

Library Grand Opening Set For Saturday

By Joe Barker
Union Missourian Editor

Sixteen months after the groundbreaking ceremony, Scenic Regional Library is set to celebrate the grand opening of the new Union branch.

The library plans to celebrate the construction with a ceremony this Saturday, Sept. 14, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The event comes just days after the 16-month anniversary of the groundbreaking. The library invited the

public May 12, 2018, to an empty field just north of Pasta House off Independence Drive to kick off the new library project. Work had yet to begin, but Scenic Regional Library Director Steve Campbell shared the plans for the new branch.

The new building would be more than double the size of the old branch, he said, and here would be space for administrative offices and other activities.

Over the next few months work began. The site was • See Library Page 20

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cleared and graded and the building started to take shape.

The library celebrated its soft opening Aug. 22, but Saturday will be the official grand opening event. The event will feature a bounce house, face painting, balloon artist, music and free hot dogs, popcorn, chips and soda.

There will be a dedication ceremony at 11:30 a.m. featuring guest speakers Missouri Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft, Missouri State Librarian Robin Westphal and Franklin County Presiding Commissioner Tim Brinker.

The Union Area Chamber of Commerce also will hold a ribbon-cutting at the library.

New Library

The new branch, located at 251 Union Plaza Drive

near Pasta House and off Independence Drive, is massive compared to the previous branch. The new building 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. It was closed Aug. 9 to facilitate the move. The old building is currently for sale.

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 rooms are split by dividers meaning the three rooms can become two or one with ease. Campbell said the way the building is set up, the actual building and administration offices can be locked down at night, but the meeting rooms can be made accessible.

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.

Near the children's area is the teen section. Campbell said the colors of the section, red and black, are meant to invoke Union High School. The area features books geared for teens, laptop tables and comfortable seating.

In the back of the library is the adult lounge. The area has a fireplace, seating and a coffee machine. For \$1 pa-

trons can purchase a cup, Campbell said.

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. Campbell said the front desk has phone chargers available to check out.

Additionally, the facility has three outdoor patios with seating, drive-up book drop, three study rooms and other amenities.

A self-check system will be installed at the branch in mid-September.

Ashcroft announced last week that the Scenic Regional Library has been awarded a \$6,238 Edge Action Plan Grant. The grant will be used to add a self-checkout station at the new Union branch of Scenic Regional Library to provide faster and independent access to the library's circulation; reader advisory and online registration services.

The Union location is the library's eighth new facility to be completed in the three-county area in the past 18 months.

In addition to the bigger space inside, the library has 106 parking spaces, more than double at the current building.

Total costs were estimated between \$6 million to \$6.5 million. The project was made possible by the library's first-ever voter-approved tax increase in 2014.

Construction on the library started in the summer of 2018.

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Wednesday Missourian: Real Estate Ads — 2 p.m. Thursday; Auction, Farm, Garage Sales, all other Display Ads, Classified Line and Classified Display Ads 4 p.m. Monday; Preprinted Supplements 8 a.m. Wednesday; Ads with proof required — 2 p.m. Monday; Legals — 4 p.m. Monday.

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