

In-person visits top 368,000 at Scenic Regional branches

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It was another busy year for the folks at the branches of Scenic Regional Library District as more than a third of million people made in-person visits, according to figures presented by District Executive Director Steve Campbell in his annual report Thursday morning to the Gasconade County Commission.

Making a stop at one of the district's nine branches were 368,401 people. Adding to the number of visitors were 150,959 who contacted the library's website. Scenic's outreach program connected with 21,589 more people, the annual report noted.

One of the local branch's features growing in popularity is the Art Gallery at the Hermann library.

"It's been tremendously popular," Campbell said, pointing out that the gallery is financially independent from the library district, relying on funds it raises on its own.

The number of items checked out at the library during the last fiscal year (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) through the self-checkout stations totaled 116,792. That accounted for slightly more than one-fourth of all checkouts at the library branches during the last fiscal year.

Another popular feature of the branches — the Hermann branch is the district's newest location — are the meeting rooms. Campbell pointed out that the rooms are used by a variety of organizations holding events such as blood drives, civic meetings and so forth. Indeed, the meeting room at the Hermann branch recently was the sight of the day-long initial session in the effort to update Hermann's Comprehensive Plan. About 30 people were gathered in the room for that event.

Campbell said the library has taken a tentative move into an unusual service for a library — serving as a site for the dispensing of NARCAN, which is used to resuscitate someone experiencing a drug overdose. NARCAN has become the leading first step in the battle against overdoses involving opioid-based medications. But one local official isn't convinced that making NARCAN available through a public library is the best way to do.

After Campbell explained that the library district agreed to provide a NARCAN-dispensing device outside the St. Clair branch, a move that the district executive director said resulted in no negative impacts, Presiding Commissioner Tim Schulte, R-Hermann, said he was reluctant to have a library branch be a location for obtaining the treatment.

"It's all about safety," Schulte said.

Campbell said that concern was voiced by community members before the dispensing device was placed outside the St. Clair branch. But, he said, none of the concerns voiced have been seen. Whether the service is extended to other branches is unclear, Campbell said.

The district executive pointed with pride to the final page of the annual report — the document showing the value delivered for the dollars to the residents of Scenic Regional Library District. The total service value during last fiscal year shows that for every \$1 in revenue, the district provided \$3.24 in services — another reason that Campbell continues to draw strong support from officials in the three counties served by Scenic Regional.

Meanwhile, in other matters taken up at last week's session of

include

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ing considered for the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's largest cowbell. The steel bell, located on property owned by the Zumwalt's along Highway 28, was constructed and installed with the help of co-creators at Heintz Welding. The bell is 12 feet across and eight feet deep, with a 350-pound crane ball as the clapper.

Inspired by this, Baker thought Owensville needed some notoriety and came up with the idea for the world's largest horseshoe. The current Guinness World Record Horseshoe, built by the Equestrian Team of Dubai, is made of 1,971 horseshoes and measures 11 feet 10 inches tall by 9 feet 2.5 inches wide. The Owensville horseshoe measures 13 feet tall, 10 feet and nine inches wide and boasts 2,468 shoes.

Baker proposed the idea to Chamber of Commerce President

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