



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
JOHN PEYTON  
MAYOR

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## **STATE-OF-THE-ART NEW MAIN LIBRARY OPENS WITH A WEEK OF FESTIVITIES**

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla. Nov. 12, 2005**—The City of Jacksonville today kicked off a week-long celebration for the opening of one of the crown jewels of The Better Jacksonville Plan (BJP)—the new Main Library. Festivities included a RALLY parade featuring members of Mayor Peyton's Book Club and a dedication ceremony, as well as lectures, tours, story hours, art and fun activities for the entire family which will continue through Nov. 20.

"Literacy is my top priority and the Jacksonville Public Library has been a strong ally in that effort," said Mayor John Peyton. "This library is not only beautiful, but also holds thousands of treasures – books, movies, music, special historical and cultural collections— that promote literacy and lifelong learning. This week-long celebration will acquaint our citizens with all it has to offer."

The new Main Library is the largest public library building in Florida. On its ground floor, the five-story, 300,000-square-foot facility designed by architect Robert A.M. Stern features a 400-seat auditorium and conference center; a bookstore run by the Friends of the Jacksonville Public Library; a popular library; a teen area and a café (to open in 2006).

On the second and third floors, visitors will find a courtyard with a fountain and café-style tables and chairs; a children's library with seating areas in the shape of an alligator, a boat and a manatee; a children's theater with an animatronic "Mrs. Owl" for storytelling; reference, periodical, fiction and non-fiction areas; and the Jacksonville Public Library's administrative offices.

The fourth floor features the grand reading room, boasting a wireless Internet zone, 40-foot ceilings, and spectacular views of Hemming Plaza, as well as the Ansbacher map room—a collection of more than 240 antique maps of Florida and Florida cities, North and South America, and the world. Other special collections include Florida history, genealogy and the library's new African-American collection.

Part of the voter-approved Better Jacksonville Plan (BJP), the library offers more than 250 public computers and access to satellite and video conferencing capabilities; two self check-out stations; 602,026 books for checkout; 83,486 reference books; 31,882 CDs; 14,204 DVDs; 16,321 audio tapes; 19,030 VHS tapes and 61,765 talking books for the blind.

"Visitors can truly '*Start Here, Go Anywhere*' at the Jacksonville's new Main Library," said Barbara Gubbin, Library director. "This fantastic facility will open up the world to our library customers by offering a variety of experiences through a wide selection of books, other materials, and spaces to explore."

In addition, the library features four new works of art commissioned through the Cultural Council for *Art in Public Places*.

Weighing almost five tons and standing 25 feet tall, *Wisdom*, designed by artist Larry Kirkland, is a bronze owl sculpture perched on the corner of the building visible from Laura and Monroe streets. Based on the owl in Michelangelo's "Night" sculpture, located in the Medici Chapel in Rome, the owl stands on a stack of gold books. Above its head hangs a gilded key, representing the key to knowledge.

ST. JAMES BUILDING, 117 WEST DUVAL STREET, JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202



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*Allegory of a Library* and *Springfield Composition*, 18-foot murals hanging on either side of the grand staircase in the middle of the building. were painted by Kathryn Freeman. The murals depict Jacksonville landmarks, notable figures and the city's musical history.

The Main Library's photography collection includes works from local and regional artists. A rotating exhibit, the collection is displayed in the lobby of the conference center.

An untitled piece painted by artist Al Held is a 9½ by 60 foot acrylic abstract painting on canvas that will hang above the windows in the grand reading room. Held passed away recently and the new Main Library now possesses one of his last commissioned works.

Duval County voters approved the BJP half-cent sales tax referendum Sept. 5, 2000. The BJP is a \$2.25 billion comprehensive growth management strategy that provides road and infrastructure improvements, environmental preservation, funding for targeted economic development and new and improved public facilities.

The construction of the new Main Library, which also includes a 600-space parking garage on Duval Street, brings the entire system to 21 locations and a combined 779,536 square feet. Other enhancements under BJP included six new branches and 12 library renovations.

The library will be open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday from 1 to 6 p.m. Rates at the parking garage are as follows: first hour free with validation; second hour, \$2; three hours or more, \$2 plus an additional per hour charge.

A complete schedule of events and festivities is attached and may also be found at <http://jpl.coj.net> or by calling (904) 630-BOOK (2665).

This event is sponsored by the City of Jacksonville; The Better Jacksonville Plan; Jacksonville Public Library Board of Trustees; a donation in Memory of Edna Ridley Kraft; Alzheimer's Association of Northeast Florida; Bedell, Dittmar, DeVault, Pillans & Coxe, P.A; BlueCross BlueShield of Florida; Brenda Frinks and Associates; Brunet-García Multicultural Advertising & P.R.; Downtown Vision Inc.; Drummond Press; Fisher, Tousey, Leas and Ball; Friends of the Jacksonville Public Library; Head Shots Portrait Studio; Improv Jacksonville; Jacksonville Children's Commission; Jacksonville Greyhound Racing Inc. Charity Foundation; Jacksonville Public Library Foundation; Library Interiors; Laura Lynn; Miller Electric; Promo Depot; Rogers, Towers, Bailey, Jones & Gay, P.A.; Shelby's Coffee Shoppe; Skinner Nurseries Jacksonville; Smith Hulsey & Busey; Southern Wine and Spirits and Winn Dixie Stores, and is in partnership with Clearchannel Radio, CBS 47/FOX 30, and The Florida Times Union.

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