

Community Partnership Award

POPULATIONS OF LESS THAN 10,000

POTOSI AND LANCASTER, WISCONSIN

ICMA's Community Partnership Award recognizes the programs or processes that demonstrate innovative, multiparticipant involvement between and/or among a local government and other governmental entities, private sector businesses, individuals, or nonprofit agencies to improve the quality of life for residents or provide more efficient and effective services. This year, ICMA presents the Community Partnership Award in the less-than-10,000 population category to the city of Lancaster, Wisconsin, and City Administrator Scot E. Simpson, and the village of Potosi, Wisconsin, for the Schreiner Memorial Library.



SCOT E. SIMPSON

Not long ago, the residents of Potosi, Wisconsin (2008 pop. 726), had access to library services when a bookmobile regularly visited their community.

When that service was discontinued, residents were left without library services. For those who had access to transportation, the closest library was almost 15 miles away. But local schoolteachers had limited resources with which to plan curriculum, and those residents who benefit most from public libraries—youth, the elderly, and disabled residents—were left with no access to books, computers, or the other valuable tools that libraries provide.

With a small operating budget and limited savings for capital projects, Potosi was unable to open its own library. So its leaders worked with community leaders and library staff in nearby Lancaster and formed a partnership with the town to construct and operate a small branch of Lancaster's Schreiner Memorial Library in Potosi. This partnership, one of only a handful in the state, has produced one of the state's smallest yet most highly used facilities.

After about a year of planning, the Potosi Branch Library opened to the public. For \$40,000, the former

kitchen and meeting room of the Potosi fire station had been transformed into an intimate, functional public library. Civic leaders, Lancaster library staff, and members from both communities contributed to the planning and construction process, donated books and other materials to establish the branch library collection, and dedicated volunteer hours to make operations a success. Each magazine subscription that the library currently holds is donated by a member of the village. Many surrounding libraries and organizations have donated materials as well, and in return, residents of the surrounding area now have access to both the Lancaster Schreiner Memorial Library and the Potosi Branch Library.

Total annual operating expenses, which the two communities share, are approximately \$26,000. Estimated costs to operate a stand-alone library would be significantly higher—and prohibitively so for Potosi. Potosi's contribution of \$15,000 per year gives its residents access to a part-time librarian, who operates the library for 15 hours per week and, in addition to book checkout, provides reference assistance, Internet access, copying and fax service, and interlibrary loans, as well as Story Hour and other children's programs. The library is managed by the director of Schreiner Library.

According to Potosi Village President Frank Fiorenza, "What



Fire station kitchen and meeting room transformed into public library

started out as an experiment between two communities, separated by approximately 13 miles, has, after the first year, proved a success beyond our loftiest expectations." In 2007 alone,

- Library cards were issued to 240 residents who had never before owned one.
- Nearly 5,100 materials were circulated, and use of Lancaster's library also increased.
- The two computers in the Potosi library served 718 users.
- Circulation to the village of Potosi increased by 763 percent, and by 342 percent to the surrounding rural area.

But numbers alone cannot tell the complete story. The librarian tells about the homebound residents she has gotten to know as she delivers books to them weekly or about elementary-school teachers bringing their entire classes to sign up for their first library cards. While other small communities struggle to keep existing houses occupied, new homes are being built annually in Potosi—a testament to how assets like a library are vital to making a community attractive to families.

Both Potosi and Lancaster leadership can attest to the power of partnerships, especially in small

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Winter Park, Florida, from page 10
had sustained two serious employee back-related injuries, one of which resulted in a disability retirement, as well as numerous needle-sticks and cross-contamination of attendants' personal protective equipment. Since the ASI features were implemented, however, workers' compensation injuries have dropped to zero.

3. *Reduction in motor vehicle crashes:* The ASI project incorporates features designed to reduce the possibility of a stationary collision while at the scene of an emergency; such features include vehicle markings, lighting, and firefighter equipment strategically incorporated into the ASI vehicles. Compliance for these features is nearly 100 percent.

Despite the dramatically improved safety features of the ASI units, a major obstacle was user compliance as firefighters and paramedics feared that the restraints would not allow them to perform their jobs properly. Getting them to acknowledge the benefits and use the product has required continued training, supervision, and policy enforcement. Complete compliance will take time, but reinforcement of safety policies through the use of ASI restraints, as well as general vehicle safety compliance measures, will help achieve the desired results.

The ASI units designed by and produced for the WPPD are truly a first in the United States. Although other agencies and manufacturers have tried to design various types of restraint systems to keep medical attendants safe, those designs failed to address the ergonomics of the attendant and thus resulted in non-compliance. Winter Park's ASI design, which accommodates the needs of today's EMS personnel, is being considered the standard for change in the industry nationwide. ■

Georgetown County, from page 11
a full-service family medical center. That transformation, as well as

renovation of an auditorium and recreational facility improvements, was completed at a cost of \$1,500,000, or approximately \$56 per square foot for the 26,500-square-foot facility. Construction of a new medical facility alone, not including land, auditorium, and recreational facilities, would have cost \$3.5 to \$4 million!

The Choppee Regional Resource Center officially opened in spring 2005. Today, St. James-Santee Family Health Care operates a full-service family medical facility, complete with a physician, nursing staff, lab, and pharmacy four days a week, as well as mental health services, alcohol and drug counseling, and diabetes education and outreach. The Crisis Stabilization Center, a partnership of SC Mental Health, the Alcohol and Drug Commission, Georgetown County Hospital System, and Georgetown County itself, provides in-patient overnight crisis stabilization and intervention for individuals who would previously have been either triaged in a hospital emergency room or transported to a mental health facility.

Located within the same campus as the medical facility is a county-operated community recreation/education center, which uses the sports fields and gymnasium to offer a variety of activities, including basketball, football, and soccer. Also offered are vocational programs, including adult literacy and computer career development training; senior citizens programs; and after-school and summer youth programs and tutoring. There is also a community food pantry, and HeadStart is renovating an empty school building for a preschool and kindergarten facility.

Rather than focusing solely on a narrow range of typical medical issues, the Choppee Regional Resource Center provides opportunities to nurture children, engage youth, and enable citizens of all ages to better themselves mentally and physically. The aim is to promote the health and wellness of the whole person throughout all phases of a lifetime. ■

Wisconsin, from page 12
communities. Across the country, small rural communities are struggling to provide the most basic services to their residents, let alone access to amenities that improve residents' quality of life. Such issues also affect the sustainability of the community: without basic services and access to cultural and recreational opportunities, these communities have difficulty attracting economic and residential growth. Providing library access was one way for the village of Potosi to remain a viable and attractive rural community.

Partnerships can also offer access to professional management where it might not otherwise be available. Potosi's leaders, who themselves lacked knowledge of library operations, were able to use the technical, managerial, and problem-solving skills of Lancaster's professional staff to create a quality library that will be sustained through professional leadership.

Through partnerships, local governments can share responsibility, achieve efficiency, and make a greater variety of services available. Both Lancaster and Potosi residents are part of a greater network of partnership that extends beyond municipal and even state boundaries, and their residents have benefited from their successful collaboration.

Using the model that was created by the Potosi Branch Library project, both governments are now exploring new partnership opportunities in the area. It is a model that local governments across the country can use as they work to address both small and large needs in their own communities. ■

Fort Collins, Colorado, from page 14
a client or student. School personnel also value the liaison program, which focuses on building relationships with school district personnel and conducting on-site assessments of need with students.

Since the partnership began, about 2,300 people—including law enforcement personnel, primary care physicians, mental health and