



Herald photo by Sig Bokalders

A PHONE CALL to Rep. Richard "Dick" Klemm from Wauconda Township Library officials in the fall of 1984 sparked the 1½-year quest for

Build Illinois funds for the library's new facility. Klemm helped the library gain a \$530,000 grant for its \$900,000 library.

Library grant penciled in by 'angel'

by Maria Mooshil

Herald staff writer

If Wauconda Township Library did not get a \$530,000 Build Illinois grant to help construct its one-story, 10,000-square-foot building, board President Robert A. Jonak still had hope the facility would eventually get built.

"We'd be many many years away from starting to build it," he said, "but one way or another, we'd have gotten there. We probably could have gotten a more traditional grant, or maybe we'd be lucky and fall into a federal grant, or found an angel along the way."

It can probably be said that Wauconda Township Library found its angel.

Rep. Richard "Dick" Klemm, R-Crystal Lake, visited the current library at 212 Osage St., in the fall of 1984 at the invitation of board members. The 6-foot 5-inch state representative toured the cramped, 3,500-square-foot building with ceilings less than eight feet tall and heard board members tell of their dream to build a new facility.

"I was told of the needs," Klemm said, "but I can walk around. It's a well-stocked facility, but it leaves a lot to be desired."

Jonak originally contacted Klemm to investigate possible funding sources.

"We were looking anyplace," Jonak said. "For assistance, where to go, who to talk to."

KLEMM TOLD the board he wasn't sure what he could do for them, but that he would look into spe-

Timeline of events

- November 1984, Rep. Richard Klemm visits Wauconda Township Library
- January 1985, Governor James Thompson gives State of the State address introducing Build Illinois program
- April 1985, Klemm adds amendment to the bill appropriating \$530,000 for Wauconda Township Library
- July 1985, Governor Thompson signs Build Illinois into law
- July 1986, Wauconda Township Library Board President Robert A. Jonak receives check for \$477,000 from Secretary of State Jim Edgar

cific library grants awarded by the state to see if Wauconda qualified.

"I can see your program, I can see your need, I'll see what I can do," Klemm recalled saying.

In January of 1985, Gov. James Thompson gave his State of the State address introducing the Build Illinois concept, which Klemm called "a visionary program statewide which looked to the future to take care of needs, to have jobs created, to take care of environmental problems... I was sitting there thinking 'what a tremendous thing.'"

When the governor mentioned that money would also be set aside for libraries, Klemm said "little antennae shot up. I got a printed copy of the speech and it was in there. I saw the opportunity for assistance to the library."

David Erickson, Wauconda's head librarian, said Klemm asked for the amount the board would need to build

the library. Minus the value of the present facility and the building fund the board had collected through the years, officials estimated that at \$530,000.

ALTHOUGH THE grant can now be considered low, given increased construction costs, which forced the board to reduce the project from a two-story, 20,000-square-foot building to the current plan, Erickson knows how essential the grant is.

"Without it we simply would not be able to build now," he said. And as for Klemm, "I think he was the single individual responsible for us receiving the grant."

In the spring of '85, Klemm inserted an amendment to the Build Illinois legislation providing \$530,000 for Wauconda Township Library. Other representatives also added nearly \$1 billion worth of projects for their districts.

When the Senate got hold of the

bill, it removed all amendments inserted by the house, Klemm said. The bill returned to the house where Klemm again penciled in Wauconda's grant. This time the amendment remained in the bill, which passed the House and Senate and arrived on the governor's desk where it was signed into law on July 25, 1985.

"I guess I was persuasive enough in the House to say this is important, hey, let's put it back in again," Klemm said. "To the governor's chief of staff, I said this was important. Wauconda is a small community but a proud, growing community."

A **TASK FORCE** headed by Lt. Gov. George Ryan was sent to 50 communities whose legislators added projects to the bill to determine which would remain. On Oct. 25, Ryan and his deputy chief of staff did not visit the library, but instead saw Klemm in his McHenry office to get details and viewed pictures of the facility.

"It was a good project and needed in an area that was underbooked," Kay Schultz, Ryan's deputy, said. "The library was not up to standards. It was a proper expenditure of money."

Klemm's pitch apparently worked. Although Susan Mogergerman, spokesman for the governor's office, denied that if Klemm were a Democrat, aid for Wauconda might have been harder to come by, others are not so sure.

Steve Brown, spokesman for Rep. Michael Madigan, D-Chicago, said while he was not familiar with the Wauconda Township Library grant

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'Angel' gives guidance to Wauconda library

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situation, suburban Cook County and Downstate regions were "ignored" in the 1985-86 Build Illinois law.

"It was largely an attempt to distribute funds by and large in Republican areas," Brown said. "It doesn't make it right or wrong. I'm making no judgment about Wauconda. In a state as big as Illinois there are all kinds of projects. All have their merits. It's hard to make a judgment about what is more meritorious than others."

Schultz rejected Brown's notion, saying that 67 percent, or \$56.9 million, of the first year's funds were allocated to Democratic projects, while 33 percent, or \$27.439 million, were given to Republican projects.

"Democrats put in for big money projects," he said, while the Republicans had many less expensive projects. For the first two years of the

Build Illinois program, Republican projects number 51.5 to the Democrats 35.5, Schultz said.

BUT THOSE figures don't mean much to Wauconda library officials. Klemm, whether Republican or Democrat, is considered an angel "at the moment" to board president Jonak.

"My whole general impression is, whatever it was, he came and talked to us. He sensed we were doing good work for the community, trying to build an important facility and he understood we could do more. Our primary handicap — limitation — was an adequate facility. He must have made a mental note he was going to do something for us," Jonak said.

Groundbreaking for the library is expected at the end of August and board members are hoping to open the doors to 12,000 potential township users next spring.