

## Music studio, STEM rooms added to Downers Grove library



Downers Grove library Director Rick Ashton talks with patrons during a weekend reception. (Alex Keown, for the Chicago Tribune)

**By Alex Keown,**  
Chicago Tribune

OCTOBER 20, 2014, 6:45 AM

**A**fter six months of construction and renovations Downers Grove Public Library officials unveiled an updated facility promising 21st century services to the community.

During an Oct. 18 dedication ceremony celebrating the end of major renovations, Downers Grove Mayor Martin Tully said the library has a "deep and rich history" as a keystone of the community. Over the past year Downers Grove has earned a number of accolades including one of the 50 best places to live and raise a family, according to Livability.com. Tully said the Downers Grove Public Library is one such reason.

"We want to thank you for helping Downers Grove be a great place to live, work, play and thrive," Tully said.

Tully also congratulated the library leadership for financing the \$2.2 million renovation with library reserve funds and financial gifts.

Kathleen DiCola, president of the library board of trustees, thanked residents for putting up with some inconveniences such as noise and "constantly moving resources" during the six month project.

For more than 100 years the Downers Grove Public Library has been a staple of the community, and recent renovations and updates will ensure the library will continue to meet community demands, said Rick Ashton, library

director. Although the current library building is only 15 years old, Ashton said the library was designed for a patron in the 1990s, not 2014.

The \$2.6 million renovation, initially planned in 2012, began in April and was nearly complete by the Oct. 18 dedication ceremony. New lighting, carpeting, furniture and bright spacious areas create an inviting facility. Ashton said there were still a few small projects left to be completed, such as fixing a window pane and adding a door knob.

But the updates go beyond aesthetics with a greater emphasis on technology to enhance both customer service and community needs.

A new automated checkout and return system not only checks in the various types of media, but also sorts them by the media type. Melanie Mentz, the library circulation manager, said the system is a great benefit for the patrons because it cuts down on the amount of time it takes for returned items to be restocked on the shelves.

"What used to take a few days we can now handle within a few hours," Mentz said.

In addition to those customer service improvements, the renovated library features an area dedicated to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) training. During the renovation celebration more than a dozen children worked on robotics projects with library staff members. Library officials have been working closely with the village's school districts to select collection items that will assist school children with their course work, Ashton said. Another upgrade includes the construction of two soundproof rooms used for musical recording and mixing. Staff member Dale Galiniak said some of the computer programs available can teach patrons basic musical skills such as how to play the guitar.

"It's sort of like Guitar Hero, except it teaches you how to play the chords on a real guitar," he said.

In addition to teaching musical skills, the rooms can be used by musicians looking to record and mix their music demos.

Library patrons looking to hone basic computer skills also have a room available for training.

"We have courses that cover all the basics, from how to use a mouse, to using the Internet and more," Ashton said.

The updated library also features improved WiFi, new study areas, a more spacious young adult section, a vibrant children's area featuring a tot-sized play café, additional display areas, a café for adults and, of course, stacks of books. However, Ashton said the library's traditional collection has been pared down some due to changing patron wants.

The community reaction during the dedication celebration was electric, with random complimentary comments such as "how neat," "this is awesome," and "what a great job" echoing throughout the facility.

Ashton was clearly pleased with community reaction.

"We're very excited about the new library and what we have to offer the community. Throughout this process the word 'destination' was key," he said.

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Downers Grove's elementary school leaders want another \$1.36 million in tax dollars next year, part of which will help support a transportation fund sorely lacking for dollars.

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# Hinsdale District 86 votes to approve teacher contract

The Hinsdale Township High School District 86 voted Monday in favor of a two-year contract with its teachers.

› **Photos: Hinsdale District 86 contract negotiations**  GALLERY

OCT. 20, 2014

## Westmont voters asked to OK school bonds

A referendum question on the Nov. 4 ballot asks voters whether Westmont Community Unit School District 201 should issue \$26 million in bonds for various improvements at four schools.


