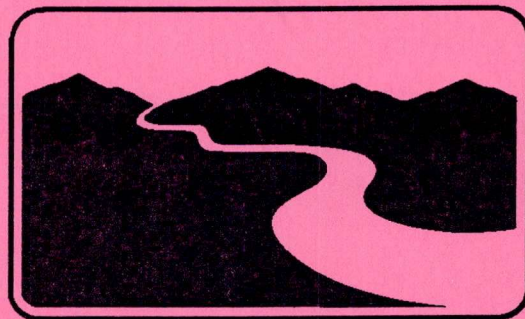


RIVER BLUFFS REGIONAL LIBRARY



SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT

1994 - 1995

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INTRODUCTION

The River Bluffs Regional Library, the cooperative service of the St. Joseph Public Library and of the Rolling Hills Consolidated Library, provides materials and services to meet the informational and recreational needs of the citizens of Andrew and Buchanan Counties.

In carrying out this mission, emphasis on a systemwide basis is placed on the roles of popular materials library, children's door to learning, and reference library. Each of the five facilities of the system assumes these roles to varying degrees.

A popular materials library features current, high-demand, high-interest materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages.

In its role as a children's door to learning, the River Bluffs Regional Library places a high priority on encouraging children and young adults to develop an interest in reading and learning through materials and services directed both to them and to their caregivers and educators.

As a reference library the system actively provides timely, accurate, and useful information for users.

Throughout the year the Board of Trustees receives detailed reports on the progress being made in meeting the library's goals in the context of commitment to these three roles. What follows are highlights from those reports which give an overview of the most important accomplishments and trends which have occurred between July 1, 1994 and June 30, 1995.

PUBLIC SERVICES

The library goal for public services is to develop and implement a program of services to meet informational and recreational needs.

For the last several years the catalog of the library's collection has been provided electronically through an automated integrated system. In the last year improvements have been made in the printed instructions for the use of these public access catalogs, or PACs, as they are commonly called.

Work also has continued on improving the speed of ordering new materials for the collection and making them available to the public.

An important development occurred when the Board of Trustees voted in July of 1994 to approve an application to participate in the Electronic Access Pilot Project. In the early fall word was received of the selection of the River Bluffs Regional Library as a participant in this effort to establish telecommunications links between higher education, elementary and high schools, public libraries, and State agencies. Project goals have included extending the information superhighway to the local community level in Missouri by

providing access to public service, civic projects, community information, and reference services by way of an Internet connection.

Similarly, as a depository for federal documents, in the early spring of 1995 the River Bluffs Regional Library acquired a new resource, "GPO (Government Printing Office) Access." This is the U.S. Government's wide area information server, a computer searching system accessible through the Internet. Free subscriptions are available to all of the GPO access databases, including on-line versions of the Congressional Record, the Federal Register, the U.S. Code, and recent Congressional bills. One work station was registered for this service, and staff quickly began exploring some of the advance searching features and up-to-date information available.

There were other efforts to make resources accessible. Staff color-coded literacy materials by reading level, an activity suggested by tutors who use this collection. In another area, in a continuing effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, three hand-held magnifiers to assist patrons with vision impairments were purchased for circulation.

The summer reading program continues to be an integral part of how the library carries out its role as a children's door to learning. The final count of enrollees in the 1994 program was 2,613, approximately 300 children more than the highest enrollment year of 1992. Of those 1,611 finished the program and received a paperback book donated by the Friends of the River Bluffs Regional Library.

In other efforts to promote reading in this age group children were targeted with activities surrounding September, 1994 as Library Card Sign-Up Month.

During Children's Book Week in November of 1994 a number of activities occurred. The library's youth services specialist accompanied Jim Wallen to the Webster and Neely Schools to entertain children in the fourth through sixth grades and visited the Edison School with storyteller Steve Otto for presentations to youngsters in kindergarten through the third grade. Mr. Wallen and Mr. Otto gave two sessions in an introduction to storytelling workshop, sponsored by the Friends. At the Belt Branch a special session of Native American folktales was given. Downtown, Kathleen Kingsley, artist in residence at the St. Joseph School District, presented a movement workshop. A special storytime also was given there featuring children's favorite stories and a button-making day where children visiting the library could make a Children's Book Week "Super Reader" button.

