

MINNESOTA RADIO TAPE FOR APRIL 8, 1964  
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Ladies and Gentlemen - -

This is Senator Hubert Humphrey reporting to you from my office on Capitol Hill in Washington . . .

Today I want to report on an honor that has come to a group of communities in the East Central Region of Minnesota. The regional library there, with headquarters building in Cambridge, Minnesota, was chosen the 1964 winner of the principal award of \$5000 in the annual Book-of-the-Month Club Library Awards competition. Behind this award is a local story of the finest enterprise and cooperation - furnishing us an example of outstanding leadership and inspiration.

Hundreds of libraries throughout the United States compete annually. Libraries in 45 states received some award this year, but the East Central Regional Library of Minnesota was first in the stiff competition.

To compete, libraries must serve towns of 25,000 or less. The purpose of the award is to stimulate the development of libraries in regions where library services are most lacking. Rural areas have fallen behind in library services. The Federal government gives some aid through the Library Services Act. State governments have increased services in rural areas, too. Still, there is no substitute for local initiative to make the most of all resources.

The library in the East Central Region of Minnesota was the unanimous choice of the judges for first place. Eleanor A. Ferguson, Executive Secretary of the Public Library Association which set up the criteria for the award, said that the Minnesota Library, which serves a four-county area more than twice as large as the State of Delaware, was "a model of how small regional libraries should be organized."

Emerson Greenaway, a past president of the American Library Association pointed out that the Minnesota library had made "effective and intelligent use of Federal Library Services Act money."

In developing its services, this library utilized a study made for it by the University of Minnesota. The University measured them in various ways and reported that during the last four years improvements "always came out between 500 and 900 per cent."



The East Central Library serves the counties of Isanti, Mille Lacs, Pine, and Aitkin. It has six branches, two deposit stations, and 54 bookmobile stops. It serves 55,284 persons in an area of more than 4,200 square miles, much of which is wooded and remote. The population of the largest town is 3,000 persons.

The isolated Chippewa Indians are among those reached by the bookmobile service. A reporter, who recently rode the bookmobile out into the area where the Chippewas make the principal use of it, was most enthusiastic about what the library seems to be doing for these people. It serves them just as regularly as it does those in more settled areas.

There has been a wonderful record of community support. In two counties, the Commissioners created the service at the request of a citizen's movement. In two others, establishment was through a referendum at a general election. The Commissioners of all four felt that the only sensible thing to do was to get the counties together. The citizens' movements, the referenda, and the total coordinating, represent a lot of work by many different people.

The people are all rural people. They are lacking in wealth, but they are all enthusiastic library servers and users. The Book of the Month Club announcement states: "On the basis of per capita income and capital wealth, this area is near the bottom of the Minnesota statistics, but in the availability and use of library service it is close to the top."

The Book-of-the-Month Club established these awards in honor of Dorothy Canfield Fisher, a great American author who was deeply interested in libraries. On one occasion Miss Fisher said: "Wherever I go, in this country, I always step into the local public library, taking its condition as . . . an indication of the . . . civilized plane of living of the community".

For winning money we congratulate the East Central Region in Minnesota. For the high mark on "the plane of civilized living" we should all be inspired.

Thank you.



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