

New library branch manager checks in

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Although officials learned the previous branch manager would soon be leaving at the same time as millions of television viewers, Scenic Regional Library's Union branch was able to get a new person in charge fairly quickly.

Renny McBride took over as branch manager Monday in Union after moving from Scenic Regional's branch in Wright City, where she was branch manager since the library opened in 2018. She previously worked for a year at the library in O'Fallon, Illinois. She also worked at a library in Evansville, Indiana, where she focused on local history.

McBride, 39, earned her master's degree in library and information science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "When I went there, it was the No. 1 library school in the country," she said.

Previously, McBride received a bachelor's degree in history with a focus in Latin American studies from Illinois State University in her hometown of Normal.

A passion for history runs in McBride's family. "My dad was a history professor," she said. "I've always had that love of history."

Although she loved learning, McBride found the library a way to be involved in education without being a teacher. "I've always kind of joked that I didn't want to be a teacher and stand up in front of a classroom full

of kids," she said.

She found her home in the library, especially when she can provide information to people who need it.

"I've always loved reading and being able to help the patrons get what they need," McBride said.

Among the things McBride is proud of doing in Wright City is starting a counseling program with Side by Side Wellness for kids who get out of the nearby middle school early on Wednesdays, she said. Along with providing resources, the organized setting allowed students to social distance in a situation where the library was often "overrun" on Wednesdays.

She also was a member of the chamber of commerce board in Wright City and had just recently been voted president-elect of the local Kiwanis Club, positions she will have to give up, she said.

Although she will miss her staff in Wright City, McBride likes being in the larger library in Union, which puts her in the same building as library administration, she said.

"If there's a project they want to implement for the whole system, I think I might be a little more involved with that based on where I work," she said. "You could probably fit three Wright City branches in here. It's much larger than what I am used to, and I'm looking forward to working with the new staff."

As with most library employees, McBride loves to read. She likes to read "just about everything," but

she has recently been into "magic realism" books, which put magical elements into the real world.

"Also, I'm a dork for legal thrillers, like John Grisham," she said with a laugh.

McBride now looks forward to moving from her current home in O'Fallon closer to the Union library and lessening her commute.

With Union being Scenic Regional's largest branch, Library District Director Steve Campbell said the organization implemented a requirement that the branch manager there have a master's degree in library science.

"Renny was a good fit because she already had the degree, and she has experience working for us," he said. "So it was perfect."

Scenic Regional likes to hire people with experience in the district because they know how to use its computer system, Campbell said.

Previous Union Branch Manager Macee Jarvis sent her notice by text message Sept. 13, the night the world learned her fiancé, Trenton Garvey, had won season 20 of the FOX cooking show "Hell's Kitchen" and would soon be moving to Las Vegas, Campbell said. Jarvis, who was named branch manager last year and had been with the library since 2012, remained in her position until mid-October.

Library officials were among those who had no idea whether Garvey won the competition, which was filmed in 2019, Campbell said. The results were kept secret for two years, as was the fact that Garvey proposed to Jarvis on the show after being named the winner.



Library time

The new manager for the Union branch of Scenic Regional Library, Renny McBride, stands in the library Monday, her first day on the job. She was previously manager at the library's Wright City branch. Missouriian Photo/Geoff Folsom.