



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Libraries: They're More Than What's on the Shelf

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### **Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column**

Visit any library throughout Central and Northern New York, and you'll see things have changed. Today, our libraries are so much more than books. They're offering –and doing—so much more for those who utilize them, and continuing to evolve to keep up with the demands of today's consumers. From classes that teach seniors how to use e-readers to seminars on using technology to trace family trees, the libraries throughout our region are demonstrating each and every day that they're more than what's on their shelves.

Recently, I asked people throughout our region to vote for their favorite libraries and librarians. Oswego County's Fulton Public Library was selected as the favorite among the 43 local libraries that received votes, and 55 area librarians were named "outstanding." Libraries and librarians in the counties I represent who earned the most votes include the following:

#### **Oswego County**

Best Library: Fulton Public Library

Outstanding Librarian: Sue Hutchins, Fulton Public Library

#### **Jefferson County**

Best Library: Roswell P. Flower Memorial Library, Watertown

Outstanding Librarian: Toni Ellinger, Hay Memorial Library, Sackets Harbor

#### **St. Lawrence County**

Best Library: Ogdensburg Public Library

Outstanding Librarian: Edith Ashley, Hepburn Library of Waddington; Linda Adams, Gouverneur Reading Room (tie)

As a member of the Senate Select Committee on Libraries—as well as lover of books—I'm thrilled to be able to recognize these libraries and librarians for their contributions to our community.

This recent initiative is just part of the work I'm doing to support local libraries, as well as those across the state. Most recently, I fought for a \$5 million increase in aid for libraries in the State Budget, as well as \$14 million in library construction funding, which will allow libraries to make updates to their facilities that will help them to better serve patrons. In addition, recently, I was pleased to have secured an additional \$150,000 in special aid to help enhance services at more than 50 libraries and two library networks in Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties.

If you're one of the 170.6 million individuals in the U.S. who has a library card, and visit your local library regularly, you know what great services they provide. From creative programs that build up our sense of community, to new technology that makes learning easier—and more fun—our region's libraries are irreplaceable. In the days to come, I'm looking forward to continuing to support libraries and encourage you to do the same by visiting and getting involved in your local library.