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Man tried to lure girl into car  VIDEO

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## DuPage sheriff candidate targets heroin influx

A candidate for DuPage County sheriff clashes with his former boss on how to best combat heroin distribution in the area.

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## Music studio, STEM rooms added to Downers Grove library

After six months of construction and renovations Downers Grove Public Library officials unveiled an updated facility promising 21st century services to the community.

OCT. 19, 2014

## Voters to weigh in on pay for Burr Ridge mayor, trustees

Should the mayor and trustees in Burr Ridge get paid for serving on the board?

OCT. 17, 2014

## School lunch program emphasizes local, organic food

A second-grader's reputation for being a picky eater is crumbling like a sugar cookie at Anne M. Jeans School in Willowbrook.

OCT. 17, 2014

## Grant will help buy, demolish flood-prone homes

Downers Grove received a federal grant this week to assist the village in addressing flooding problems in the area.

OCT. 17, 2014

## DuPage officials: Heroin antidote saved 25 in first year

As a young man gasped for breath and began to turn blue, Hanover Park police officer Timothy McNulty and his partner administered Narcan, a drug that reverses the effects of a heroin overdose.

OCT. 15, 2014

## Boys golf | Downers South season ends at sectional meet

The Downers Grove South boys golf team didn't qualify for this week's Class 3A sectional meet, but you'd never know it looking at the regional leaderboard.

OCT. 16, 2014

## Downers Grove native picked for training camp

Downers Grove native Nick Fernandez, a defender in the Chicago Fire club, was one of 48 players named to a roster for an eight-day training camp that ends Sunday. It's hosted by United States National Team head coach Brian Johnson in Carson, Calif.

OCT. 16, 2014

## Downers Grove man runs 919th in marathon

. Downers Grove's Michael Lifson cracked the top 1,000 at the Chicago Marathon on Sunday. The 24-year-old finished 919 out of 45,000 entrants with a time of 2 hours, 58.42 seconds. Earlier this month, he won the Fall Color 5K Run in Lisle.

OCT. 14, 2014

## Blotter: Drag racing in Woodridge

The following items were taken from Woodridge police reports:

OCT. 14, 2014

## Blotter: Cigarettes stolen in Westmont

The following items were taken from Westmont police reports:

OCT. 14, 2014

## Blotter: Driver's ed cars damaged in Downers Grove

The following items were taken from Downers Grove police reports:

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A history of  
Downers Grove

GALLERY



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Darien and  
Woodridge

GALLERY



Dream homes:  
Burr Ridge

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Your photos:  
Downers Grove  
Area GALLERY

OCT. 14, 2014

## Downers Grove residents warned about phone scams

Two Downers Grove residents reported receiving harassing phone calls, one consistent with a Microsoft phone scam making the rounds in the area.

OCT. 13, 2014

## DUI leads to retirement decision in Westmont

Former Westmont Village Manager Ron Searl hopes people will remember the positive things he did while working for the town for more than 30 years, not as "that village employee who got a DUI," he said.

OCT. 13, 2014

## Medical clinic, yogurt shop approved in Westmont

A new immediate care medical clinic and a yogurt shop have been approved for a vacant storefront in downtown Westmont.

OCT. 13, 2014

## Back-yard drainage fund boosted in Darien

Darien aldermen have decided to increase funding for a popular program designed to help alleviate flooding in residential back yards.

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OCT. 13, 2014

## Downers Grove to scrap grants program

Downers Grove is wiping from the books a program that once provided village dollars to area nonprofit organizations.

OCT. 10, 2014

## Oak Brook man arrested for crimes at three places in Downers Grove, police say

Downers Grove Police were called to the same stretch of Ogden Avenue three times on Thursday night. All three calls involved the same man, who on Friday morning was arrested, police said.

OCT. 10, 2014

## Downers Grove may cut flood tax for nonprofits

Downers Grove may give churches and not-for-profits a way out of paying a fee imposed on property owners in town.

OCT. 10, 2014

## Downers Grove police searching for Ogden crime suspect

Downers Grove Police were searching for a man suspected of multiple crimes in town Thursday night, according to an alert from the village.

