



Mary Gjermo of the Library Grand Opening Committee and Steve Struss, Cambridge village president, cut the ribbon at the Cambridge Library Grand Opening held Wednesday, Aug. 19. More from this event can be found online at www.cambridgeenews.com. Photo by Tristan McGough.

Ribbon cutting officially opens new library

By Tristan McGough
CNDI Correspondent

It took 37 years and \$2.2 million but the vision of the Cambridge Community Library inhabiting its own expanded space has become a reality.

If you speak to the key players they all say that this wasn't just one person or group

that made this happen but rather a partnering on a scale never seen before in this small community.

About 200 were in attendance as an official Grand Opening was held Aug. 19 that allowed local officials, professionals, residents, funders, planners, designers, builders and community members to

celebrate this milestone.

There was a lot of pride to go around, as folks from across the project spectrum of the new 6,800-square-foot addition assembled on the recently completed library patio to listen to many speak about this special moment.

Mary Gjermo, a member of the Cambridge Community

Library Board (CCLB) of Trustees and vice chair of the capital campaign, was present at the podium, sharing emcee responsibilities with a beaming Cambridge Village President Steve Struss.

Struss read a Village Proclamation which officially recognized the opening of the library on that date and memo-

rialized the area achievement by declaring that henceforth August would be known as "Cambridge Community Library Month."

Perhaps there was a great deal of pride in this particular library opening because there has been a great deal of history

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with an amazing amount of talent, time, energy and money dedicated to the completion of this new state-of-the-art library.

Gjeramo took the audience on a tour of memories of all sorts, recounting personal stories of involvement with the project and the remarkable highlights of others, such as "the library moms."

This group shepherded the motivation to guarantee that a local library would be built as an alternative to the then visiting bookmobile.

The Cambridge Foundation, who knew that a good library is an asset to any community, supplied about a third of the funds necessary to bring the library to fruition.

But that, according to featured speaker, Bob Salov, Capital Campaign Committee chair and Dane County supervisor, was all by plan.

Upon selection to take the campaign through its final funding phase to ensure that the new addition, located at 101 Spring Water Alley, would be built and connected to the existing Amundson Center, Salov looked at the plan to raise the remaining funds required.

After consideration, he decided that funding could best be engineered "like a three-legged stool," and he divided the funding pie into thirds.

One-third would come from the public-sector and government; the second-third from foundation grants; and the last of the three parts from the local community comprised of individuals and businesses.

With that model in mind, Salov went on to aggressively pursue final funds - "too aggressively," he apologized to a sympathetic audience who easily forgave him with laughter.

Salov gave credit to the many, many monetary sources it took to build the facility in front of which they were all standing.

The towns of Christiana, Deerfield and Oakland gave. So did the villages of Rockdale and Cambridge. Most of these gave more than once.

The Cambridge Foundation was responsible for giving \$325,000, and other funding came from the Madison Community Foundation and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.

Cambridge State Bank (via its charitable arm, the Vucurevich Foundation) was one of the biggest contributing businesses, reaching the \$100,000 mark, thereby giving it naming rights to one of the several and distinctive rooms.

The Friends of the Library contributed over \$185,000 to the project. Further financial support came from the Ralph Evinrude Foundation, Evjue Foundation (the altruistic division of The Capital Times), Calpine/Zion Energy, Herb Kohl Foundation, Alliant Energy, Shopko Foundation, and the American Endowment Foundation.

And then there were the determined residents of the area who, in Salov's words, brought the money in "cookie by cookie," referring to the endless fundraising campaigning that was done throughout the greater community to pull even spare-change into coffers for the cause.

Originally started by the Friends of the Cambridge Community Library, the future library fund designated for a new building finally - under Salov's watchful eye - eventually rolled into the massive financial snowball that leveraged the design and construction process.

Pete Vogel, president of Vogel Brothers Building Company, which was the general contractor for the phased project, was on-hand with a celebratory gift, a check for \$2,500, made out to the Cambridge Community Library Fund.

Also present, Valentine

Schute, principal of the visionary River Architects, who persistently maintained collaborative contact with stakeholders to move the project along from conceptual through schematic and onto final design phases prior to actual construction.

After a few final remarks from library director, Joan Behm, Struss led a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony that included Bob Salov; Scott Waller, former village trustee; Sydney Krieger, CCLB trustee; Ted Kumbier, Village of Cambridge trustee; Mary Gjeramo; Dwight Christianson, Cambridge Village Trustee; Steve Struss, Paula Hollenbeck, Cambridge Village trustee; Patty Stroh-bush, library board treasurer, and Behm herself.

Attendees were then invited to partake of refreshments while they viewed a film-loop of the progress of the construction project, specially composed by Gary Zibell for the event and acting as historical documentation of the project.

Judy Brandt and the CD Players provided live entertainment, performing several selections from the upcoming "Willy Wonka, Jr." show that will take place at the Cambridge Historic School auditorium Aug. 28-30.

Michael Keeney, balloon artist, and Kathrine Thompson, face painter, were also available to offer their services to young and old alike, adding to the festive atmosphere that energized everyone who participated in this historic accomplishment.

Those who wanted to do more than just participate in history were given a chance to become an official part of it. Residents were invited by Struss to sign the Proclamation as witnesses.

Not only would they then have their own personal memory of this locally significant event, they - as witnesses - would be known as an official part of this public achievement.