

Press Release



Northern Maine Library Trustees Announce \$1.35 Million Private Donation

Presque Isle, ME, February 11, 2013

The Mark and Emily Turner Memorial Library trustees and library staff are pleased to announce that they are beginning phase 2 of their library renovation project. Substantial donations by several donors, including Mary Barton Akeley Smith, will enable the trustees to enhance the library. Mrs. Smith's donation of \$1,325,000 was given in memory of her parents, Robert and Hope Akeley. It has been augmented by generous gifts from the Ray and Sandy Gauvin Family Foundation for the Teen Area and Children's Library, the Maine Humanities Council for the reference and local history section, the Howard & Espa Michaud fund for the Espa Michaud Reading Room, and the Green Foundation.

These gifts will be used to update the interior of the library, build a beautiful, accessible, two-story entryway, and add finishing touches to the exterior of the library.

City Council Chair, Emily Smith, remarks:

"We are fortunate to have received generous donations in our community. The support and interest of such dedicated benefactors have undoubtedly shaped and molded the future of our library. We are truly grateful."

Plans for this library enhancement project are well underway and guided by a committee composed of library board members, library staff, and community members. They are working with Scott Simons Architects of Portland, Maine to develop a vision and plan. Representatives from the board, staff, and community will continue to remain actively involved through the completion of the project. Renovations will include new lighting, furnishings, and color schemes as well as a separate teen area, a larger quiet reading room, and comfortable seating in a new centrally located periodicals section.

Three paintings symbolizing part of the Aroostook potato farming story by artist Richard V. Ellery and commissioned in 1947 by the Northern National Bank, will be relocated from the third floor of City Hall to the library. The paintings were part of the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A), which sought to employ the unemployed.

Nicole Cote, chair of the Mark and Emily Turner Memorial Library Board of Trustees remarks:

“These gifts will help us inject new life into our library by projecting a friendly, inviting atmosphere, including updated, beautiful spaces that patrons of all ages can use. Such generous donations to our library leave a legacy for all future generations of area residents to enjoy.”

Groundbreaking is scheduled for the spring of 2013, and the project is estimated to be completed by the spring of 2014. Schematic drawings and plans are available at the library for those interested in viewing them.

The mission of the Mark and Emily Turner Memorial Library is to provide quality materials and services in a comfortable, open environment. We strive to enhance lifelong learning and personal growth while fostering a community connection.

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