

Book It

■ City Library Is Moving to Larger Home

By Keith E. Domke
St. Clair Missourian Editor

The St. Clair Scenic Regional Library soon will write another chapter in its history when it moves into a bigger, more open building that will offer additional elbow room for both its customers and employees.

And, the new location is only about a half a block from the current spot.

The St. Clair library, 570 S. Main St., will move its 36,000-plus collection to 515 E. Springfield Road sometime around the end of August or the beginning of September.

"This current building is chopped up. There's not much open space," Scenic Library System Director Ken Rohrbach told *The Missourian*. "This new location will be better in every way. It's bigger, open and has better accessibility.

"I just feel in this different location with the room we will have inside and the additional parking outside, this library should take off."

The new facility has 4,730 square feet of floor space which is about 48 percent larger than the current library's 3,199 square feet.

"We want to be more than just a book warehouse," Rohrbach said. "We want to provide an attractive environment for library users."

The present library is housed in the old city hall building which the city abandoned in the late 1980s. The new building is the old St. Clair post office.

"I guess we keep having an interest in old city buildings," Rohrbach said. "But this is an exciting move for us. I'm thrilled we can get St. Clair a bigger and better facility."

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A New Friend

Three-year-old Brent Light looks up at Martha, The Talking Dog, as he holds her hand at the St. Clair Scenic Regional Library recently. Martha made an appearance at the local library on Main Street after Christy Schink, children's librarian for the Scenic Library system, read "Martha, The Talking Dog" to youngsters in attendance. Author Susan Meddaugh has written a series of books about Martha, and the dog also stars in a show on the Public Broadcasting System. Also standing at left behind Martha is St. Clair librarian Karen Fogelbach. Missouriian Photo/Keith E. Domke.

St. Clair Library History Dates to 1951

The St. Clair Scenic Regional Library has a history that dates back to 1951.

According to information provided to *The Missourian* by Scenic Regional Library System Director Ken Rohrbach, here are some of the highlights:

• 1951 — The Evergreen Garden Club first begins to talk about sponsoring and maintaining a public library.

• 1952 — The first library opens its doors in January in the Earney-Junge building on South Main Street in the center of St. Clair. It features about 700 books, including two Bibles. Hours are 1 to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays and

Thursdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Three Evergreen Garden Club members — Mrs. Frank Evans, Mrs. Helen Osborn and Mrs. Fred Reed — are the regular volunteer librarians. Others fill in as needed.

• 1953 — The library moves to the John Dierking building on St. Clair Street behind the old R&R Hardware Store just off of Main Street.

• 1957 — The library moves into the new city hall facility after Garden Club members earlier helped campaign for a new city hall that would include a room for the library.

• 1958 — The St. Clair library becomes

part of the newly established Franklin County Library District.

• 1971 — When the city decides it needs the space, the library moves out of city hall and into the ground floor of the building next to the United Methodist Church on Main Street.

• 1989 — The library purchases the old city hall building from the city when a new city hall was built on Paul Parks Drive.

• 2011 — The St. Clair Scenic Regional Library purchases the old post office building and will relocate to that building at 515 E. Springfield Road in late summer.



St. Clair Scenic Regional Library Librarian Karen Fogelbach, left, and Scenic Library System Director Ken Rohrbach look over the construction work being done on the local library's soon-to-be new location at 515 E. Springfield Road. Missourian Photo.

LIBRARY

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"We're really looking to make it an attractive environment for everyone."

"I think it will be a big improvement," St. Clair librarian Karen Fogelbach said. "There will be a lot more space. Everyone I've talked to about it is all for it."

The new library will have a pair of reading areas — one for children and one for adults — complete with tables and chairs. In a new twist, a vending area will be added so customers can purchase snacks and drinks to enjoy while they are reading. Ten Internet stations also will be provided and will be located in the middle of the facility. The current library has six computer terminals.

"We're going to have some comfortable seating areas," Rohrbach said. "The juvenile area will have some interesting features —

chalkboard wall and book browser bins for easy reader books. ... It will be so much better to have this additional room. And we'll make good use of the extra room. Our goal is to leave it open."

Fogelbach's popular preschool story hour on Thursdays will take place in the children's reading area. The circulation desk will be located near the front entrance. The stacks will be spread out throughout the building.

"The collection will be displayed in an easily accessible fashion," Rohrbach said. "Our goal is to have a good-looking, interesting collection that will circulate.

"It will look nice, fresh, new and not as crowded."

Both Rohrbach and Fogelbach also are pleased the library will stay in the downtown area. They also are happy that the parking will increase from the cur-

rent four spaces to a whopping 21.

"The accessibility will be great," Rohrbach said. "Parking always has been a problem with this current building. We shouldn't have to worry about that anymore."

The parking will be located on the side and behind the new library. One handicap space will be included.

Rohrbach said there are no immediate plans to expand the local library's current collection, but he and Fogelbach will focus on making that collection a better mix of current and traditional selections.

"We want to keep things current, but also achieve a balance of newer and older items," Rohrbach said.

"We just think people really will enjoy it. We should be able to provide residents of the St. Clair area with a very pleasant library experience."