

the contractor, Wright Construction, and architect, JEMA, for their work.

Campbell said he hopes the public uses the new facility. He said the seven other new branches saw an increase in attendance after they opened and he hoped Union follows suit.

Franklin County Presiding Commissioner Tim Brinker also spoke at the ceremony.

"What a great day for Franklin County, the city of Union and the great state of Missouri," he said.

Brinker talked about how fitting it was that the library opened during the county's bicentennial. He said this year has been about reflecting how far the county has come and the new library is a shining symbol of progress.

Missouri State Librarian Robin Westphal also addressed the crowd. She praised the new facility and talked about the many ways it can be used. Westphal said she was jealous of the kids who get to play with the Legos and the teens who get to lounge on the comfortable furniture. She said she'd like nothing better than to

sit down and read the newspaper in the adult lounge.

Westphal encouraged everyone to get their library card and use the facility regularly.

The final speaker was Missouri Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft. His office oversees the state libraries. Campbell said he thinks Ashcroft is the first statewide official to visit the library's headquarters.

Ashcroft also said he was impressed by the new facility.

"When you have a library like this, anybody whosoever walks through those doors — regardless of age, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background — can learn what they need to learn to be the best they can be," he said. "That only happens because of every one of you."

Ashcroft said the library is a place that brings the community together. He called it the new town square for the city.

Meeting Rooms

The ceremony closed with a nod to the library's past. Campbell introduced his predecessors as library director — Sallie Hancox and Ken Rohrbach — who were in attendance.

Campbell also spoke about the original library director, the late Lucy Lomax. After calling her the mother of the library, Campbell said one of the three meeting rooms at the facility would be named in Lomax's honor. A photo detailing her life will be hung near the room.

Campbell surprised Hancox and Rohrbach by announcing the other two meeting rooms would be named after them. He presented them both with pho-

tos that also will be hung in the rooms.

Campbell pointed out Hancox hosts a regular meeting of the library's book club. The group met in the sole meeting room at the old branch, but from now on will meet in the Sallie Hancox Meeting Room.

New Library

The new branch, located at 251 Union Plaza Drive near Pasta House and off Independence Drive, is approximately 23,000 square feet — 17,200 square feet for the Union branch and 5,800 square feet for the administrative offices and bookmobile.

The old Union library was just 7,000 square feet.

The facility has three new meeting rooms — triple the space of the old library. Each room has a number of features like projection screens and outlets.

The children's area features games and activities for kids. Campbell said the idea was to give young kids a free place to play indoors. The area has a giant touchscreen tablet, LEGO tables, magnet walls and other activities. The library also has sections for teens and adults.

Seating is spread throughout the library. Some areas are "pods" meant to provide privacy for working people. Others are meant to relax.

Each seat has a power hookup near it so people can charge their devices. Additionally, the facility has three outdoor patios with seating, drive-up book drop, three study rooms and other amenities.

Construction on the library started in the summer of 2018.



Library Directors Honored

The new Scenic Regional Library Union branch has three dedicated meeting rooms. At the grand opening ceremony Saturday, Sept. 14, Library Director Steve Campbell, left, announced all three rooms would be named after his predecessors. The rooms are now named after the late Lucy Lomax, Sallie Hancox, center, and Ken Rohrbach, right.

Missourian Photo/Joe Barker.