



SPOTLIGHT ON 2015 SPLOST LIBRARY MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY FUNDING

For nearly 100 years, the Griffin-Spalding County Library has served the changing needs of Spalding County citizens. Located at 800 Memorial Drive, Griffin, Georgia, the Griffin-Spalding County Library opened in 1974 replacing the Hawkes Library on South Sixth Street that was built in 1916. Last year, an average of 475 people per day visited the library. The Griffin-Spalding County Library acts as the headquarters location for the Flint River Regional Library System servicing Spalding, Butts, Fayette, Lamar, Monroe, and Pike Counties

The Griffin-Spalding County Library is the place where you can go if you need to find a book, apply for a job, access your email, help your kids with a project, research a new lawn mower, grab a movie, or print a copy of your paystub? There are not many places in today's world that can fill all of these needs at a single location, but your public library is a one-stop shop for information and technology needs and most of these services are free with your library card. A 2013 Gallup survey found that over 90 % of Americans feel that libraries remain a vital part of their communities.



Your public library supplies the citizens of Spalding County with information in many ways; however, primary resources are offered through materials and technology. Materials include printed books, e-books, magazines and other periodicals, audio books, databases, and movies. The Griffin-Spalding County Library currently houses a materials collection of approximately 78,000 items. Every year, new and up-to-date materials are added and outdated or worn-out materials are removed.

Budget cuts, over the last several years, have reduced the funding per citizen from \$.59 in 2008 to just \$.15 in 2015. The State of Georgia has allocated no funding for new materials in the current year's budget. In 2014, Spalding County citizens checked out over 146,000 items from the library materials collection, without materials funding a library's collection will become stale, worn, outdated and inadequate to meet the needs of the people it serves.

The 2015 SPLOST will provide the Griffin-Spalding County Library with funding to increase the materials collection in all areas. A larger non-fiction/informational print book collection gives the citizens the information they need. Picture book and early reader collections help the children in our community achieve a higher degree of literacy. More popular fiction books will be available for immediate check-out which reduces the wait time. An increased e-book, audio book, database and movie collection will put the materials people want at their fingertips.

The library also offers access to desktop computers for use by Georgia residents with a valid library card with free access to the internet. Wireless internet is also provided for those who



bring in their own devices. There were more than 113,000 individual computer sessions logged at the library in 2014. The library is also a resource for printing, faxing and scanning.

In the past, funding for the update and replacement of computers came from technology money supplied by the State of Georgia, or through grants provided by organizations like the Gates Foundation. Unfortunately funding is currently not available through either of these resources for replacement or updating of current technology.

A successful 2015 SPLOST will provide the Griffin-Spalding County Library with funding for replacement of the computers as they age, expanding services provided with desktop computers, laptop computers for use inside the building, and technology upgrades such as wireless printing and digital preservation of newspapers

In his March 2015 article for *The Rotarian*, Joe Queenan called the public library “the only civic institution in my community that is uncompromisingly successful.” The public library fills its purpose in the community when it serves all of its citizens to the fullest potential.

The updated materials collection and technology that the 2015 SPLOST funding will provide will enhance the tools needed to serve the Spalding County community and assist in the creation of a thriving, engaged community with a rich history and a promising future.