

Library earns state's top spot

Exactly 100 years after establishing itself locally as a disseminator of free information, Greenwich Library has been recognized as the foremost facility in towns of comparable size in Connecticut.

In rankings released last month, the second annual Hennen's American Public Library Rating Index ranked Greenwich Library the best library in Connecticut serving populations between 50,000 and 100,000 in 1999.

Considering diverse factors – including staff size, funding and circulation levels – Racine, Wis.-based Hennen's awarded the local library 835 out of a possible 1,000 points.

"It's something I'm extremely proud of," said Greenwich Library Director Mario Gonzalez, who, following stints at public libraries in Brooklyn, N.Y., and

Houston, assumed his new role on Sept. 20.

"It's a very exciting recognition," Gonzalez said Friday. "To know that in the entire state of Connecticut we're No. 1 ... it's an honor."

The index uses data provided by nearly 9,000 public libraries in the United States to create comparative rankings. The comparisons are in broad population categories, according to Hennen's. The index provides a comparative rating system that librarians, trustees and the public can use to improve and extend library services in the coming millennium.

The HAPLRI includes 15 factors. Chief among factors considered, Hennen's said, are circulation, staffing, materials, reference service and funding levels.

— *Cameron Martin*