Library district reports major increases in services, items checked out across system

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HERMANN — Gasconade County Commissioners on Oct. 17 lauded the efforts of Scenic Regional Library officials to boost use of the district's nine branches — efforts that are supported by increasingly impressive numbers.

In presenting the district's annual report to the Commission, Scenic Executive Director Steven Campbell noted the number of adults taking part in the programs offered at the various branches has increased 15 percent in the last four years.

Major increases have been posted in the past year in the number of print products and electronic products being checked out at the branches: 566,368 of printed items in 2018-19, an 18-percent increase from 2017-18; and 130,582 items from other facilities. Fishing pole are also available for borrowing.

Library district officials attributed the increase in use of the library to a number of factors, including the addition of more branches, increased programming, and the introduction of new technology.

The district's annual report contained some surprises for the commissioners:

• Some non-traditional library items are available for checkout, including telescopes, fishing poles and patio umbrellas.

• Staff at all nine branches have been trained in process passports.

• The number of people using the library is up 18 percent from the previous year.

• The district has 46 staff members, up from 38 the previous year.

The district is governed by a 13-member board — four members each from Gasconade, Franklin and Warren counties and one member from Crawford County. Crawford County was allotted a seat on the board when the district took in West Sullivan, which lies in Crawford County.