.

Now just what do excellent library services mean?

First, it means a knowledgeable, friendly staff. Everyone on our staff is truly dedicated to helping our patrons utilize our resources most effectively. Our goal is to provide meaningful answers to your library questions.

Second, it means a collection rich in a wide variety of resources in many subjects, genres and formats. Our collection includes regular print books, large print books, audio books, videos, DVDs, music CDs and e-books. We have fiction and non-fiction best sellers,



classics and contemporary titles; plus a highly regarded South Dakota history collection. We also have many helpful online databases including encyclopedias, magazine and newspaper indexes. We have colorful picture books, puzzles, puppets, early readers, theme backpacks and book/music sets. In fact, our collection includes more than 92,200 titles. And if we don't have a title you want, we will gladly submit a request to borrow it for you from another library.

You may use your own computer or portable device to connect to the Internet; or you may use one of our Internet computers for your social networking, searching our reference databases, completing academic assignments and online applications. Of course, you may also search our online catalog to locate helpful titles in our collection and in other library collections around the State. You may also use the word-processing computer that connects to a scanner and both color and black and white printers. You may use our typewriter, scanner, copier and fax machine. Or you may simply enjoy our friendly environment while listening to music, reading a newspaper or magazine and looking for a great title. Last year, more than 155,200 people visited our Library; however, we are never too busy to welcome you and help you find the library resources you need.

Third, it means we have outstanding library services and programs. For example, we have convenient hours and the Library is open seven days a week, including four evenings. You may return borrowed items in the outside box anytime at your convenience. You may call us and we will gladly renew items so that you may enjoy them longer. You may also access our website and browse our collection to reserve titles and renew items. Plus, we offer a fine-free service on Wednesdays and Sundays so you may return overdue items inside the Library and the overdue fee is waived.

Our web site, <http://rpllib.sdln.net> has timely information about upcoming events, the Library's resources, staff, Board and services; and from this site, you may also access our "Titles To Go" collection and download books to your mobile device. We also have front page search links that will take you directly to our catalog, the City of Pierre, the City of Ft. Pierre, Hughes County, the South Dakota State Library and the South Dakota Library Network.

We focus on early childhood literacy development because we know that kids who read, succeed. Furthermore, we want to



develop strong library habits in our young people so they will be productive members of society, lifelong learners and library supporters. Our collection of preschool materials is highly recommended and we have a year-round series of outstanding preschool storytimes.

Students in all grades will find homework information both in print and online. Plus, our librarians will assist students with special school projects and help them increase their knowledge of available resources.

We never forget our senior citizens, though, and we carefully select recommended books and magazines in large print, audio books and DVDs on topics of interest to seniors. Plus, we deliver titles to residents in retirement facilities, senior centers and nursing homes.

Many exciting activities take place at 1000 East Church Street during the week of our Birthday, National Library Week, Teen Read Week and Children's Picture Book Week. We focus on the importance of good literacy skills during the community-wide Kids Safe Saturday and we have an excellent Summer Reading Celebration with weekday activities for kids of all ages.

As we prepare to celebrate our 108th year of providing meaningful public library services on March 10th, I continue to have a strong vision about how we will expand upon those services. First, we will continue to maintain our resources and facility by employing sound fiscal management and maintenance procedures. Second, we will continue to maintain a collection of relevant titles both in print and electronic formats and we will utilize technology to enable more people to access our resources both in and outside of our building. And, fourth, we will expand our crowded facility and renovate the existing space when it is financially possible to do so.

As with all visions and goals, there must be thorough planning, astute negotiations, like-minded partners, perseverance and just plain hard work to turn them into realities. However, we have a proven history of providing excellent library services and I am enthusiastic about a future in which Rawlins Municipal Library will be an even more valued place of community learning and gathering where everyone is welcome.

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