

# Ashcroft visits Union library, awards grant

By Geoff Folsom  
folsomg@emissourian.com

Having visited Scenic Regional Library's Union branch for its September 2019 ribbon cutting, Missouri Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft said he enjoyed getting the chance to take a closer look at the building Tuesday.

Ashcroft's official reason for coming to Union was to present library district Director Steve Campbell with a \$30,000 check. The money, which comes from the federal CARES and American Rescue Plan acts, is intended to pay for e-books at Scenic Regional's nine branches, plus the Washington Public Library.

Ashcroft checked out the library's self-service coffee station. Campbell then took him to the patio, where Ash-

croft played on outdoor instruments like drums and a xylophone. They then returned inside and saw the areas for kids and teens.

Ashcroft, who oversees libraries along with elections in the state, said he tries to visit every county in Missouri at least once a year, with as many visits to libraries as possible.

"One of the neat things was to see the grand opening and come back a little later and see how it's working and how people are utilizing it," he said.

Libraries are a place where people from all walks of life come together, Ashcroft said, adding that if schools teach students to think critically, they can use the library the rest of their lives.

Ashcroft also saw the library's new mobile

kitchen, paid for with a \$12,000 grant from the Foundations for Franklin County, Campbell said. The kitchen is used by the library branches for cooking programs.

The library also recently received money to purchase two electronic self-checkout stations for the New Haven and Hermann branches, the only two that don't currently have them.

The visit to the Union library was one of two library visits Ashcroft made Tuesday. He also checked out a library in Jefferson County.

In the past year, the Missouri State Library, a division of the secretary of state's office, has awarded more than \$6 million in grants to libraries in the state that request funding, according to a news release.

Campbell said the



## Library help

Missouri Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft, right, stopped by the Scenic Regional Library Union Branch Tuesday, Aug. 24, to present a \$30,000 check for the purchase of e-books for Scenic Regional's nine branches, plus the Washington Public Library. Joining Ashcroft, from left, are Assistant Director Megan Maurer, branch manager Macee Jarvis, children's programmer Melody Hoag and Director Steve Campbell.

Missourian Photo/Geoff Folsom.

grant from Ashcroft's office will allow the library system to purchase e-books that are not metered, which means of times they can be checked out is unlimited.