As usual, National Library Week of 1995 was a time for special events. Central Library staff employed the theme "Books Make You Bloom," creating bookmarks with a sunflower design and labels for packets of sunflower seeds donated by Research Seeds for distribution to patrons. At Savannah staff conducted a daily drawing to give away prizes and magnets, and the branch manager furnished her world-famous cookies to library users as well. Children at the Washington Park Branch colored pages to decorate the walls, making them eligible for a drawing for prizes.

All library facilities also featured a variety of programs throughout the year.

At the Belt Library, Booktivities, a story hour for home school children, began in late March of 1995 and ran through the first week of May.

In the last year the Carnegie Branch staff continued working with local elementary schools by sponsoring visits by classes at the St. James School and second and third graders from the Hyde School.

A season-inspired event at the Carnegie Branch was a "Windy Workshop" in April for children to make fish kites and mobiles.

An unusual program for children given in the early spring of 1995 from the Central Library was on the winter night sky, and children learned about the moon, planets, and stars, looking through a telescope to view the craters and the light and dark areas of the moon. After going outside to view visible planets and constellations, the youngsters also made flip books that imitated the changing phases of the moon and banners of their favorite constellation.

At the Central Library a three-week lapsitter storytime was held in the fall of 1994 as well as several preschool storytimes.

Programming activities remained strong at the Savannah Branch, despite the lack of appropriate space for this purpose.

At the Savannah Branch staff conducted and videotaped a workshop about materials and services for home schoolers.

Book talks by Savannah staff to local fourth graders continued in FY 1995.

Other off-site programs were given to kindergarten and first and second graders during the Health Fair Week at Mid-Buchanan Elementary School. Programs were also given to United Cerebral Palsy, the Eugene Field School, and the Frederick Boulevard Child Care Center.

One highlight of the 1994 summer program was an increased effort to serve daycare centers. Children in the St. Joseph School District summer school program also participated by taking advantage of books from the Central, Belt, and Washington Park Libraries which were distributed and rotated among the four summer school sites by Washington Park Branch staff.

The following spring the Washington Park Branch manager spoke about this program to the summer school faculty in a session which provided the opportunity for feedback from the teachers for improvements to be made before the program was implemented again.

Washington Park staff also worked with children from the Calvin Center who enrolled in the summer reading program, coming to the library in the morning and using the basement space for various activities.

The Washington Park Branch also sponsored Library Fun activities for elementary-aged children with varying abilities and needs. In October of 1994 activities revolved around themes including magic and pirates. Another occasion included an aerobics program where the workout was performed to the strains of the Swamp Stomp. Off-site programs conducted by Washington Park staff included storytimes for the St. Mary's Head Start, LaPetite Academy, Land of Little People, and the McCarthy Baptist Preschool.

In the fall of 1994 the Washington Park basement was used by Pass the Power volunteers and tutors and people using Hooked On Phonics. There were occasions when it was not uncommon to have all three of the basement rooms being used simultaneously.

As part of its efforts to extend other outreach services, or the provision of materials and services off-site, the library places deposit collections in a variety of locations. During the year the Oak Ridge Apartments and the Two by Two Preschool in the Huffman United Methodist Church were added to receive these collections.

A program in December featuring humorous holiday stories was given to approximately 15 residents of the Citadel Care Facility.

Outreach services staff met special needs by taking books to shelters set up during a severe ice storm in December of 1994.

Another outreach service was the preparation of an audio-by-mail catalog.

Books-by-mail service is provided to the local jail, and several of those incarcerated have sent letters of thanks to staff for service received. Prison populations in general are said to have a rate of functional illiteracy which tops 80%.

In the spring of 1995 outreach services staff received a report of a budding romance between two senior citizens who, having lived in the same apartment complex for some time, met while returning books-by-mail books at the same time.

