



St. Marys Public Library
A Member of Three Rivers Regional Library System

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**St. Marys Public Library granted state matching funds for expansion
*\$1.1 million construction project to double space at facility***

ST. MARYS (July 16, 2009) — The St. Marys Public Library will begin a major transformation in the coming months – a \$1.1 million construction project that will double the size of the facility.

The Georgia General Assembly and Gov. Sonny Perdue recently approved \$860,000 in capital outlay funds for the L-shaped library at 100 Herb Bauer Drive in St. Marys. Those funds will be combined with \$256,683 from a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, to add 7,500 square feet to the library.

The St. Marys Public Library expansion is one of 11 new library projects that Gov. Perdue included in his original capital outlay recommendations in January. The budget recently approved by the legislature included seven additional critical library design and construction projects.

"Georgia's public libraries are deeply appreciative to the governor and to the legislature for the state matching funds for these 18 library construction projects," State Librarian Dr. Lamar Veatch, in a statement released by Georgia Public Library Service. "We are gratified that the state's leadership recognizes the continued importance of public libraries as vital educational and informational resources in our communities. Our capital construction program, which combines state and local funding, continues to be a great model of cooperation."

The St. Marys Public Library staff and board have waited a long time for the project to become a reality, and several people were responsible for maintaining the momentum.

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However, one person, the late Bill Blankenship, a former library manager and board chairperson, is credited with igniting the spark back in 1998, said Judy Armantrout, manager of the St. Marys Public Library. Board president Arlene Norris agreed, and added that the library's success over the decades is a testament to the commitment and hard work of many donors, volunteers and library staff.

"We are very proud of our library," said Norris, who heads the library's board of trustees. "But we are excited about the new design and what it will allow us to offer the community."

The library's current collection tops 42,000 items, including books in large and regular print, audiobooks on cassette and CD, videos and DVDs. Patrons check out more than 100,000 items annually. The library also offers free Internet access. Public computer use at the St. Marys Public Library has been steadily increasing, a trend also noted at other libraries within the Three Rivers Regional Library System and across the nation. The expanded library, designed by Roswell-based Pope/Partners Architects, Inc., will result in a spacious area for public computers and a larger children's department, Norris said.

There's no timeline just yet, indicating exactly when the work will begin and when it will be completed, said Armantrout. The next step will be a bond sale conducted by the Georgia State Finance and Investment Commission.

"We hope our patrons will pardon our dust once construction gets underway," Armantrout said, "But when the dust clears, we're going to be bigger and better."

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St. Marys Public Library is a member of Three Rivers Regional Library System, based in Brunswick, Georgia. Three Rivers members include Brantley County Public Library, Camden County Public Library, Charlton Public Library, Hog Hammock Public Library, Ida Hilton Public Library, Long County Public Library, St. Simons Island Public Library and Wayne County Library. Three Rivers libraries are members of PINES, the Public Information Network for Electronic Services, a program of the Georgia Public Library Service, which gives libraries and their patrons access to more than 9.6 million books and materials, at more than 275 libraries and service outlets in Georgia. For more information about Three Rivers, visit its Web site at www.trrl.org, or contact Michele Nicole Johnson, Community Relations Coordinator for Three Rivers, at (912) 267-1212 or mjohnson@trrl.org.