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# OPINION

## EDITORIALS

### Scenic Regional delivers

In 2014, voters in a three-county area were asked to consider a 10-cent property tax levy to benefit the Scenic Regional Library system.

Scenic Regional officials made the case that if the levy was approved, they could transform one of the most poorly funded library systems in the state into one that was remarkable — a library system truly representative of the communities it serves.

They promised to replace, remodel or expand all of the facilities in the system. They promised to double the system's material budget, provide longer service hours, increase outreach services and offer better-quality programming for children, adults and teens at all of their branches.

Steve Campbell, system director, said if the tax passed, the public would finally have libraries with enough parking, plenty of comfortable seating, space for significantly more materials, and public meeting rooms for community organizations. The facilities would be handicapped accessible and have enough space to accommodate class visits from local schools, and big turnouts for programs and events.

The tax passed in all three counties. Then something happened that doesn't always happen following a tax increase — the library system delivered on its promises. It did all of the things it said it would do with the new money. And the results are impressive, if not remarkable just as promised.

Flash forward a few years from the tax vote and the library system is flourishing. Like the line in the movie, "If you build it, they will come," patrons are coming in

droves to take advantage of all the services and amenities the library provides.

Campbell presented the library's 2018-19 annual report to county officials last week. In every critical category the system tracks — library visits, print circulation, E-circulation, adult programming, youth programming, adult outreach and more — the system posted increases.

The library system unveiled four new, expanded buildings in Sullivan, St. Clair, Pacific and Warrenton in 2018 alone. Last month the grand opening for the new 23,000-square-foot Union library and system headquarters was held, making it the system's eighth new facility in the past 18 months. All of the new facilities are garnering positive reviews.

Campbell and the rest of his team have done an exceptional job as stewards of the taxpayers' money. If you don't believe us, check out one of the system's new and improved libraries for yourself. Others are, in record numbers. You will be impressed.

Scenic Regional's expansion is part of a worldwide resurgence in libraries. Many believed the advent of the internet would render libraries obsolete. But libraries have adapted and, in many ways, reinvented themselves by embracing technology and offering new essential services to help people and communities thrive.

Americans have always valued public libraries as institutions that enrich their communities. We applaud Scenic Regional for delivering on its promises and making the libraries in its system indispensable pillars of the communities they serve.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### SCC ready to Warren C

To The Editor:

St. Charles Community College was thrilled to add Warren County to its extended service area 18 months ago. Soon after, we got the call from Warren County leadership to bring technical training into their county. The SCC Board of Trustees answered that call when they placed Prop J on the November 2019 ballot in Warren County R-III and Wright City

requested by local residents and emerging industries. For the owner of a home (the average Warren County home value equates to 98 cents or \$4.25 a month.

The SCC Board resolution affirming property taxes raised in Warren County will be on the Warren County, s taxpayers vote in Prop J on Nov. 5.