

# THE PAWNEE Republican

THURSDAY  
AUGUST 19, 2010

Nebraska's oldest continuously published weekly newspaper.

news@pawnee.com

Pawnee City, Nebraska 68420

## Groundbreaking ceremony for new PC Library held Thursday

Carol A. Sisco  
Editor

A large crowd showed up for the Pawnee City Public Library Groundbreaking Ceremony Thursday morning, August 12 despite the heat. A patch of ground was blocked out in chalk to show the size of the new building, if not the exact location on the lot to the east of the current Carnegie Public Library building, which has been in use since 1907.

Assistant Librarian Lola Seitz, also the chair of the building committee, welcomed the crowd, "Thank you for coming out to help us celebrate the beginning of a new chapter, not only for the Pawnee Library, but for Pawnee City."

She related that the project has been in the works since March 2007, when the first personal check for the new building came across the counter.

Pawnee City Mayor Duane Westing said, "This is a great example of a grassroots effort where people saw a need and worked together to make it happen."

Library Board President Laurie Smyth demonstrated that need by revealing statistics including that 1000 patrons have visited the library over the last six months and circulation has come out to 50 magazines, 800 books, and 200 videos circulated each month for the last three months.

One special speaker was Brenda Bailey, administrator of the Southeast Library System, which covers 15 counties.

"I am always overwhelmed at all local libraries are able to do for their communities. I want to congratulate you for getting this far," Bailey spoke of the importance

of libraries in helping individuals become lifelong learners, in providing the widest variety of materials and playing their part in keeping democracy working.

"Libraries hold the heritage of the past and the promise of the future," she continued. "A library building without people inside is just a warehouse of materials, it is the people and staff who bring it to life."

Seven golden shovels were handed out to people who had been involved in the project: Mayor Westing, Seitz, Smyth, Librarian Mary Friedly, Foundation President John Dahlgren, Kody Daily representing the Summer Reading Program, and Jay Herrmann of AHRS Construction of Bern, Kan. Herrmann stood in for architect Larry Chilese who was unable to attend the ceremony.

Other special guests in attendance were introduced: Rod Wagner, Director of the Nebraska Library Commission; Janice Stopak, USDA Rural Development Area Specialist; Luann Brown, USDA Rural Development Area Technician, and Carol Farwell, also with AHRS Construction.

Following the ceremony, Nebraska Library Commission Director Wagner commented, "It's fantastic. Libraries are a great community asset. The people of this community will enjoy this new facility as they have the current one."

"This library will provide more services that they need and want. I am always glad to see a community recognize the value of a library and get behind it."

"It is great to see this library grow."

The library project had been estimated to cost \$700,000 by the architect. The AHRS bid on the project was \$650,000, which came



Carol A. Sisco/REPUBLICAN

**Groundbreaking** – Wielding golden shovels at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Pawnee City Library building project Thursday were, from the left: Kody Daily, representing the Summer Reading Program; Jay Herrmann of the contractor AHRS; Pawnee City Library Director Mary Friedly; Lola Seitz, assistant librarian and chair of the building committee; Pawnee City Mayor Duane Westing; Laurie Smyth, president of the Pawnee City Public Library Board; and John Dahlgren, president of the Pawnee City Public Library Foundation.

as a great relief to the building committee and everyone involved in the project.

The plans call for a building with 6,245 square feet of room, which triples the size of the current library (which only has 2,040 square feet on two levels). This will make it possible for the library to increase the number of computers from three (with only two available for the internet, the other is the card catalog) to eight, if all the grants come in.

Computer use is one of the largest unmet needs in the library. The figures show 1,747 signups during the last fiscal year (08-09), which works out to over 145 per month.

"We expect that to go through the roof because people know there are only two computers for the internet and they don't want to wait. Now they won't have to wait," said Friedly.

Wireless internet has been available at the library since October

2008. In that first year, a minimum of 231 wireless connections were made, and that only counts the ones they could see. From October 09 - July 10, at least 465 wireless connections have been made.

The contract with AHRS Construction calls for a tentative start date of October 1, 2010 and projects completion by June 1, 2011.

The plans and color swatches are available for viewing at the Carnegie Public Library.