A popular service continues to be the preparation of bibliographies to meet community needs and demands. For the 1994 Trails West! festival, the well-received list of the library's resources on local history was updated.

Another bibliography was prepared on the subject of women's health.

For programs during National Hospital Week in late May 50 packets of health-related bibliographies compiled by library staff were given to Heartland Health System.

Thought-provoking displays in all facilities continue to be an effective way to promote the use of the library's collections. Central Library displays included ones on religion and art.

All five library facilities had displays and information relating to current recycling efforts in St. Joseph.

Most memorable about the time between the late spring and the late fall of 1994 was the activity and media coverage surrounding a challenge to the collection which involved a petition drive and several public hearings on the subject. At its business meeting in October of 1994, the Board of Trustees confirmed that its current policies and guidelines concerning intellectual freedom and collection development had been followed to date. It also adopted guidelines for public services to minors and guidelines for the behavior of

minors in the library. The former policy contains references to access by minors to library materials and to the nature of parental responsibility regarding the use by minors of the library.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The library goal for collection development is to acquire and organize a wide variety of information and materials to meet informational and recreational needs.

Throughout the year the deputy director for public services worked on streamlining the process for selecting and ordering new materials.

In an effort to make better use of staff time and to streamline the collecting and ordering process, the Carnegie Branch manager assumed some major responsibilities for collection development at the Washington Park Branch.

At the Savannah Branch health-related books and adult fiction were weeded.

In the FY 1995 year acquisitions were greatly aided by a grant in the amount of \$17,500 of Library Services and Construction Act Title I money for reference books, circulating books, audiovisual materials, book cases, and promotional materials for a project for business. This project, which was coordinated with staff of the St. Joseph Area Chamber of Commerce, was publicized heavily through newspaper articles, bookmarks, signs, brochures, and a bibliography. It also contributed to the opening of the Chamber's business resource library. A program on small business in the 1990s, cosponsored by the library, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Small Business Development Center in the Chamber, was held in late June.

At the Washington Park Branch paperback romances, and paperback general fiction were weeded to relieve overcrowding.

The Carnegie staff weeded westerns and science fiction and fantasy. Adult fiction and adult paperback romances also were weeded.

Throughout the year staff explored possibilities for new products in CD-ROM format.

PERSONNEL, TRUSTEES, VOLUNTEERS, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The library goal for personnel and staff development is to recruit, develop, train, and retain the most competent and appropriate personnel available to perform and support the services of the River Bluffs Regional Library.

Continuing education is an important part of this goal for not only paid personnel but also Trustees and volunteers.

At the Trustees Round-Up sponsored by the Missouri Library Association in September of 1994 four Trustees and the director attended programs and exchanged ideas with Trustees from other public libraries throughout the state.

Throughout the year staff continued to benefit from the workshop on Customer Service and Tourism Advocacy conducted by the St. Joseph Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Once again the success of the summer reading program was attributable in part to the assistance of a loyal corps of volunteers.

Operations of the Central Library were assisted by enrollees in the Futures Program of the Division of Family Services.

As required by Missouri law, the Board of Trustees adopted in July of 1994 an ethics code dealing with conflicts of interest, identical to the two adopted in previous years.

Staff training on the Internet continued in various forms.

At the fall conference of the Missouri Library Association staff attended workshops on such subjects as advocacy for libraries, the Internet, Amendment #7, library security, marketing the library, intellectual freedom for youth, library and Head Start partnerships, service to daycare providers, and standards for public libraries.

The workshop on giving story hours was once again given by the youth services specialist for in-service training.

The deputy director for support services received Hewlett Packard system manager training.

Staff at the Belt were trained to be able to offer family storytimes using a "team" approach.

During work on the FY 1996 budget in the spring of 1995, the Board of Trustees expressed interest in addressing the issue of merit in salary administration.

