One of the first Veteran Resource Centers in an Alabama public library is up and running at Albert L. Scott Library in Alabaster! For the past year, the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) has been working to further the reach of their services through public libraries. Veterans, especially in rural areas, cannot easily access information pertinent to their lives and well-being. Libraries are unrivaled at disseminating information and are therefore a natural partner in providing information related to employment, health care, and the services and assistance that veterans may be eligible to receive. The VA wants to target rural libraries willing to provide a small space to house the signs and materials. If you have already expressed interest, a representative from the VA should be in touch. If you would like to be added to the list, please email Stephanie Taylor at staylor@apls.state.al.us.

Abbeville Black History Month

During the month of February, Abbeville Memorial Library held a special exhibition to celebrate Black History Month. Ms. Willadean Hall kindly loaned the library some of her extensive collection of photographs remembering Henry County Training School. This school was opened in 1917 and for 53 years served as the principal educational center for black citizens of Henry County. Ms. Willadean Hall and Abbeville Public Library Director Paul McNamara can be seen below.
Huntsville News

The Huntsville-Madison County Public Library (HMCPL) is one of five public library systems in the nation selected for a pilot program that will address media literacy. The American Library Association (ALA) awarded HMCPL a grant to fund a series of media literacy programs through a pilot program called Media Literacy @ Your Library. The program trains library workers to help their adult patrons become better news consumers.

“This grant gives our library an opportunity to strengthen our programs for adult learners. The media’s landscape has changed so dramatically in the last few years, especially with the rise of social media usage,” said Jake Cornelius, the grant project director and manager of the Information and Business Center at the Downtown Huntsville Library. “Media literacy is an important skill and the programs we will offer through this grant will help the public better discern what is valid information.”

In this six-month learning and prototyping project, ALA and the Center for News Literacy work with teams from the five public libraries to adapt existing media literacy training materials to serve the needs of public librarians and the communities they serve. The HMCPL team traveled to Chicago as part of the training last fall.

HMCPL created a four-event series which will address various topics of media literacy through film, panel and group discussions. The highlight of these is a moderated panel discussion on March 7th with Alabama Media Group’s John Archibald and Anna Claire Vollers, to discuss how the media combats fake news.

For 12 years, the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library (HMCPL) has been bringing the community together and sparking conversations through its program, Madison County Reads. Madison County Reads is a community-wide reading initiative held every March and is complemented with themed programs and activities. The program encourages all residents of Madison County to read the same book. The library aims to foster community engagement by inviting people of diverse ages, backgrounds and viewpoints for discussion.

By true coincidence, Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein was published the same year that the HMCPL was formed in 1818. In celebration of both the book and the library’s bicentennials, the Madison County Reads committee selected “Frankenstein” as their book choice.

“Mary Shelley’s novel was the perfect choice for 2018, as we are both celebrating 200 years,” said Suzanne Flynn, the Madison County Reads chairperson. “More than just a musty old classic, this novel features a monster that speaks to the shared humanity in all of us.”

The kickoff event was held on March 3rd at 1:00 p.m. at the new Madison Library. The event featured a screening of the movie Frankenstein in the auditorium.

Munford Awarded Grant

Munford Public Library is proud to announce that they have received a grant for $15,000 with an additional challenge amount of $10,000 by providing a local match. The grant is from the Daniel Foundation of Alabama and will be used to expand the library facility. Congratulations, Munford!
Ashville Public Library recently hosted their 3rd Annual Father Daughter Dance. With about 180 in attendance, it is a fantastic fundraiser for their small library.