

LIBRARIES

CONTINUED FROM 1A

collection development policy and an established legal framework for what the public, including children, has a right to read."

At its June meeting, the Washington Library Board of Trustees approved updated library policies to conform with Ashcroft's directives. At the time, Appell said those updates were merely tweaking library rules already in place. But there was one rule that proved to be a big-ger obstacle.

"The library has or will adopt a written, publicly-accessible policy allowing a minor's parent or guardian to determine what materials and access will be available to that minor, and no person employed by or acting on behalf of the library shall knowingly grant access to a minor to any material in any form not approved by that minor's parent or guardian."

While this rule was meant to keep "inappropriate" materials away from minors, both Appell and Campbell said it would be impossible to police, as the library has a self-checkout, as well as online materials, which anyone with a library card can access.

"Frankly, no one knows the best way to comply with this and meet the rule requirements," Campbell told *The Missourian*.

During the Washington Library Board of Trustees meeting on Monday, Appell announced the library would need to "expire" all juveniles' library cards on July 31 in order to comply with this rule. Library access will be reinstated when the parent or legal guardian reads and signs the policy on what their child can access.

Appell said Campbell

at Scenic Regional Library has decided "expiring" minors' library cards seems to be the only solution and following Scenic Regional's lead will be the easiest transition for all library patrons in the area.

"I don't see any way to practically do this without following along with them or we're going to have two different sets of rules in a seamless system," Appell said.

Both Appell and Campbell said they were advised by legal counsel that "expiring" minors' cards is the safest way to comply.

"We were kind of hoping Kansas City and St. Louis libraries could offer us some great guidance on it, but they are also a little bit flummoxed," Appell said.

Campbell said other libraries such as Cass County Library and Jefferson County Library have decided to "expire" juveniles' cards as well.

"We were hoping we could find another option," Campbell said, "because the parents will have to come in with their minor and sign the card, and we're afraid some of the minor's parents won't want to make that trip, so the child will lose their card, which would be unfortunate. But we feel like in order to comply with the rule, we really have no choice but to do this."

Previously, the consent on the library cards for minors only had to do with financial issues, stating that if a library material is lost or damaged, the parent or guardian is responsible for its replacement.

This Friday, Campbell said he will email library patrons with information about the consent change. Part of the email will state:

"The new consent language acknowledges that the parent (or legal guardian) understands that the library cannot control or monitor a minor's access to the library's collections, including the Internet. A parent (or legal guardian) who is uncomfortable being solely responsible for monitoring what their minor accesses at the library (including online) are advised to not renew their minor's library card."

"I think there will be some people that are unhappy about it," Campbell said, "some parents that have to come in and sign for their kids' cards, but I would direct them to the Secretary of State's office if they want to lodge a complaint. We have no control over it."

Campbell said that despite the uncertainty of this process, Appell has been a great partner and has made it easier to work through.

Libraries to expire kids' cards

Signature required under new rule

By Antjea Wolff
 wolffa@emissourian.com

Washington Public Library will "expire" minors' library cards on July 31 to comply with a new state rule.

For the past two months, Washington Public Library Director Nelson Appell and Scenic Regional Library Director Steve Campbell have been working together to find solutions on how to navigate some of the new rules enacted by Missouri Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft that went into effect May 30. Failure to comply with these rules could result in the libraries losing their state funding, and libraries across the state were given until July 31 to ensure all policy changes were in place for compliance with the rules.

"When you go through the new proposed rules, this is stuff we've already been doing," Appell said in June. "We have an established

"I don't see any way to practically do this without following along with them or we're going to have two different sets of rules in a seamless system."

Nelson Appell

Washington Public Library
 Director

• See Libraries Page 3A