

News Release

For Immediate Release



*400 Eau Claire Street
Eau Claire, WI 54701*

www.ecpubliclibrary.info

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Media contact:

Isa Small

Librarian

Programming & Communications Services

isas@eauclaire.lib.wi.us

Campaign leadership contacts:

www.ecpubliclibrary.info/storybuilder/campaign-materials

RCU Foundation Steps Up to Support Library Expansion with \$500,000 Gift

The L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library in Eau Claire and its \$7M Story Builder expansion campaign are proud to officially recognize a \$500,000 pledge from the RCU Foundation. This gift is among the very largest pledges the library has received to date, and it brings funding to roughly 81% of the total project cost.

The City of Eau Claire is investing \$11.5M to revamp the library's failing mechanical systems while the Story Builder campaign is raising an additional \$7M in private funds to expand the library's physical space—a long overdue effort to meet the demands of Eau Claire's ever-growing and evolving population.

Located just blocks from the library, Royal Credit Union's RCU Foundation strives to create a positive impact in the lives its community members, awarding grant funds to organizations across Western Wisconsin and Eastern Minnesota. Since it launched in 2012, the RCU Foundation has given more than \$3M in gifts and donations. The Foundation carefully evaluates donation requests according to several criteria, such as community needs, number of people impacted, future sustainability, and demonstrated financial support from a variety of sources.

Speaking to their involvement, RCU Foundation President John Sackett says, "The Foundation focuses on large-scale, capital projects that help build community and create the spaces where people come together. Libraries are community gathering places that offer resources for everyone. We are proud to support the expansion of the of the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library and appreciate the many ways it benefits the Eau Claire community."

As part of their gift, the RCU Foundation has secured naming rights for the library's "Dabble Box" hands-on learning lab, allowing for the facility's significant expansion, providing a much wider array of STEAM learning opportunities for all ages. Sackett believes these services "will increase creativity and innovation for decades to come."

The RCU Foundation has also joined forces with the Pablo Foundation and two anonymous donors to challenge the community to match their total gifts of \$1.5M before the end of the year. Construction to upgrade the library's infrastructure—funded by the city's \$11.5M investment—will begin in the spring of 2021. It's imperative to raise the additional \$7M by the end of the year so expansion work can happen at the same time.

Library Deputy Director Kimberly Hennings says, "We're proud to have such generous support from the RCU Foundation. RCU is truly a pillar of this community and especially for Eau Claire's downtown area, the place the library calls home. They were a crucial catalyst for downtown's revitalization, and we're honored to stand beside them in continuing those efforts."

Speaking to the importance of the project, Sackett says, "A strong library helps create a strong community. Particularly in our current times, we know that many people are struggling financially and we all face uncertainties. Libraries can fill vital needs. For example, they provide youth literacy programming and assist job seekers with access to Internet to find and apply for jobs."

The library's expansion plans are designed to enhance core services. For example, an all-new third-floor event room will double community engagement space, offering expanded programming for all ages. Modernized study rooms will help individuals and groups to work, study, and meet. Redesigned shelving and display space will offer unprecedented physical access. And a new drive-up window will ease materials pickup. Beyond these essential enhancements, the expansion project dovetails perfectly with the city's upcoming plans to construct an urban plaza between the library and City Hall.

Anyone interested in learning more about the campaign can visit www.ecpubliclibrary.info/storybuilder.

Questions about naming rights can be directed to Deputy Director Kimberly Hennings (storybuilder@eauclaire.lib.wi.us; 715-839-6225). Pledges and gifts can be sent to the Eau Claire Community Foundation, which supports the philanthropic portion of the Story Builder expansion campaign (306 S. Barstow St. Suite 104, Eau Claire, WI 54701; www.eccfwi.org; 715-552-3801; info@eccfwi.org).

For other library information, people may contact Information & Reference by calling 715-839-5004, emailing librarian@eauclaire.lib.wi.us, or chatting with staff via the library's website at www.ecpubliclibrary.info.

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