

# One in a *Ver* Million

## Meet Jon Flanagin

By David Lias

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Jon Flanagin, president of the Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library's board of trustees, described the facility as the community's "living room" during the June 1 dedication of the newly expanded and remodeled library.

Perhaps nothing better illustrates Jon's concept of what a library should be than the facility's new lounge area, complete with comfortable seating and a fireplace.

"When the initial plans were being discussed and drawn up, and we were talking with the architect, I really, really wanted that fireplace. I think it's a focal point," Jon said. "There were time when I was in the library this winter, and there is seating for about 14 people there, and there wasn't an empty seat."

"I'm delighted by that. I'm delighted by the way the library meets the needs of everyone from the 1- or 2-year-olds who are there with their parents for story time, to the retired in this community," he said. "We like to offer something for everybody throughout the course of their lives. We like to give them a reason to come to the library."

Thanks to the expansion and renovation, the library has more than doubled its size, with 22,890 square feet, as opposed to the 11,000 it was previously.

Other upgrades beside the new lounge area include a new circulation desk, an expanded community room,

automatic doors at the southern entrance and separate areas for teens and technology.

"Our potential for programming is much greater. I think one of the problems that all libraries have is reaching out to young adults and getting them involved. We had been doing a good job, before the expansion, with just a corner blocked off for young adults. Well, they have their own place now," Jon said. They have the programming set up for them, and I hope we can continue to serve that young adult public, and interest them in reading, and interest them in participation, because clearly, they should be. I think that is a real possibility."

It's important to keep in mind, he said, that the library is much more than simply a place to check out books. Jon cites the outreach to young people as an example.

"Our children's programming has been very strong, and kudos to Joyce Moore (youth services librarian) for what she's done," he said. "During the summer children's reading program, everybody pitches in; everybody is a part of it."

"That program is only the tip of the iceberg. Because throughout the year, we offer all sorts of story times for children from toddlers through grade school all of the way. It functions at a whole variety of levels – it's not only good for the kids, it's also good for the parents who bring the kids. I'm delighted by the way the library meets the needs of

the 1- or 2-year-olds who are there with their parents for story time, to the retired in this community. We like to offer something for everybody throughout the course of their lives. We like to give them a reason to come to the library."

Thanks to a financial arrangement with Clay County, the library services expand beyond Vermillion's city limits.

"The county contributes something to the library each year, and we issue library cards to everybody in the county," Jon said. "It's not Vermillion's library, and it's not my library, it's your library."

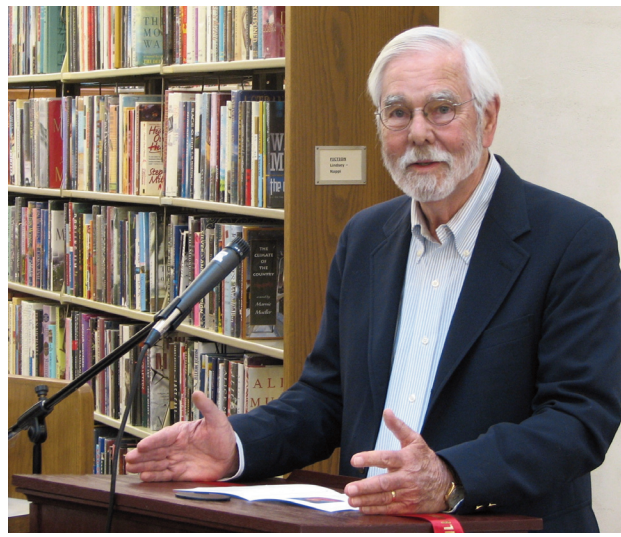
Jon has been a member of the library's board of trustees for over two decades, and meeting the needs of the public by expanding and remodeling the library building has always been a priority, he said.

The city of Vermillion set aside more than \$1 million to aid in construction and a Community Development Block Grant that brought in \$192,500 was awarded. That funding, however, was not enough to complete the needed work.

Edith B. Siegrist made the "new" library a reality. The longtime Vermillion resident and professor of library science at the University of South Dakota bequeathed more than \$800,000 to the project two weeks before she passed away in 2011.

"None of this would have happened without Edith," Jon said.

The library expansion was a cooperative effort involving the library



board, Friends of the Library, the library foundation, staff, volunteers and the city of Vermillion.

In addition to Siegrist others who contributed greatly to make the expansion a reality include Jerry Johnson and the late Roger Kozak, who co-chaired the library board fundraiser that secured the money for furnishings for the project.

The library's community room has been named in Kozak's honor.

Jon said that, in particular, the fundraising efforts by Jerry and Roger, the work of the board, and the city, and especially, the contribution by Edith were vital to the project's

success.

"This wouldn't have happened without Edith," he said.

The expansion now allows the library to fulfill a goal that was difficult in its smaller, confining building – to be open and welcoming.

"The idea that a library is only shelves and shelves and shelves of books and intimidating is simply not true," Jon said. "We have expanded our services to meet the needs of almost every member of the public that we can think of."

"Service. It's what we do. We serve people's needs," he said.

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### 1101 Announcements - Events

**BERGEN LUTHERAN Church:** "The little white church on Timber Road." Worship 10:30 a.m. Sunday School 9:15 a.m. Pastor Ralph Egbert

**Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Church,** 995 N. Sioux Point Road, Dakota Dunes, SD. Weekend Masses: Saturday, 4:30 p.m.; Sunday, 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

**BRULE Creek Lutheran Church,** Elk Point, SD: Worship Service 11:00am, Sunday School 9:45am to 10:45am.

**CHRIST OUR SAVIOR** Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod: Worship Sunday 6:00 p.m., Bible Study Tuesday, 9:00 p.m., Neuharth Center, 624-5398 or 1-800-998-1234

**CHURCH OF CHRIST,** 102 Prosp: Sunday Worship 10:00 a.m.; Bible Study 9:00 a.m.; Bible Study 12:00 noon; Wednesday Night Classes, 7:00 p.m.

**Concordia Lutheran Church (LC-MS)** 7 South University Street, Vermillion. Divine Service – Sunday, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School – Sunday, 9:20 a.m. Pastor Samuel Needham.

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL,** 226 E. Main St., Pastor Steve Miller. 10:30a.m. Worship Service. No Longer Strangers www.uccvermillion.org

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