

WHITE PINE LIBRARY COOPERATIVE

HISTORY

The Saginaw Area Library System was started in 1960 by the Public Libraries of Saginaw using federal funds and a book loan from the Michigan State Library Public Library Development Collection to demonstrate extended services to certain areas of Saginaw County.

In April 1964 Merrill became the first library to contract with the Public Libraries of Saginaw on an affiliate basis under P.A. 92, 1952, and was followed by the libraries in Chesaning, Hemlock, and St. Charles.

On November 19, 1965 those libraries joined with the Public Libraries of Saginaw to officially form the Saginaw Area Library System. The Public Libraries of Saginaw became the headquarters for the system with the director and board of the Public Libraries of Saginaw also serving as the director and board of the system. The library in Vassar became an affiliate under the same act in January 1966, thus extending service for the first time outside of Saginaw County.

In 1967 service was extended to Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola Counties and the Saginaw Area Library System was organized into two divisions. The five affiliate libraries in Chesaning, Hemlock, Merrill, St. Charles, and Vassar became the Saginaw Division. Libraries in Brown City, Caro, Cass City, Fairgrove, Fostoria, Mayville, Millington, Peck, Pigeon, Port Austin, Sandusky, and Unionville joined the Thumb Area Division and a separate headquarters was established in Caro. The Thumb Division also had a separate advisory board, consultant, and budget. Libraries in Bad Axe, Kingston, Marlette, and Sebawaing joined the Thumb Area Division later under the same act.

The Thumb Area office in Caro was closed in 1972 and the two divisions were merged into one with new offices in the basement of the Public Libraries of Saginaw.

The Bay County Library System, the Iosco-Arenac Regional Library, and the library in Frankenmuth joined the Saginaw Area Library System in 1974. In that year the name of the system was changed to the White Pine Library System.

In February 1976 a new plan of service created an eight-member governing board for the system, which consisted of representatives from member libraries.

The system offices were moved from their location in the basement of the Public Libraries of Saginaw to a separate building at 4570 Lawndale Rd. during April 1976 and on June 30, 1976, the director of the Public Libraries of Saginaw resigned as director of the system and the system board appointed its own director.

In 1976 the library in West Branch and in 1977 the library in Rose City joined the system. On February 1, 1978 the White Pine Library System reorganized under P.A. 89, 1977, and changed its name to the White Pine Library Cooperative. The library in Midland also joined the

Cooperative on that date. In 1979 the library in Birch Run joined the Cooperative followed in 1980 by the library in Burt and in 1983 by the libraries in Clare, Coleman, Gladwin and Harrison. The library, in Bridgeport, joined in 1982 and the library, in Thomas Township, joined in November 1988.

In April 1990, the Cooperative moved to a new headquarters at 1840 N. Michigan, Saginaw.

A newly formed library, in Reese, joined in 1990. In October 1993 the Veteran's Memorial Library [changed name to Chippewa District Library, 1998] in Mt. Pleasant joined the Cooperative.

In the early 1990's membership was expanded to include Associate members.

In October 1996 libraries in Croswell, Deckerville, Lexington, Harbor Beach, Port Sanilac, and Ubyly joined the Cooperative. In 1999, the Cooperative moved its headquarters to 3210 Davenport Ave. to share a building with the Valley Library Consortium.

In 2003, Bay County, Saginaw, and Midland Public Libraries chose to leave WPLC and affiliated with another cooperative.

In 2007, ten public libraries in Clinton and Gratiot counties joined the White Pine Library Cooperative. (Clinton: St Johns; Dewitt; Elsie; Maple Rapids; Ovid and Gratiot: Alma; Ashley; Breckenridge; St Louis; and Ithaca)

In 2008, Pierre Marquette District Library, Clare; Chippewa River District Library, Mt. Pleasant; and Coleman Area Library, Coleman left White Pine Library Cooperative to join another library cooperative.

In 2011, Sherman Township formed the Sherman Township Library and joined the White Pine Library Cooperative.

In 2016, Dewitt Public Library left White Pine Library Cooperative to join another library cooperative.

In 2017, Houghton Lake Public Library joined White Pine Library Cooperative.

In 2019, Harrison District Library left White Pine Library Cooperative to join another library Cooperative.

In 2020, the VLC building was sold and White Pine Library Cooperative moved its headquarters, during the COVID-19 pandemic, to 429 N. State Street in Caro. A sort of coming home for the Thumb Area Division returning to the Thumb of Michigan 48 years after moving to Saginaw.

Directors

- Sue Hill, 1972-1993
- Tom Scott, 1994-1998
- Dave Simmons, 1999-2002
- Bryon Sitler, 2004-2019
- Kate Van Auken, 2019-present