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Update on

Huntsville Public Library

The LATEST 

Update Written By Ruth Fields

Get ready to party. There will be birthday cake and lots of festivities as Huntsville Public Library observes its 50th birthday. At a celebration on Saturday, September 23, citizens will even get a chance to sing "Happy Birthday" to the library. "There will be a lot of fun things for the kids and adults to do," says Linda Dodson, city librarian. Another party will be held on Sunday, September 24, 50 years to the day after the Huntsville Public Library celebrated its grand opening. "There will be more cake," Linda says. "At that party, we will recognize some of the people who got us started and got us where we are today."

In the mid-1960s, a grassroots effort to build a public library in Huntsville got some help from a little girl. Vicki Davis Christopher, then nine years old, wrote to Huntsville Mayor Raymond Wright, urging the city to establish a public library. The letter was published, support grew, and in 1967, a facility of about 7,000 square feet was complete. "A lot of hard work went into it; a lot of people raised



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funds," Linda says. "It was a community effort to get the library built, and I think that's pretty special."

Over the years, the library became utilized so widely, the original facility was no longer adequate. In 2009, about 80 percent of voters approved a bond referendum to enlarge the library. "It was the only library bond election in Texas that passed that year," Linda says. Remarkably, the library more than tripled its size, growing to about 22,000 square feet, without ever closing its doors to the public.

The library is constantly improving itself, adding new programs, materials and technology upgrades. Some improvements have been added without fanfare, Linda says, but

have helped library patrons by enhancing the accuracy and efficiency of operations.

Among the many upcoming events at the Huntsville Public Library is the annual Frances Sprott Goforth Genealogical Weekend on August 4 and 5. This year's event, "One-half of our Ancestors are Women: Finding our Female Ancestors" will be hosted by the library and the Walker County Genealogical Society. In the past, Linda says, genealogy enthusiasts have traveled from all over the county to attend. Some come from as far away as Madisonville, Houston and even Austin. The event is free but registration is required. For more information or to register, call 936-291-5471 or visit www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com.



Kelly Sue Photography