



News Release

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Benzonia Public Library Earns 2016 State Librarian's Excellence Award

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LANSING – The Benzonia Public Library (BPL) has earned the 2016 State Librarian's Excellence Award for its superior customer service, State Librarian Randy Riley announced today.

Riley presents the annual award, including \$2,000 in privately-donated funds, October 28 at the Michigan Library Association's annual conference in Lansing.

“Michigan libraries are doing amazingly creative things to serve their communities,” Riley said. “Benzonia Public Library has been able to provide its users with an experience that rivals or exceeds those offered by much larger or greater-funded library systems.”

The Library of Michigan Foundation and Library of Michigan (LM) present the State Librarian's Excellence and Citations of Excellence awards each year to highlight the importance of services provided by Michigan's libraries.

This year's Citations of Excellence went to the Troy Public Library (TPL) and Orion Township Public Library (OTPL). Each library receives \$1,000 as a Citation of Excellence winner.

The State Librarian's Excellence Award is sponsored by Roger Mendel and his late wife June. The Citation of Excellence Awards are funded by Martin L. Gibbs in memory of his late wife, Carole Sorenson and the Library of Michigan Foundation in recognition of former Executive Director Carolyn “Sparky” Mowery.

“The staff, board, volunteers and friends of Benzonia Public Library could not be more delighted with this incredible honor,” said Benzonia Public Library Director Amanda McLaren. “It is always our goal to give our best to our community. Our community is our purpose, our focus and our inspiration.”

Riley said BPL’s proactive, collaborative approach to establishing meaningful partnerships in its community is a model for other libraries of all sizes.

Some BPL programs and partnerships include:

- Selected by the University of Michigan School of Information to host a three-day “Making in Michigan Libraries” workshop
- Partnering with three other Benzie county libraries to offer the Great Benzie Read Program
- In response to an increase in local teen overdoses and suicides, worked with a local child psychiatrist to offer a session on childhood depression
- Teamed with Frankfort Community Credit Union to offer a program during Money Smart Week
- The Summer Reading program “Building S.T.E.A.M. at the Benzonia Public Library” provided weekly sessions focusing on science, technology, engineering, art or mathematics
- Active member of the Crystal Lake Community Business Association
- Presented the “Power Tool Basics for Women” program

State Librarian's Excellence Award evaluation factors include: demonstrating that the library provides superior service to its customers and community in a cost-effective manner, with a can-do attitude; always delivering on promises; and fulfilling the library's commitment to high standards of customer service.

In earning Citations of Excellence, the Troy and Orion Township libraries also are recognized for customer service.

TPL has embraced its community’s teens and challenged them to help make the library more teen-friendly, to grow the next generation of users and to improve services overall. Young patrons responded enthusiastically and actively took on more “ownership” of the facility.

OTPL strives to provide superior service with a goal to engage a thriving community of lifelong learners. It successfully has positioned itself as a community gathering and learning place where children, teens, entrepreneurs, educators and seniors are all welcome. OTPL received the first annual Library of Congress Award from the Michigan Department of Education for its work on early literacy initiatives.

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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.