



News Release

Contact: Martin Ackley, Director of Communications, (517) 241-4395
Carolyn Sparks, Executive Director, Library of Michigan Foundation, (517) 373-1297

Novi Public Library Wins 2011 State Librarian's Excellence Award for Exceptional, Innovative Service

Citations of Excellence Awards go to Bayliss Public Library of Sault Ste. Marie and the Van Wylen Library of Hope College in Holland

October 27, 2011

State Librarian Nancy Robertson announced today, that the Novi Public Library is the recipient of the 2011 State Librarian's Excellence Award for superior customer service. The Library of Michigan Foundation annually gives this prestigious honor, which includes a trophy and \$2,000 in privately-raised funds used to enhance library service, to one Michigan library. Robertson presented the award during the Michigan Library Association annual conference in Kalamazoo.

Bayliss Public Library of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, and the Van Wylen Library of Hope College in Holland, Michigan, each received a Library of Michigan Foundation Citation of Excellence, including a \$500 prize and a trophy.

The State Librarian's Excellence Award is sponsored by the Roger and June Mendel Fund of the Library of Michigan Foundation. Gifts from Martin L. Gibbs and Carole Sorenson and from Elaine M. Logan supported the citations of excellence.

"Each year, Michigan's libraries have persevered and continue to serve their patrons and their communities with vigor and with vision, even with dwindling funding and staffing reductions," Robertson said. "The 2011 award nominations demonstrate that this year is no exception. Michigan's libraries of all types focus on what their unique communities need and, in continuing to meet those evolving needs, are essential to the fabric of Michigan's communities and success."

Julie Farkas, Director of Novi Public Library said, "It is both an honor and privilege to receive the State Librarian's Excellence Award. Our library works hard every day to be a destination place and information gateway for its community. Being honored with this award validates that the services, resources and programs we are providing is making a positive impact on our great community."

Larry Kilgore, Novi Library Board President said, “The Library of the Year Award is very exciting for the Novi community! This award is the result of a combination of great leadership over the past eight years on the part of City Council, the Library Board and the Library Administration, plus an ongoing commitment to service excellence by everyone at the Library.”

Robertson acknowledged that the selection process for the awards is always extremely difficult because all of the nominated libraries are worthy of recognition. As always, she explained, it is illuminating and inspiring to see what so many excellent libraries are doing to serve their users and their communities.

Novi Public Library is a Class 6 library – the largest of the six size classes for public libraries. With input from community focus groups in mind, they recently built a new state of the art facility that has gained national attention. Its programming and services are built upon the self-perception as “A Gem in Our Community – providing the resources and programs to support the educational, cultural, informational and recreational needs of our diverse community.”

While they have made enhancements to their facilities and services, including green initiatives, this library focuses on cost-effectiveness in all areas. They have maintained their fund balance in these tough financial times. They engaged in fund-raising campaigns for many aspects of their physical improvements, and they raised an additional \$10,000 for the library’s youth collections during an auction event. The self-service components they’ve added save personnel costs and create efficiencies that have allowed a shift of employees to different tasks that could not have otherwise been addressed.

The Novi Public Library has a 24-hour turnaround for patron comments and concerns. They listen to their community members with an impressive result: In 2008 a National Citizen Survey was compiled for the City of Novi and the library received a rating of 84% for its perception of the public library services by the city’s residents. When the survey was repeated in 2010, a positive perception of the library was recorded by 94% of the residents.

Criteria for the State Librarian's Excellence Award are:

- demonstrating that the library provides superior service to its customers and community in a cost-effective manner, with a can-do attitude and by always delivering on promises; and,
- demonstrating the library's commitment to high standards of customer service through staff dealings with customers and the service community.

Two additional libraries – Bayliss Public Library of Sault Ste. Marie, and the Van Wylen Library of Hope College in Holland – also were recognized for their devotion to customer service and earned SLEA Citations of Excellence.

The Bayliss Public Library serves the 14,000 local residents and the 38,000 residents of the surrounding county. This area’s median household income is 15 percent below the median for the state of Michigan, and 20 percent or more of the county’s population lives below the poverty line. The library has been proactive in assessing its changing role in light of the evolving needs of the people it serves and has been extremely successful in doing so – and in making a difference for them.

A key indicator of the success of this library in achieving excellent customer service and meeting the needs of the community is the fact that a full 75 percent of the local population and over a third of the surrounding county's population have come to at least one library program in the past year. Bayliss Public Library is the first library to have been recognized for a second time with a Citation of Excellence. It first received one in 2007 and has done so again for 2011. Congratulations to director Ken Miller, his board, his staff, and the Bayliss Public Library Community.

Kenneth Miller, Director of Bayliss Public Library said, "I was told by State Librarian Nancy Robertson that this award has never been given to a library twice. So when we were notified that we received the State Librarian's Citation of Excellence again, our staff was more than delighted: they were ecstatic."

Miller said, "It is immensely gratifying to be recognized once again for the huge effort we expend to serve the public in the face of severely diminished library financial support. It just goes to show what can be done with a dedicated, creative, and "can-do" library staff."

The Van Wylen Library of Hope College strives to support student learning and academic engagement. It is highly involved with its community – teaching and coaching students; working with faculty; and providing services and resources to campus departments and programs – to help meet the college mission, particularly its emphasis on diversity.

One of the highlights of its programming and services recently is its successful collaboration with the English Department to pilot a new "Writing Corner," a tutoring and support center within the library. The project has been so well-received that a permanent Center for Writing and Research will open this fall on the first floor of the library.

"I am grateful to the Library of Michigan Foundation for honoring the contributions and exceptional customer service that the staff of the Van Wylen Library provided our community this past year," said Kelly Jacobsma, Director of Van Wylen Library.

"We have talked a lot about how exceptional customer service in an academic library means strong support for student learning and student academic engagement."

Jacobsma added, "Our staff has been very active in supporting diversity, student learning and scholarship, technology, faculty scholarship and creative performance and connecting widely with the community. We have an exceptional and caring staff and it is nice to have their hard work and commitment recognized by the wider library community."

This year's State Librarian's Excellence Award recipients were selected by a committee including the state librarian, the executive director of the Library of Michigan Foundation, a Library of Michigan reference librarian, a teacher/librarian from the Birmingham Public Schools, the library director of Mott Community College, the director of Adrian Public Library, and the assistant director of the Muskegon Area District Library.

###



Library of Michigan
Foundation

The Library of Michigan Foundation was established in 1985 to raise funds to support special programs, services and collections of the Library of Michigan. For more information, visit www.Libraryofmichiganfoundation.org

The Library of Michigan – Michigan’s official state library agency for more than 175 years – is part of the Michigan Department of Education. To learn more, visit www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan