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The Missourian

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Scenic Regional Library Serves Area



The headquarters for the Scenic Regional Library is located in Union on Highway 50. This facility opened for use last March. The Scenic Regional Library also has branch locations in Franklin, Warren and Gasconade counties.

Staff Photos.

In the past people who lived in the rural areas quite often did not have access to a library. That left them without the opportunity to read good books.

This was the situation when the State of Missouri, at the request of people in the community, set up a demonstration library in the city hall at Union in 1957.

The purpose of the demonstration library was to show what county-wide library service could mean to Gasconade, Warren and Franklin counties, according to Sallie Hancox, director of the Scenic Regional Library.

After about a year, people in Franklin county voted on whether to establish a library district in those areas that did not have a tax-supported library. People in Washington, Sullivan and Pacific did not vote since they already had library districts.

People in Franklin county approved the district with a ten-cent levy. A year later, the other two counties followed suit. They too, approved a ten-cent levy. The cities of Hermann and Warrenton did not vote because they had tax-supported libraries.

The Scenic Regional Library district was formed in May, 1959, to provide library service to the three counties. By being a larger unit, a cost savings was involved.

Later the Pacific library merged with the district as did those in Warrenton and Hermann. Today the Scenic Regional Library serves all of Gasconade, Warren and Franklin counties excepting Washington and Sullivan.

Today Warren county has a five-cent levy, Franklin has a seven-cent levy and Gasconade has a nine-cent levy.

Although several communities, including Union, St. Clair, New Haven and Owensville, had local libraries founded by community groups, there were still many gaps in rural service before the estab-

lishment of the Scenic Regional Library.

The Scenic Regional Library used a bookmobile to reach rural communities and schools. That service continues today.

In the early days the bookmobile was important to many of the rural schools. They did not have the libraries they have today.

Now, however, the bookmobile supplements the school libraries, but they "do not depend on the bookmobile like they used to," she noted.

Union has always been the Scenic Regional Library's headquarters because it is centrally located. It serves as a base for business activities and it is the location out of which everything comes. It has a larger reference collection as well.

Branch libraries are located in Warrenton, Hermann, Owensville, New Haven, Pacific, St. Clair and Union. Each branch's collection ranges from 13,000 to 18,000 books. Most are storefront libraries, except for St. Clair's which is located in the former city hall and New Haven's which is housed in the former Trinity Lutheran Church building.

When school is in session, the bookmobile has 59 stops, the majority of which are at schools. The library continues to work closely with the schools because the children wouldn't be home when the bookmobile came to the community.

During the summer months, the bookmobile makes 35 stops, all in the community. Some stops are made only in the summer.

The bookmobile makes a visit to each stop roughly every three weeks.

A district with several branches and a bookmobile, such as the Scenic Regional Library, has what is called a "revolving collection." Books are moved back and forth between facilities. Books can also be requested.

Because the books are scattered among several sites and the bookmobile, running an operation such as this is more

difficult than a standard library. Action must be taken to determine where books are.

This is a time-consuming process, particularly since the library's card catalog is not yet computerized.

Ken Rohrbach serves as branch coordinator and assistant director. In that position, he travels to the branches to see where books are.

~~He tracks down books that~~ have been requested. The library averages 635 requests each month, not counting those on a new booklist. People often wonder why it takes so long to process a request, but because the system is complicated, it does take time.

Hancox feels that people are very aware of books. Books are discussed on radio and television talk shows and are reviewed in publications such as the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Time and Newsweek.

Not every request can be filled. When people request older books, the books may no longer be in print. It may be possible, however, to get the book through interlibrary loan.

Although the library is open to suggestions, it does not buy every book that is suggested. That is not always possible.

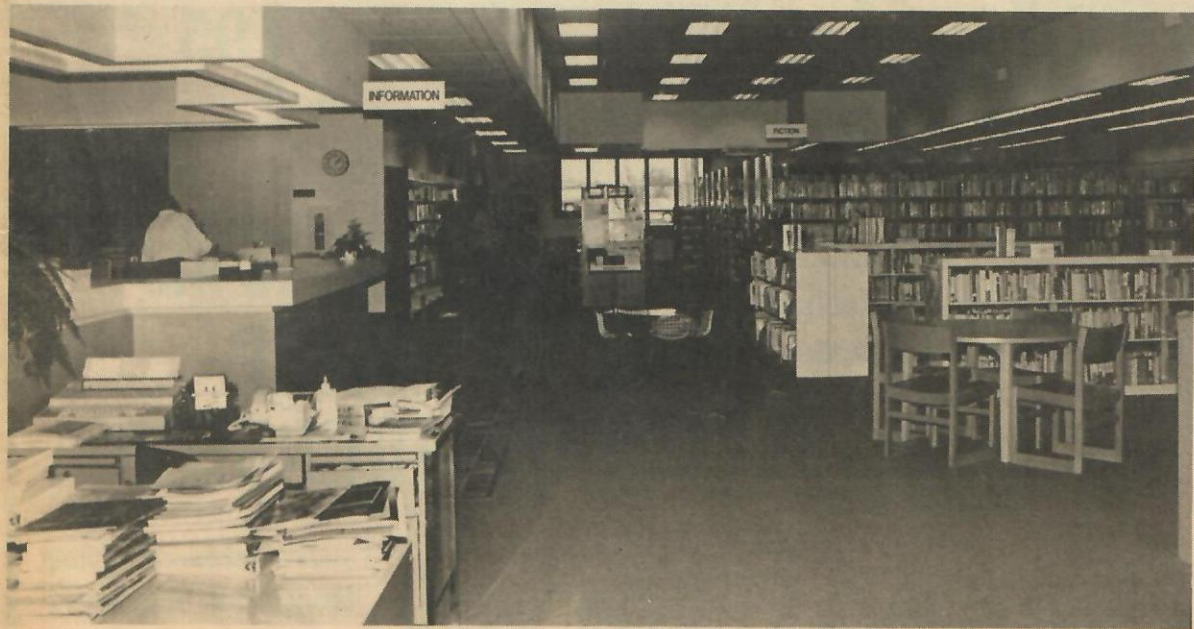
In the past interlibrary loan was free to all library users in Missouri. Now each library has access to only 100 free transactions. After that someone will have to pick up the cost. That free loan policy will have to be evaluated by many libraries, Hancox stressed.

Other Services

In addition to offering the usual service of lending books, the Scenic Regional Library



Sallie Hancox, director of the Scenic Regional Library, in front, helps a patron find the book she needs.



The new Scenic Regional Library facility at Union has 10,696 square feet with seating for 55. The facility is more spacious than the old one, making it easier for patrons to use.

has a number of other services.

More and more people are looking for information. They may be able to find what they are looking for in the reference collection. The large collection is housed at the Union location.

Carolyn Scheer is reference librarian.

Some of the reference books on business include "Sorkins

swers to simple questions.

Books on cassette have become "very, very popular" in the last three years, she said.

These are abridgements of the original publication, but are very popular with travelers, commuters and people who are doing other things at the same time as they listen to the tapes.

The library also loans videos. It usually has subject

local communities, the library purchases those books.

The library has been working on obtaining copies of area newspapers on microfilm as well. There is usually about a two-year lag time between when a paper is published and when it is placed on microfilm.

Census records are also available on microfilm. The 1920 census will be released this year. The government waits 70 years before releasing census information.

The Scenic Regional Library can and does borrow microfilm for other parts of the country from the Mid-Continent Library in Independence. At this time there is no cost. Interested people must, however, go through the Scenic Regional Library for these materials.

The library is involved with the Internal Revenue Service as a tax help site. Someone from the IRS is available at the Union location every other Saturday.

Call the library for more details for this or any other programs at 583-3224.

The Scenic Regional Library district was formed in May, 1959, to provide library service to Franklin, Gasconade and Warren counties.

Guide to St. Louis Businesses," "Missouri Business Directory," "Thomas Register" and "Standard and Poor's Corporation Records."

Hancox encourages patrons to call the library and ask questions. Having librarians look up things is a "legitimate use of the library." There are many types of information that can be provided over the telephone, particularly an-

matter different from the video stores. Topics include children, travel, instructional, historical and informational. Many first aired on PBS.

The staff tries to have as much local history as possible available.

It has a genealogy section. Hancox said the staff would love to have copies of people's genealogies to keep on hand.

As books come out about the

New Headquarters 'Meant to Be'

New Headquarters 'Meant to Be'

It seems as though the new Scenic Regional Library headquarters off Highway 50 in Union was just "meant to be."

At least that's the way library director Sallie Hancox feels.

Since 1960 the library had been located on Washington avenue in Union in a former roller-skating rink and dance hall.

It was small. It was crowded. It really wasn't inviting. It was difficult to use some of the materials due to the cramped space.

A series of events which led to the new library began in 1986. That year it was learned that Meta Vossbrink, a former resident, had died and left a fourth of her estate to the library. At that time the actual amount the library would receive was unknown, Hancox explained.

In December of that same year, Oliver and Corinne Taetz approached the library to offer it a gift of 1.3 acres, just off Highway 50. The land was formerly their "beautiful" flower garden.

By 1988 the Vossbrink estate had been settled and the library received \$491,000 from it.

Because the library had the land and the bequest, it was decided to pursue a new facility. The library applied for a Library Services and Construction Act Title II grant.

Hancox feels very fortunate in the results of that pursuit. That year the state had \$380,000 to grant to libraries. It received nine applications.

Not only did the library receive one of the grants, it received a substantial amount—\$298,000.

"There were times it really didn't seem real. As things fell into place, it was meant to be," she said.

The library opened to the public March 18, 1991.

The total cost of the library, including construction, design, landscaping and furniture was \$828,310.

The building was designed by Washington Engineering and Architecture and Robert Horn, along with Randall Pierce.

The new facility has 10,696 square feet with seating for 55 compared to 3,969 square feet and seating for 24 in tight quarters.

The new facility has a typing room and a meeting room. The library has been able to use the meeting room for its programs. Community groups have used it as well.

The response to the new library "has been excellent."

The 1991 circulation was up 18 per cent from 1990. From March through July the library issued 806 new cards. After that the staff stopped keeping track of new patrons.

Hancox feels the new facil-

ity is more accessible and more visible to the public. She believes that people have different expectations from the library now than what they did before, although basically the same services are offered.

"People didn't look at it (the old facility) as a place that wouldn't have what they wanted," she explained. "People hesitated to come. When they did they were pleasantly surprised."

The staff sees more men and more families using the facility.

She is happy to see more families with the push to make people realize how important it is to read.

Hancox feels there has been greater use of reference materials because the materials are much more accessible than they had been.

It is also easier to browse, as well as sit down and read.

The library is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays and until 8 p.m. Wednesday nights. It is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.

People from all over the library district have come to use the new Union facility. People today tend to travel between communities more than they did in the past. Distances do not mean what they once did.

"It's been very rewarding and satisfying to see the way people have taken to the building," Hancox said.