

Bruning Library is recognized by the Nebraska Community Foundation

The Bruning Library renovation was recently recognized by the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF) when they held their state-wide board meeting in Shickley on June 3rd. Members of the state-wide board came from all over Nebraska. Late that afternoon, the Board and NCF staff drove to Bruning to see what projects the Bruning Community Foundation has been involved with. They were informed of the construction/owning/leasing of the Bruning Cafe; the Bruning Foundation involvement in the Old Tavern Antique Store and now the Bruning Library Renovation.

The NCF Board/Staff and Bruning Community Foundation Board members/guests were treated to an evening meal in the Bruning Opera House with a short program following. Highlights of the state-wide organization were shared along with the community of Shickley's story of their success in raising local foundation funds and the successful projects in Bruning. Bruning Community Foundation President, Fred Bruning welcomed guests, served as MC of the evening, and told about

Bruning Community Foundation successes.

The success of the Bruning Library is a community effort of which residents and volunteers can be quite proud. The original Bruning Library consisted of one room inside the Bruning Opera house. The 430 square foot room was shared with the Village of Bruning and various organizations as a meeting room. The Bruning Library was started by the Bruning Woman's Club in 1923, and they have continued to sponsor and staff it since that time. For many, many years Marie Huber was the librarian. The conditions were overcrowded and library open hours were very limited.

The Bruning Community Foundation originated the idea of a new library, with two donors coming forward with funds to begin the process. A Bruning Community Foundation Library Committee was named and investigated the many possibilities for a new library. Edwin Korff and Associates architect firm was hired to draw plans for a new library building. Various locations were identified to house the building, with the preference of a

main street location. By the end of 2007, nearly \$100,000 were raised for this effort!

From May - July 2008, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educator Phyllis Schoenholz facilitated eleven Focus Group Interviews with 68 people attending to give their vision of Bruning's future. Community members appreciated the clean, progressive and safe village where people are friendly and come to the aid when people need help. When asked about the new library, they wanted extended hours, activities to help children get excited about reading, technology, and an adult reading room. Not all people were interested in a library and there was concern about the proposed cost of a new library building. Several Town Hall meetings were held to determine the future of the library. The decision was made to renovate a historic building on Main Street into the new library; Tim and Lois Norder donated the building.

The Bruning Community Foundation sought professional advice regarding the building structure, design, safety, library accreditation, proposed service

offerings etc. The Nebraska Library Commission, informed the Village Board they needed to appoint a library board for accreditation and so a board was appointed. Myra Kluck, who served on the board, left her position and was hired as the new librarian.

During several community meetings, the process and procedure how to create the new library was determined. Additional committee members were appointed and/or volunteered for committees such as Communications, Construction, Furniture and Decor and Fundraising.

The physical renovation is nearly complete. Inside, the Library is continually updating and changing. As the library moves forward, all volunteers are welcome and appreciated. The Bruning Library appreciates all volunteers for their time, talent, energy, items and monetary donations. This is one more successful effort in a progressive small rural Nebraska community - stop by anytime and visit the newly remodeled facility.



Visitors were in awe of the beautiful Bruning Library during the Open House. The original brick walls and wooden library shelves add character to the library. An added feature is the Reading Loft for children in the upstairs portion of the library.

Contributed photo