



SCENIC REGIONAL CLOSER TO WORK ON NEW HERMANN BRANCH LIBRARY

Ray Scherer

Work is about to commence on the renovation of the former Alco building into the new Scenic Regional branch library for Hermann.

That news was given last Thursday, Oct. 28, to the Gasconade County Commission. That update, as well as an annual report, were given by Scenic Regional director Steve Campbell.

Campbell told the commission that mold remediation in the Alco building, located in the Bavarian Hills Plaza, has been one of the ongoing projects. Construction of the new Hermann library, he added, is set to begin sometime in the next two weeks. The city's branch library is the final member of the Scenic Regional system

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to undergo renovations or reconstruction. The Hermann Area District Hospital will also be overseeing virtually simultaneous construction of a new medical clinic as a neighbor to the library in the same structure.

The new library will feature an art gallery and two patios, said Campbell. He said it's hoped the branch's construction will be complete by the end of May, the month when the institution's

furniture is due to arrive. Library officials are hopeful of staging an opening ceremony for May, with special activities that will be planned for a Saturday. Moving out of the current library at 601 Market St. is due to occur in May.

"Our general contractor said they'll be done by the end of April," he told the commission of the project. "The art gallery will hopefully be a tourism thing."

The library's annual report was also distributed to the commission.

"Our numbers are all down last year,"

Campbell said. "We're starting to rebound this year."

A self-checkout system was recently added to Hermann's library.

"It's an option for people," he said. "It frees our staff for other things."

All collections in the Scenic Regional system have been converted to a new RFID (radio frequency identification) network, permitting patrons to check out five items at once.

"We just launched that last week," said Campbell.

Installation of the system had been de-

layed for six to eight weeks due to a shortage of computer chips.

Also at the commission's meeting last week, Presiding Commissioner Larry Miskel said entity applications for American Rescue Plan Act funding have started to arrive at the courthouse. The applications are available on the Meramec Regional Planning Commission website, www.meramecregion.org. Gasconade County's ARPA allotment is \$1.4 million, with monies to be obligated by 2024 and spent by 2026.