

The History of the North Suburban Library District

1943-1944

In 1943, The North Suburban Woman's Club began discussing the need for a local library. The community supported the new library with donations of money, labor, and materials. On April 15, 1944, the women opened their library at the George May building at 5426 N. Second Street. The budget for the first year of operation was \$600, including \$28 per month for rent. Roughly 4,000 residents made up the new library which followed the Harlem School District boundaries.



1945

Many new families moved to the Loves Park and Machesney Park areas after WWII. A referendum was held and the North Suburban Library District became the first district library in the state. By the end of 1945, almost 1,500 people held library cards, and a story hour was established. Edith Van Duzer was the first librarian hired in 1945.



North Suburban Library District's first location on 5426 N. Second Street.

1950s

Circulation of materials went from 600 in 1945 to 27,255 in 1950 and growth continued. The library moved to 515 Loves Park Drive, where it shared a building with the Loves Park Post Office. In 1956, the North Park branch located at 7912 N. 2nd was opened in the former Ruth's Tog Shop. The first children's Summer Reading Club started. Over 900 children participated.

1960s

By 1960, circulation had grown to more than 150,000, requiring further expansion, so the library leased the building at 535 Loves Park Drive. By 1968, space became such a serious problem that the Board of Trustees decided to construct a building on land previously purchased at 6340 North Second Street. In 1969, the new library opened.



North Suburban Library District's opens at 6340 N. Second Street.

1980s

On March 4, 1982, Joan Kapstein was named the new Head Librarian of NSLD. Former Head Librarian, Alice Targo, resigned. In 1984, Friends of the Library was formed to assist the library and its staff.

1985

In 1985, work began to automate the library's paper card catalog. An automation consortium grew out of a stand-alone computer system at Rockford Public Library, which was funded with State grant money. Rockford Public Library, North Suburban Library District, Woodstock Public Library, and Cherry Valley Public Library District were the founding libraries from which grew what is now the Northern Illinois Consortia.

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That same year, NSLD/Roscoe was opened as a storefront branch at 5540 Elevator Road. This initiative was funded through a State of Illinois Project Plus Grant awarded to NSLD. Later that year a referendum was approved, adding Roscoe Township to the district, thereby doubling the total size of the district.

1987

In 1987, NSLD took out a mortgage to support an addition of nearly 19,000 square feet for the NSLD/Loves Park library, making room for an auditorium, meeting rooms, display cases, and additional space for staff and books. The original section of the building was also renovated.



NSLD/Roscoe's original location.

1990

In 1990, the library acquired land and doubled the size of its parking lot. Library staff member Ann Powell became the sixth Head Librarian in the library district's history.

1994

In 1994, circulation was well over 398,000, and the library's collection included almost 139,000 books. The annual budget had reached just under \$1 million and served more than 50,000 residents from its two locations.

1996

Eleven years after Roscoe Township was annexed to the Library District, voters approved a \$5.3 million bond to build a new library in Roscoe and increase the size of the NSLD/Loves Park facility. A new NSLD/Roscoe library and a remodeled NSLD/Loves Park library opened in the fall of 1997. The NSLD/Roscoe library totaled 16,000 square feet, while the NSLD/Loves Park library building now totaled 54,000 square feet.



Construction begins on NSLD/Roscoe's new location at 5562 Clayton Circle.

1997-2004

Between 1997 and 2004, remodeling was the word of the day. The district added a computer lab, moved and remodeled the Anderson Local History Room, and added a Project Next Generation computer lab to NSLD/Loves Park. Most of these projects were funded by LSTA grant money from the Office of the Secretary of State. The library budget for 2003-2004 was \$1,906,507. Over 556,901 items were checked out in 2003-2004 and more than 353,950 people visited the two libraries that year.

2004-2005

NSLD partnered with the North Boone School District and started a North Boone demonstration library, financed through a LSTA grant through the Illinois State Library, in spring of 2003, which lasted through June of 2005. This attempt to annex five townships in northern Boone County by annexation did not succeed. An operating rate increase referendum failed in March of 2004. Circulation at NSLD/Loves Park and NSLD/Roscoe increased 1.5% to 556,901 in the years 2004-2005.

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NSLD/Roscoe offered wireless Internet access starting October 3, 2005. A wireless network was added to NSLD/Loves Park a few months later. The library also increased the number of public computers in NSLD/Roscoe to 10. During 2005-2006, circulation at NSLD/Loves Park and NSLD/Roscoe increased to 590,794. NSLD/Roscoe library's yearly circulation increased more than 35% and Loves Park's annual circulation increased over 15%. The number of visitors at both libraries increased 8.2% to 360,681. Overcrowding at NSLD/Roscoe's library was a problem. There was a severe shortage of program space and shelving space for materials.

2005

NSLD refinanced the 1996 building bond saving taxpayers \$619,382.

2006-2007

NSLD and seven other libraries made the decision to break ties with the Prairie Area Library System (PALS) and move the management and operations of the Innovative automation system to an independent consortium – Northern Illinois Cooperative (NIC). The NIC libraries included: Cherry Valley Public Library District, Harvard Diggins Library, Ida Public Library, Nippersink Public Library, Talcott Free Public Library District, Woodstock Public Library, Rockford College's Howard Colman Library, and NSLD. Planning for another expansion to NSLD/Roscoe began in 2007.

