

News Release

Media Contacts:

Kristina Massari
Public Relations Manager
Cengage Learning
(203) 965-8694
kristina.massari@cengage.com

Julie Brand
Community Relations & Marketing Director
King County Library System
(425) 369-3273
jbrand@kcls.org

Gale and *Library Journal* Name King County Library System 2011 Library of the Year

Farmington Hills, Mich., June 7, 2011 — Gale, part of Cengage Learning and a leading publisher of research and reference resources for libraries, schools and businesses, and *Library Journal* magazine today announced that King County Library System in Issaquah, Washington has been named the 2011 Library of the Year. Each year this prestigious recognition goes to the public library in the United States that most profoundly demonstrates service to community, creativity, leadership and innovation in developing specific community programs, particularly programs that can be emulated by others. In addition to a cash award of \$10,000, King County Library System (KCLS) will be featured as the cover story for the June 15, 2011, issue of *Library Journal*.

“King County Library System has a lot of fans at *Library Journal*, with good reason. We’ve watched KCLS lead the way for years in innovative service to their community,” said Francine Fialkoff, editor-in-chief, *Library Journal*. “This year, all their efforts aligned—from new buildings to new services to record-breaking usage—and we’re thrilled to name them Library of the Year.”

The King County Library System was founded in 1942 to serve rural areas and small towns. Now, nearly 70 years later, KCLS is one of the busiest libraries in the U.S., serving 1.3 million county residents with its 46 branches and 2,131 square miles of service area. Patrons have visited the library 10.2 million times in the last year, and KCLS’s unique marketing efforts and innovative programs have helped get them in the door. Some examples:

- “Take Time to READ” program encouraged community members to take time to read for fun, providing “Quick Read” books and chairs in the unlikeliest places, but often the busiest, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles and the mall
- Focusing on the number one use of American public libraries – job and career assistance – KCLS implemented the “Look to Your Library” project, offering 46 workshops on job searching, resume writing and networking
- Bringing library resources direct-to-patrons with its “Library2Go” and “Digital Discovery Zone” vans, housing tools for creating computer graphics, games and animations for citizens of all ages

Over the last year, KCLS grossed more than 30 million website visits, driving traffic by:

- Redesigning its Web pages and expanding its digital downloads collection with new eBook titles
- Producing eReader information cards to answer questions about device compatibility and download procedures, and preparing “Get Started” videos and Facebook ads
- Revamping its book review blog “Book Talk” into a fantastic collection of reading recommendations from more than 60 librarians
- Creating a “Tell Me a Story Wiki” featuring filmed finger plays, songs, rhymes and links to materials, encouraging adults to share early literacy activities with children

- Creating Web pages in Spanish that offer access to materials, programs and services, ensuring a key service group can take advantage of the library's many services

"Supporting libraries is always paramount to our daily work at Gale, and the contributions being made by King County Library System deserve our greatest support and recognition," said Frank Menchaca, executive vice president and publisher, Gale. "Through its tailored career help programs, community reading programs and social media outreach, KCLS has reached new and underserved groups within the community while continuing to support and strengthen services its patrons have always relied on."

"We're delighted to receive this recognition from Gale and *Library Journal*," said Bill Ptacek, director, King County Library System. "The Library of the Year Award is an honor for the entire community: for our patrons, who made their libraries the busiest in the nation; for the voters who made it possible through their continued support; and for our hard-working staff who continuously create innovative programs and services that best meet the needs of the communities we serve."

Special mentions for Library of the Year were also given to Middle Country Public Library, Centereach, NY; San Diego County Library, San Diego, CA and Jefferson County Public Library, Lakewood, CO in recognition of their service philosophy and dedication to community.

The 2011 Library of the Year Award will be presented formally at a gala reception at the American Library Association Annual Conference in New Orleans on June 26, 2011.

For more information, please contact Kristina Massari at kristina.massari@cengage.com or Julie Brand at jbrand@kcls.org.

About Cengage Learning and Gale

Cengage Learning is a leading provider of innovative teaching, learning and research solutions for the academic, professional and library markets worldwide. **Gale**, part of Cengage Learning, serves the world's information and education needs through its vast and dynamic content pools, which are used by students and consumers in their libraries, schools and on the Internet. It is best known for the accuracy, breadth and convenience of its data, addressing all types of information needs – from homework help to health questions to business profiles – in a variety of formats. For more information, visit www.cengage.com or www.gale.cengage.com.

About *Library Journal*

Library Journal is the oldest and most respected publication covering the library field. Considered to be the "bible" of the library world, *Library Journal* is read by over 100,000 library directors, administrators, and staff in public, academic, and special libraries. It is the single-most comprehensive publication for librarians, with groundbreaking features and analytical news reports covering technology, management, policy, and other professional concerns. Its hefty review sections evaluate nearly 7000 books annually, along with hundreds of audiobooks, videos, databases, web sites, and systems that libraries buy. For more information, visit www.libraryjournal.com. *Library Journal* is a publication of Media Source Inc., which also owns *School Library Journal*, *Horn Book*, and *Junior Library Guild*.

About King County Library System

KCLS is a large system: 46 libraries serving more than 1.3 million residents and 18 school districts over a 2,131 square mile area of cities, towns, farms, and forests. Administrative efficiencies have a broad impact, and patrons expect their libraries to provide quality service, comfortable and welcoming facilities, responsible environmental practices, and responsible stewardship of public assets. In 2010, KCLS libraries were busier than ever. Patrons **checked out nearly 22.4 million items**, a 5% increase over the 2009 record. Staff issued more than 100,000 new library cards. Web traffic reached 31 million visits; program attendance hit 77,000, and 10.2 million visitors came through the libraries' doors.

###