

KINSLEY LIBRARY WINS TWO AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

CHICAGO - The Public Library Association (PLA) has announced thirteen 2012 award winners honoring the best in public library service, innovation and outreach. Of these thirteen national awards, the Kinsley Library is the recipient of two.

The *EBSCO Excellence in Small and/or Rural Public Library Service Award* honors a public library that demonstrates excellence in service to a community of 10,000 people or fewer. This year's \$1,000 award recognizes the Kinsley Public Library for its online "One-Stop Shop" showcasing the history of its home county, with resources gathered from historians, architects, computer programmers, newspaper editors, the librarian and volunteers.

The *Polaris Innovation in Technology John Liff Award* honors the life and accomplishments of John Liff, early adopter and champion of technology in public libraries. This award provides a \$1,000 honorarium to a library professional that has used technology and innovation as a tool to improve services to public library users. It is presented to Joan K. Weaver, director, Kinsley Public Library, for her nimble efforts with a 2.1 FTE staff, volunteers and community partners to create a library website that also highlights community resources and information.

"It is really gratifying to have our little library recognized with these two awards," said Weaver, "but these are awards that the community has really won. So many people contribute to making our library the excellent, accessible resource it is. They all need our appreciation.

"At the top of the list would have to be the Kinsley Library Board members who have given me the freedom and support to succeed without worrying about the possibility of failure. Current board members include Virginia Gleason, Mike Padgham, Mary Kallaus, Dennis Kuder, Emily White, Julia Butler, and Pat Hetzel.

"During my tenure I have also enjoyed the support of the following past board members: Marjorie Riisoe, Celesta Taylor, Tammie Schmidt, Donald Pierce, Cordelia Froetschner, Irene Woolard, Ted Taylor, Fred Lovesee, Robert Zumwalt, Ralph Pool, Robert Weidenheimer, Vicky Haskell, Lynette Anderson, Cynthia Stiebe, Bonnie Hirsh, Janelle Andersen, and Ann Lee Gleason.

"Next on the list would be our librarian Rosetta Graff. Over a lifetime in the county and 38 years of service at the library, she has become a walking local history expert. Besides organizing and cataloguing all the local research, she keeps the library running smoothly amongst the creative chaos I sometimes cause.

"Then we have legends of volunteers from Don Benish who designed the *Historical Downtown Map* software, to the many people who did the research for it and also indexed our local historical papers

The Edwards County History Society, the Foundation for Carnival Heritage, the William Reagh family, and many private citizens made their photographs available for the library's digital image collection.

Ed Carlson regularly digitizes and donates local history records and research for our website. He also created the *Architectural Styles of Kinsley* tour a couple years ago which became a digital book on our website.

“Things really began many years ago when Eula Westphal digitized an index for the Edwards County Burial Files. Then Ray Wetzel provided the digital cemetery records and Mary Graff photographed all of the tombstones linked to it on our website. Julie Ackerman also contributes Offerle history and cemetery records.

“There were 45 participants who graciously told their stories for the two Edwards County oral history projects. What a wonderful, lasting gift they made to the community and the library collection.

“The SWKLS Automation and Technology staff of Charlene McGuire, Steve Andrews, and Janelle Mercer expertly solve all of the library’s many technology needs and problems.

“Dr. Boehme and other professionals and students of USD 347 have cooperated in projects like the “Our Town” research and most recently in the “What Kansas Means to Me” actual and virtual literary exhibit.

“Each summer, over 50 volunteers provide creative, educational, and fun activities for a summer reading program that competes with the biggest libraries and staffs.

“Grants from the Kansas State Library, the Kansas Humanities Council, The National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Library Association, and Southwest Kansas Library System have all supplied funds to make both technology and programming possible.

“All of the Kinsley and Edwards County citizen who contribute their tax dollars to sustaining this library have a share in these awards. I am grateful to everyone,” concluded Weaver.

PLA President Marcia Warner, along with the award sponsors and PLA members will recognize all of the award winners as part of the PLA President’s Program and Awards Presentation, 1:00-2:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 24, at the 2012 ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif. PLA award winners are chosen by the PLA Award juries and the Public Libraries Advisory Subcommittee.

PLA is a division of the American Library Association. PLA’s core purpose is to strengthen public libraries and their contribution to the communities they serve, and its mission is to enhance the development and effectiveness of public library staff and public library services.