

Carl M. Freeman Makes Donation to Library Campaign

Coastal Point

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By M. Patricia Titus
News Editor

The Friends of the South Coastal Library and other library supporters are nearing the halfway point in their capital campaign to raise \$3 million for their share of funding needed for planned expansion of the library in Bethany Beach.

With a \$250,000 donation from the Carl M. Freeman Foundation officially made on Monday, Aug. 6, the campaign has raised about \$1.35 million dollars of that total, which will provide for expanded space for books and other library resources, as well as a cultural center and community room at the site of the current library in Bethany Beach. The library's space will more than double, from 10,000 square feet to nearly 23,000 square feet.

Members of the library's advisory board, honorary chairmen state Sen. George Howard Bunting and Rep. Gerald Hocker and Carl M. Freeman Foundation President Michelle DiFebo Freeman gathered at the library on Monday to hand over the traditional oversized check and express hopes that it will be just one of many donations that will come in the near future, all toward fulfilling the dreams of a larger library and community facility.

Ray Aumiller, co-chairman of the Capital Campaign with Joan Thomas, announced during the ceremony that county officials had OK'd the naming of the revamped facility as the "South



Coastal Point, SUBMITTED

Library advisory board and capital campaign supporters gather on Aug. 6 at the South Coastal Library to accept a \$250,000 donation from the Carl M. Freeman Foundation toward the \$3 million needed by the Friends of the South Coastal Library to fund their portion of library expansion costs.

From left are: Advisory Board Member Jay Headman, Honorary Campaign Co-Chairmen State Sen. George Howard Bunting and Rep. Gerald Hocker, Campaign Co-Chairman Ray Aumiller, Advisory Board Member Mike Cummings and Michelle DiFebo Freeman, president of the Carl M. Freeman Foundation.

Coastal Library and Joshua M. Freeman Cultural Center,” honoring the late Josh Freeman as a donor to the library campaign and inspiration for the foundation named after his father to make Monday’s sizeable donation.

Freeman’s widow, Michelle, explained, “The Carl M. Freeman Foundation feels a responsibility to support important infrastructure in Sussex County. It’s a pleasure to be part of the expansion of the South Coastal Library.

“I feel that, by naming the cultural center after Josh, that in Sussex County the three parts of his personality are represented wonderfully: through the library, culture and community; through the Sea Colony fitness center, and at Bayside, with the performing arts center,” she said.

Michelle Freeman said she hoped the donation to the library would also prove inspirational to other large developers in the area, to encourage them make significant contributions toward infrastructure such as libraries and toward activities and facilities that future homeowners in their developments will be able to use.

“I hope other large developers will step up and give back to the community,” she said. “It is important that you’re not just building houses.”

Aumiller said the opportunities for similar donations will be available to developers and others as the campaign continues toward its \$3 million goal.

“There will be more leadership naming opportunities, such as with the garden, the teen/youth center, the data center...,” he said of the campaign’s plans. “There will be some big gift opportunities, and we hope people will step up and help with the expansion.”

Already individual donations from citizens, as well as donations from area towns have fueled the effort to raise the \$3 million FOSCL total. The group itself seeded the campaign with \$500,000, while Sussex County has funded its portion, \$1.5 million, and the State of Delaware has funded \$3 million for its part.

A variety of local fundraisers, including the new annual Harvest Ball (set for Oct. 13 this year) and “library nights” wherein some local restaurants have given a portion of receipts to the cause, have helped increase that total to the \$1.35 million figure. The next restaurant fundraiser is set for Bethany Blues on Sept. 27.

The library is set to close the existing location in late September and reopen sometime between November of 2008 and January of 2009. An abbreviated selection and services will be available starting in October at a temporary location in Millville that was formerly home to Creative Concepts, located behind the Beebe Emergency Center off Route 26.