



By Tim Linscott

Managing Editor

Onward and upward!

Hastings Memorial Library in Grant has seen a sharp improvement in the last year with more grants awarded, more resources available and most importantly, more registered borrowers.

Last year there were 1,003 registered borrowers at the library and this year's tally is 1,109 so far.

A varied list of programs, outstanding customer service and a solid base of people moving to the area are just some of the factors of why the library has increased its membership, according to Robin Quinn, library director at Hastings Memorial Library.

"We are always trying to give people more of what they want," Quinn said.

Many things at the library are increasing, other than numbers of registered users, including the total library holdings. Last year the library had 12,477 holdings (total items in the library collection) and this year there are 12,806.

The use of internet at the library has increased exponentially as well in the last year. There was an almost nine percent increase in internet use at the library from 2012.

New computer equipment and faster internet service led to more use by the public, Quinn felt.

An e-book download service was recently made available and Quinn worried that it may take away from actual books being checked out, however, that was not the case.

"People still want that physical book in their hand they can hold," she said.

Programs have long been a staple of community libraries with Grant's being no different. Last year 32 programs were put on with 673 people attending, while this year's programs increased

to 37 with 727 people attending.

The largest program this year at the library was the annual summer reading program. This year's theme was 'Dig Into Reading.'

On average, 65 children attended the 12 programs held in the month of June, which culminated in a pool party at the city park in Grant. Around 40 children and their families attended the swimming party.

Adults could also get into the reading program fun with the third annual adult reading program finishing in August. Each week participants read a book and rated it. Prizes were awarded weekly in a random drawing. A grand prize of chamber cash was given out in September.

To help save money, Quinn and her library crew are always on the lookout for grants.

One major grant utilized by the library is the Library Broadband Builds Nebraska Communities grant, which helps libraries with their technology needs. In years past the library has received a new desktop computer, a printer, an LCD projector, projection screen, external hard drive and scanner.

This year the library received two new laptop computers with locking cables and five new desk chairs for the computer stations. Over \$10,000 in new equipment has been secured by the library through this grant.

Also helping stretch the budget this year was a discounted rate on phone and internet services at the library through the 'E-Rate' program. The program utilizes the Universal Service Fund through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The program provides telephone services at a discounted rate, up to 90 percent, based on the eligibility for free and reduced lunches and the cost of telecommunications in the school or library's service area.

Hastings Memorial Library has received a 70 percent discount, which equaled a savings of \$1,526.45 this year.

A program that is new to the library that Quinn feels has been a tremendous asset to the community has been an internship program.

The grant gave the library a \$1,000 stipend to hire an intern to learn more about the profession and help support staff.

Hannah Beck, a junior at Perkins County High School, was the intern this year and assisted library staff in shelving books, checking books in and out and assisting patrons in locating materials and information.

"Hannah enabled us to do so much more this summer and we couldn't have done all of those extra things without her," Quinn said.

Quinn is continuing to look for grants and opportunities to help the public explore the library.

Hastings Memorial Library is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m.-noon.