2007-2009

In 2008, a 6,090 addition to the Children's Services department at NSLD/Roscoe building was finished, bringing the total size of the library to 22,090 square feet. Over 200 children and parents attended the Grand Opening program in Roscoe on Tuesday, June 10, 2008.



A number of other improvements were made to the libraries, including the expansion of the NSLD/Loves Park parking lot across Burrwood Street in Loves Park, adding thirty-four more parking spaces. Express Check-Out, a self-check machine, was expanded to include the NSLD/Roscoe Children's Services desk in addition to the machine at the circulation desk at both libraries. In 2009, Sandy Aden became Director of NSLD.

2012

NSLD's new mission statement is, *"With unmatched service, the North Suburban Library District opens the door to learning and entertainment, creating lasting memories for all."* Director, Sandy Aden retired in 2012 after years of service as both the head of the Children's Department and the Library Director. In September 2012, Mary Petro became Library director.

2014

NSLD TURNS 70! NSLD celebrated our 70th anniversary by going to the ballot in March to ask taxpayers to allow the library to redirect funds from an expiring building bond to the operating fund. The Library Proposition did not pass. NSLD went back to voters in November, 2014 with a successful outcome. The question passed and renovation on NSLD/Loves Park and improvements to NSLD/Roscoe began in 2015. Funds from the redirection of the expiring bond went to pay for continuous improvements to both library facilities.

YOUR Library, YOUR Future



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2015

Renovations started at NSLD/Loves Park in the spring of 2015. Improvements included:

- Updated HVAC electric, plumbing, lighting, and roof.
- Updated services desk on the first floor and additional self-checkouts.
- More windows were added to improve lighting
- New ADA larger bathroom
- New furniture
- A larger auditorium, new small meeting room, and additional study rooms.
- New teen and local history area.
- Addition of a quiet area for reading.
- More public computers for public use.
- Faster internet service and Wi-Fi were added to both library locations.



2016

Renovation Reveal! A ribbon cutting for the newly renovated NSLD/Loves Park first floor was held on October 15, 2016. The time capsule was also reburied.

Renovations continued at NSLD/Roscoe in fall, 2016 with an expanded parking lot and improvements to the HVAC system.

The North Suburban Women's Club announced in October, 2016 that they gifted the property adjacent to NSLD/Loves Park located on the corner of Theodore and 251 to NSLD.



2017

NSLD/Roscoe, completed the parking lot and HVAC updates. The Friends of NSLD officially dissolved.

2018

NSLD libraries rolled out maker and craft spaces at both libraries. These spaces were designed to provide library users of all age's opportunities to engage in creative activities. Passive programming really took off in 2018 in response to the needs of patrons for convenient activities.

2019

In April, NSLD celebrated 75 years in the community with a community celebration, book bags with a 75th logo, and other activities commemorating the anniversary.

NSLD joined the PrairieCat consortium of libraries in May 2019.



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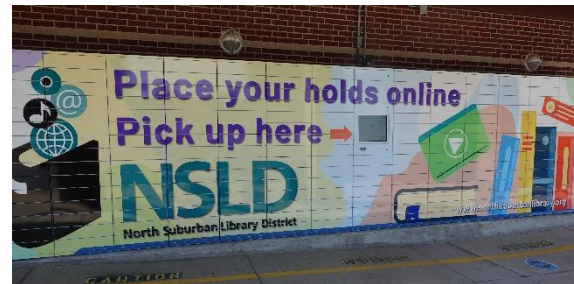
2020

NSLD libraries felt the impact of the COVID pandemic in 2020. That spring, staff mobilized in response to the Governor of Illinois' mandate to close and implement local health department and safety regulations. NSLD began to adjust policy, procedures, and workflows to create a more safe environment for library users.

Library staff reached out to local health department officials and asked them to write first-hand accounts of life during the pandemic that they could share with NSLD. The officials provided this information for the NSLD local history collection.

2021

NSLD libraries continued to operate throughout the COVID pandemic. Hold lockers were installed at both NSLD libraries in the summer of 2021 to provide library patrons with 24/7 access to library materials.



2022

NSLD staff worked in partnership with KMK Media to create a new website, which included new event calendar software and online donations. Some of the new digital resources offered on the website were two local history newspapers: *The Post Journal* and the *Rockford Register Star*.

The North Suburban Woman's Club building was taken down and the space was returned to green space. Both NSLD libraries had new landscaping and flagpoles installed.

2023

Storyboards were installed in the garden areas around both NSLD libraries in winter 2023. These storyboards complement the new walking paths and landscaping. This project was done to expand access to library services beyond the walls of the NSLD libraries.

The celebration of the NSLD 80th anniversary began in July 2023, and went throughout the fiscal year. April 2024 marks the official 80th anniversary of North Suburban Public Library District.

If you would like to make an online donation in honor of North Suburban Library District's 80th anniversary, scan the QR code.

