



Welcome Back, Centennial Library!

A column by Circle Pines Mayor Dave Bartholomay for the Quad Community Press Newspaper (July 23, 2019)

Dear Centennial Library,

We're so glad that you've finished your construction and are open again for Centennial area residents!

I'm not sure if you know how much you mean to our communities. The Centennial Library is a cornerstone to healthy communities, right up there with our great Centennial Schools and our tremendous parks and trails. A library is a great equalizer and uplifter for an increasingly diverse community - it serves everyone from all walks of life; it provides life-enriching programs and services, and it's a boost to our arts and culture, making all of us more complete and caring neighbors.

The Centennial Library and our Centennial School District are the glue that holds all of us together. Good schools and community assets like the library demonstrate our ongoing commitment to young people and to the improvement of everyone's lives. It is in our combined activities and actions that we all thrive, and where we can work together to really make a difference.

I love that you serve everyone; young and old, rich and poor, long-time residents or new arrivals. Just look at who's in the library: you might notice the kids first, of course. You are their refuge in the summer. You give them the opportunity to stay reading and learning during the summer break from school, so they don't fall behind when they get back to school in the fall. Your programs entertain and enlighten them all year long, and the popular new Lego table encourages creativity and lets their imaginations run wild. The kids were crowded at the old building, but now there is plenty of room for them to learn and grow. That means a lot to the future of our communities!

And it's not just the kids who are excited you are back open again. Teens, parents, older residents, folks looking for an Internet connection, small business entrepreneurs, job seekers - everyone gets tremendous value out of their community library.

Perhaps one of my favorite improvements to the Centennial Library has been the addition of a 'Community Room'. What a splendid space for all sorts of community gatherings...book clubs, art showings, nonprofit meetings and so much more. I see this addition as a space for all of us to use and enjoy - something that will provide a meeting place to make sure we maintain and grow the very important sense of community that makes the Centennial area so special.

I'm also very proud of the role the City of Circle Pines played in your new building. We see ourselves as partners with you in this grand adventure of making the Centennial area a thriving place for all residents and visitors. Our city staff was proud to work with the Anoka County Library Board and the Anoka County Board of Commissioners as they created an excellent asset for the southeast corner of the county. Our Centennial Utilities is also a partner, supporting an innovative natural gas fireplace that will be quite the draw when winter comes once again to our communities. And Circle Pines is adding outdoor lighting, new signage along Lake Drive, a new City Hall playground, and are working on paving the trail to Lexington Avenue in order to improve the public campus of the library, City Hall, Post Office, and Centennial Food Shelf. As Mayor, I invite everyone to check out the new library and keep coming back to see continued improvement of a wonderful public space.

Centennial Library, we loved you before and with your new construction, you are well-positioned to serve our area for many years to come. Welcome back!