

Scenic Regional Library survey shows high public satisfaction, little interest in Sunday hours

Scenic Regional Library officials say patrons of the tax-supported district were “overwhelmingly” supportive of services and programs in the eighth-largest library system in Missouri.

Scenic Regional serves a population of 141,000 residents with nine branches in Franklin, Warren, and Gasconade counties, as well as the Sullivan portion of Crawford County. Library administration modeled on other library surveys from across the country, according to a release issued this week.

The library contracted with Missouriian Publishing, Co., for printing and mailing of the survey sent out July 22 to 10,800 random residents of the district. Respondents had an option of completing the survey online, or completing and mailing back the paper copy.

The survey asked two dozen questions covering aspects of the library including program offerings, services, hours, customer service, new materials, website, and newsletter. The results were overwhelmingly positive.

Library officials said they place a strong emphasis on customer service, which was reflected in the results, including:

- 91.8 percent of respondents strongly agreed (72.4 percent) or agreed (19.4 percent) with the statement “library staff is helpful.”
- 91.8 percent of respondents strongly agreed (70.7 percent) or agreed (21.1 percent) with the statement “library staff is friendly.”
- 94.7 percent of respondents strongly agreed (68 percent) or agreed (26.7 percent) with the statement “I would recommend the library to friends and family.”

The survey was the first conducted since the library’s historic 2014 tax increase — the first in 55 years. Over the past six years, the library dramatically expanded services, as well as replaced, or expanded and renovated, its branches as part of a \$22 million building project.

An overwhelming 94.8 percent of respondents strongly agreed (74.2 percent) or agreed (20.6 percent) with the statement “I consider the library a good use of taxpayer money.”

The library already offers thousands of free adult, teen, and children’s programs every year. However, the survey results provide branch programmers with valuable information about the types of programs the public would like.

According to the results, the public would like to see the library offer more programs about local history (37.8 percent), gardening/hobbies (32.4 percent), crafts/fine art (31.8 percent), and computer skills/technology (29 percent). Since mid-March, the library has only offered virtual programming on the branch Facebook pages and the system’s new YouTube channel due to coronavirus.

Last year, the library administration discussed the possibility of offering Sunday afternoon hours at some branches. The Washington Library is open on Sunday afternoon and experiences good traffic during that time period. However, 67 percent of survey respondents were content with Scenic Regional Library’s current hours, which were expanded in 2015.

Only 15 percent of respondents said that they would like to see the library offer Sunday hours. As a result, the library most likely will not change their service hours at this time.

The library administration, which continues to analyze the results, believes that the information will be very helpful to guide future program offerings, publicity, and other services. The library intends to conduct the survey every two or three years.