

Flint River Regional Library, Georgia

By Carrie Pauling

You think Georgia, you think: peaches. Perhaps one day when you think Georgia, you'll think: libraries! It's possible that Georgia library patrons already do—they have access to every circulating material in the state of Georgia through the statewide Public Information Network for Electronic Services, better known as PINES, a program of the Georgia Public Library Service. According to their Web site, the network includes more than 275 libraries in 140 counties. Through the idea of a "borderless library," a user has access to 9.6 million materials, delivered to his or her home or library free of charge.

One of the first members of the PINES network was Flint River Regional Library (FRRL) in Griffin, Ga., located about halfway between Atlanta and Macon. "PINES is wonderful because it's a shared database for all users. Libraries in our system are very heavy borrowers and very heavy lenders because of the varied collection we have," says Vicki Marshall, Coordinator of Technical Services at FRRL.

FRRL, a system of seven branch libraries and the Headquarters Library in Griffin serves a wide demographic, from suburbanites outside of Atlanta to the agrarian communities between the cities of Atlanta and Macon. "We serve six counties—and I'd lay odds that ours probably runs the widest spectrum that most libraries serve," says Marshall. Many patrons are employed by the airlines and other technical industries in the city, and many more are in highly rural areas. Marshall says their base collection that suits everyone includes bestsellers and children's materials. "The nonfiction collection is different at each location."

Busy with Brodart

Recent recipients of a Ferst Foundation literary grant, FRRL has been working hard to build their children's collection, adding materials for fifth graders and younger. The Ferst Foundation's mission, according to their Web site, is to "Provide books for local communities to prepare all Georgia preschool children for reading and learning success."



Flint River Regional Library's Headquarters are located in Griffin, Ga., about halfway between the cities of Atlanta and Macon. The library services a diverse demographic, from those living in the greater Atlanta area to a very rural, agricultural-based population.

"Brodart has primarily helped us build that area," notes Marshall. In fact, FRRL developed a partnership with Brodart five or six years ago specifically in search of children's materials. "Barb Fritz set up our profile, and we've been ordering ever since!" Two of their libraries, the Fayetteville and Peachtree City branches, subscribe to McNaughton lease plans for their other materials, including bestselling fiction (print and audiobook), multiple copies, and popular, timely nonfiction.

Marshall has also been working with Sharon Shotwell and other Brodart representatives to transition to BibzII.com, which she, as the Coordinator of Technical Services, looks forward to implementing—though of course with some natural trepidation that comes with anything new. Training is in progress and Marshall feels confident the transition will be smooth. "We have a very set pattern for how we are going to order and define our categories," she notes. And it's important to be exact when you belong to a shared online active database of titles, like PINES.

PINES, GALILEO, and Georgia Libraries

Marshall explains that all Georgia libraries approach cataloging the same way, though they may approach the call number differently. This adherence to the general guidelines enables all patrons across the state using PINES to access materials. Using PINES, a library patron can manipulate information using the publishing date, or sort by author name, subject, and much more. Once they find the material they seek, users can place holds, by volume, title, or copy, and receive their items in a day or two.

In addition to PINES is GALILEO, “an Initiative of the University System of Georgia.” GALILEO is a subscription-only search engine that includes information not otherwise found using free Web search tools, available to Georgia citizens. GALILEO is broken down into subheads, including “Scholar” for higher education, “Library” for general use, “High School” for grades 9-12, “Teen” for grades 6-8, and “Kids” for grades K-5. “GALILEO is unique to the state,” says Marshall. “It’s a joint effort among similarly-typed libraries in the state that allows libraries to offer more to their patrons. And once you’ve taught someone how to use it in the K-12 years, that person can use it in college and throughout adulthood. They can access information based on their level of use; for example, doctorate students would access the GALILEO Scholar.”

Equal Treatment for All Patrons

Marshall reinforces that patrons in the Georgia library system, and specifically in the FRRL system, should all be treated the same—have access to all of the information available, and have the ability to locate that information. They work to improve the literacy level of their citizens through the addition of new libraries in communities to serve those residents and by expanding their children’s collections. “We work in cooperation with school libraries—in fact, Georgia libraries as a whole function very well with academic libraries,” she says. It’s a clear case where technology, dedicated libraries, and the right collection of books and materials come together to make a great and lasting impact on library patrons.

FRRL Stats

- Location: Library Headquarters in Griffin, GA
- Web site: www.doc.frpls.net
- Branches: 7 locations in 6 counties
- Collection size: 481,818 materials
- Population: 300,000
- Registered cardholders: 120,000



One of the library’s favorite Brodart services is Compleat Book-Serv’s processing for McNaughton books and audio books. Here, Jill Prouty, Library Administrator, and Nancy Jurchenko, Library Assistant for the Peachtree City Library, look over some new arrivals.