OCT. 10, 2014

## Hinsdale D86, union reach tentative deal to avoid teacher strike

Negotiators with Hinsdale Township High School District 86 and the Hinsdale High School Teachers Association have reached a tentative contract deal Thursday night, according to a release from the district.

OCT. 9, 2014

## Downers Grove teen picked for Army marching band

Sam Tedeschi aspired to play percussion, as a child but a turn with a brass instrument in fourth grade quickly changed his plans.

OCT. 9, 2014

## UPDATE: Disabled man found safe in Downers Grove

UPDATE: Michael J. Vina was found safe in Downers Grove Thursday.

OCT. 9, 2014

## Downers Grove South boys dominate

Downers Grove South's boys golf team dominated the West Suburban Gold meet, winning by 20 strokes last week at the Prairie Bluff golf course.

OCT. 9, 2014

## Downers Grove South grad sets record

Former Downers Grove South running back Josh Williams opened the Elmhurst College football season on fire.

OCT. 10, 2014

## Downers Grove high schools look at giving up lunch subsidies

Downers Grove's high school district is exploring dropping out of the federal school lunch program just as a northwest suburban district did this summer.

OCT. 7, 2014

## Blotter: Disorderly conduct in skate park in Woodridge

The following items were taken from police reports:

OCT. 7, 2014

## Blotter: 100 smashed pumpkins in Downers Grove

The following items were taken from police reports:

OCT. 7, 2014

## Blotter: Armed robbery in Westmont

The following items were taken from police reports:

OCT. 8, 2014

## Foreign language push features new state credential

Students taking an advanced Spanish class at Lincoln-Way North High school were discussing — without using a word of English — films and literature, including the dark tale, "Chac Mool," by the late Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes.

OCT. 6, 2014

## Woodridge eyes long-term town centre improvements

Improvements to the Woodridge downtown area could cost about \$8 million, according to a town centre master plan trustees have approved.

OCT. 3, 2014

## DuPage water agency pays off financial snafu loans

The DuPage Water Commission has voted to make the final payment on \$70 million in short-term loans that the agency borrowed after a financial crisis that was discovered in 2009.

OCT. 3, 2014

## Downers Grove to remove hundreds of damaged ash trees

More than half of the ash trees in Downers Grove will have to be removed because of an emerald ash borer infestation that continues to spread.

OCT. 2, 2014

## Woman killed, driver critical in Burr Ridge crash

A 23-year-old woman died early this morning and a 24-year-old motorist remains in intensive care after a bizarre crash in which a car flipped after hitting a steakhouse filled with patrons in Burr Ridge on Wednesday night.

OCT. 2, 2014

## Downers Grove eyes 14% water rate increase

Increases in water bills are in the pipeline for Downers Grove residents in 2015, the fourth straight year in which the village would impose hikes.

OCT. 2, 2014

## Former DGN standout gets playing time at Michigan

University of Michigan freshman volleyball player Katherine Mahlke, a former Downers Grove North standout, had 12 kills in a five-set loss to No. 15 Purdue on Friday. Although Michigan is struggling with a 5-7 mark, the Wolverines' future appears bright with several freshmen, including...

OCT. 2, 2014

## Downers Grove North girls take own challenge

Downers Grove North's girls swimming team dominated in its own six-team Trojan Challenge on Saturday. The Trojans notched 446 points while second-place Lockport was far behind with 351. Downers Grove South was fourth with 290.

OCT. 2, 2014

## Downers Grove Metra platforms reopen, some work delayed

Platforms at Downers Grove's downtown commuter train station reopen Wednesday morning but a large chunk of the project will sit unfinished into next year.

SEP. 30, 2014

## Blotter: Marijuana possession and suspended license in Westmont

The following items were taken from Westmont police reports:

SEP. 30, 2014

## Blotter: School windows egged in Downers Grove

The following items were taken from Downers Grove police reports:

SEP. 29, 2014

## Police called to sort out soccer game conflict

Police were called to sort out a dispute between two Downers Grove youth soccer teams that mistakenly scheduled games for the same field.

