

Scenic Regional Library Awarded Big Read Grant

■ To Present Free Programs, Book Discussions in Three Counties

Scenic Regional Library has been awarded a prestigious NEA Big Read grant.

NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in partnership with Arts Midwest.

The library is partnering with Washington Public Library, East Central College, East Central Area Literacy Council and the Scenic Regional Library Foundation on the grant.

The NEA awards only 78 Big Read grants to nonprofit organizations and public libraries throughout the entire country each year. The NEA Big Read grant is Scenic Regional Library's first federal grant and first communitywide read program.

The objective of the NEA Big Read is to get as many people as possible in a community to read and discuss the same book. The NEA provides a list of 32 books from which applicants for the grant can choose.

The library and its partners selected "Station Eleven" by Emily St. John Mandel. The 2014 novel takes place in the Great Lakes region after a flu pandemic has devastated the world, killing most of the population. It won the Arthur C. Clarke Award, given for the best science fiction novel, in 2015.

The \$15,000 grant will provide funds for a wide range of programming based on the themes of the book. During the six-week period between Sept. 24 and Nov. 5, the library and its partners will present 77 free programs and book discussions throughout the three-county area — Gasconade, Franklin and Warren.

The programming will culminate with a visit from "Station Eleven" author Emily St. John Mandel at the John Edson Anglin Performing Arts Center at East Central College Tuesday, Nov. 5. She will be interviewed by Mike Thomas, host of Livewire on KWRE 730 AM in Warrenton, followed by a book signing.

Scenic Regional Library's Friends of the Library groups in Union, St. Clair, Warrenton, Pacific and Owensville have agreed to purchase a total of 750 copies of the book for local high school English classes.

Eight public and private high schools in the three-county area have agreed to participate in the NEA Big Read by incorporating "Station Eleven" into the curriculum

of their senior English classes. The schools are Owensville High School, Pacific High School, St. Clair High, St. Francis Borgia Regional High School, Union High School, Warrenton High School, Washington High School and Wright City High School.

Scenic Regional Library will purchase an additional 1,000 paperback copies of "Station Eleven" for the high schools and public through Neighborhood Reads in Washington.

Free copies of the book will be available at the library's branches, Washington Public Library, and other locations beginning Sept. 3. E-book and e-audiobooks copies also will be available on the library's website.

East Central College Library will purchase copies for their students; East Central Area Literacy Council will purchase copies for East Central College's Adult Education & Literacy (AEL) students. Both organizations also will host book discussion groups.

All local media outlets in the library's three-county district have agreed to be sponsors for the library's NEA Big Read: *The Missourian*, *Warren County Record*, *Sullivan Independent News*, *New Haven Independent*, *Gasconade County Republican*, *Hermann Advertiser-Courier*, KWRE (730AM), KLPW (1220AM), and KTUI (1560AM).

Other sponsors include United Bank of Union, Bank of Washington, Bank of Franklin County and Neighborhood Reads.

The NEA Big Read planning committee was comprised of Steve Campbell, director of Scenic Regional Library; Megan Maurer, assistant director at Scenic Regional Library; Christy Schink, youth services librarian at Scenic Regional Library; Claire Miller, director of the Washington Public Library; Leigh Kolb, assistant professor of English and journalism at East Central College; Lisa Farrell, director of the East Central College Library; and Alice Whalen, director of Adult Education & Literacy at East Central College and president of the Scenic Regional Library Foundation.

For more information about the NEA Big Read, including details about getting a free copy of "Station Eleven," programming, and book discussion groups, visit www.scenicregional.org/bigread.

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