

GRANT FROM HARTFORD FOUNDATION HELPS AVON LIBRARY REACH FUNDRAISING GOAL

The Avon Free Public Library has reached its goal to raise \$1 million from a capital campaign to expand and renovate the library thanks to a \$171,500 grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

The Hartford Foundation grant is the largest gift the library has received through the fundraising campaign, which has been underway for 18 months, said Mary LaBelle Suter, president of the Avon Library Board of Directors. Construction of the \$8.7 million project began last December and is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2012.

The project will expand the 18,000 square foot library to 40,000 square feet. The additional space will include the library's first room dedicated to teens. The much larger new space will accommodate programs in literacy, the arts, technology, culture and educational support. The Hartford Foundation grant will fund improvements in the Young Adult Room and common areas, including computers, furnishings, workstations, books and Radio Frequency Identification Technology, a new system that will bring a state-of-the-art approach to the way the library is able to track its collections.

"We are extremely grateful to the Hartford Foundation for this award, as it will allow the library staff to provide the community's young adults with activities and programs to support healthy and positive development during the teenage years," said Suter.

"We are particularly pleased that the Hartford Foundation grant has an allocation for Radio Frequency Identification technology in the Young Adult area," said Library Director Virginia Vocelli. The collection management technology increases productivity, efficiency, customer service and security of the library's collection, said Vocelli. She anticipates that other funds from the capital campaign will be used to install the technology in the other areas of the library.

The library expansion project includes a two-story addition on the south and west sides of the building. The project will also include an expanded children's area, additional computer access and capabilities that include more hard-wired work stations and wireless connections, a 50 percent increase in the size of the community room, individual conference rooms and an expanded Avon History Room. The site around the library will be reconfigured to accommodate 111 parking spaces (an increase of 52) and a drive-up book drop.

Major funding for the project comes from the Town of Avon, the State of Connecticut, the Library Board of Trustees and the Friends of the Avon Library. The first \$500,000 of funds raised has been committed to the Town of Avon, in order to contribute to the cost of the project, said Mark Nolan, chairman of the Capital Campaign Committee. Additional capital campaign funds will be used to support enhancements to the building in technology, furniture, lighting,

signage, electronic bulletin boards, self-check-out stations, programming and collection development. Nolan also emphasized that the fundraising effort will continue through the completion of the project, in order to equip the library with these enhancements and to endow a fund to support future needs.

The Avon Library was built in 1982 and renovated in 1997, but current space has been inadequate for more than 10 years to meet the demands by patrons, based upon a study conducted in conformance with standards set by the Connecticut State Library. More than half of Avon residents hold library cards and the library records more than 200,000 visits annually. For more information about the library, visit www.avonctlibrary.info.

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford region, dedicated to improving the quality of life for area residents. The Foundation receives gifts from thousands of generous individuals and families, and in 2010, awarded grants of more than \$29 million to a broad range of area nonprofit organizations, the largest amount granted in the Foundation's 85-year history. For more information about the Hartford Foundation, visit www.hfpg.org or call 860-548-1888.