

## NRPL launches state computer center

New Rochelle Public Library's (NRPL) Public Computer Center was officially opened on Dec. 6 with a ceremony and ribbon cutting attended by Mayor Noam Bramson, and other dignitaries, patrons and invited guests.

The state grant for the Public Computer Center (PCC) has allowed the library to develop an extensive additional layer to NRPL's services, programs, facilities and technology, all designed to help patrons find and keep jobs. These enhancements were described in remarks by Tom Geoffino, library director, followed by comments from Greg Varian, president of the NRPL Board of Trustees, and Mayor Noam Bramson. Once the new computer area on the second floor was officially inaugurated with a ribbon-cutting, librarians conducted tours of the new BTOP Help Center, increased capabilities of the third floor Computer Lab, and a new Learning Lab in the library's lower level.

The NRPL is one of 35 libraries in New York State to receive funding to become a Public Computer Center and will be receiving \$244,000 over the next two years. This grant is made possible by the New York State Library, a unit of the Office of Cultural Education within the New York State Education Department, which was awarded \$9.5 million in a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration to expand computer access in public libraries across New York State. The funding is being provided through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP).

"The New Rochelle Public Library is proud to be one of the few New York libraries to receive this federal stimulus funding. The timing could not have been more ideal, as the



Library Director Tom Geoffino greets guests.

library has seen a steady rise in use – particularly those in need of services to help them through the difficult economic times," said Board President Varian. "Thanks to library director Tom Geoffino and his dedicated staff, the library has done a remarkable job in utilizing the grant to create critically-needed opportunities for our community, and they were able to do this in just two months."

Since receiving the funding, the library has added 20 additional computers with high speed, broadband service, and created the new two new computer areas and enhanced

a third. These computer areas are for the exclusive use of adult patrons who are looking for jobs or doing research, and allow for extended periods of use (up to two hours.)

A job search coach and a social services assistant have scheduled hours to provide one-on-one assistance, and have aided several dozen patrons in the four weeks the BTOP Help Center has been open.

Four computer assistants and librarians are also available to guide patrons requiring help in setting up email accounts, master basic computer skills, study for the GED and

employment tests on-line, and complete e-forms.

The library has increased its free computer training sessions from 9 sessions per month to 27 per month. Seven sessions are now offered in Spanish.

These services and programs are promoted through community-wide outreach efforts and a new monthly schedule and calendar devoted to the activities of the PCC-BTOP, which is available in the library's lobby or by clicking on the BTOP logo on the library's website, [www.nrpl.org](http://www.nrpl.org).