As part of the administrative reorganization set in motion in the spring of 1994 by the elimination of the position of associate director, some changes were made in job descriptions at the Central Library. The adult services manager was promoted to the position of manager of the Central Library, and the title of the manager of the Children's Department of the Central Library became assistant manager for children's services, Central Library. Another position title change was to assistant manager for adult and references services, Central Library.

Several Central Library staff attended a workshop on building teams in the workplace.

At the Belt Branch, the responsibilities of the youth services specialist were broadened to include the position of manager of the branch.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The library goal for facilities and equipment is to provide and maintain appropriate, functional, and accessible facilities adequate to support the mission, roles, and goals of the River Bluffs Regional Library.

One of the most tangible steps toward future expansion of one of the library's facilities occurred in late August of 1994 when library officials closed on the purchase of property to the immediate south of the Savannah Branch. At a later time a building on the property was razed.

The practice of transferring equipment between facilities has become fairly common. In FY 1995 "orphaned" shelving units from the Central and Washington Park Libraries were transferred to the Belt.

The Washington Park Branch manager has assumed the job of coordinating the collection of unneeded equipment from throughout the system, trading some items and auctioning off others.

In a continuing effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the public telephone and public area fire extinguisher were lowered, and new signage was installed for the restrooms in the Belt Branch.

In the Children's Department of the Central Library a second coat of plaster on damaged parts of the walls was put on, and an aesthetically appealing shade of blue enamel-based paint was applied throughout the room by School District personnel.

The room in the basement of the Washington Park Branch where Adult Basic Education classes were being held was spruced up.

At their December meeting the Board of Trustees voted that making the Washington Park and Carnegie Branches accessible at this time would pose undue financial and administrative burdens, but they also voted that any and all long-range plans address issues of accessibility.

During the year a systemwide review of needs for photocopy equipment was done, and in January the Board authorized increasing equipment expenditures to accommodate new purchases.

Adjustments were made to the Savannah Branch for further compliance with ADA.

In accordance with a motion which carried in the spring of 1993 to begin planning for a different facility on the east side to replace the Belt Branch, at their January 1995 business meeting the Board passed a motion to seek enabling legislation to convey land to the library for the purpose of constructing a new public library at the intersection of Mitchell and Woodbine. At their March meeting however, the Board voted to take no further action to acquire this property until it had adopted a master facilities plan prepared by an independent library buildings consultant in a process to involve continued and extensive public input.

In a significant development in early April, the Savannah City Council voted to exercise its option to buy the parking lot next to the Savannah Branch from the Baptist Church, based on the terms of its lease with the Baptist Church. The First Christian Church then bought the lot from the city, having located a generous benefactor who donated \$10,000 for the purchase. The agreement developed was for the Christian Church to lease the lot back to the city, thereby making it possible for continued use by library users, an option probably not available had the land been sold to another party.

At the Belt new equipment purchased in the spring included three office chairs, two paperback racks, and a rack for compact discs and cassettes.

In the spring of 1995 the Washington Park Branch assumed some responsibility for off-site storage of items from other branches which do not circulate frequently but which are still occasionally requested. This transfer has made space on the open shelves of all facilities for newer, more in-demand materials.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The library goal for administrative and support services is to attain and maintain the most efficient and effective utilization of human, financial, and physical resources of the River Bluffs Regional Library to carry out its mission, roles, and goals.

In a continuing attempt to improve the rate of recovery of long-overdue library materials, the staff experimented with the use of a collection agency.

An extensive "clean-up" of various databases in the automated integrated system was conducted during the year. A decision was made to remove the records of library borrowers with no items on loan who had not used their borrowers' cards in the last two years, and in September of 1994 approximately 12,000 records were deleted. Staff also completed a batch delete of records for items due in 1990 and 1991 which were never returned.

For the year ending June 30, 1994, clean audits were received for the River Bluffs Regional Library, the St. Joseph Public Library, and the Rolling Hills Consolidated Library.

In their January meeting the Board of Trustees approved guidelines for cost recovery for services. Specifically, these deal with when it is appropriate to recover costs for the use of photocopy machines, fax machines, and printers and reduces the fee for use by the public of photocopy machines from \$.20 to \$.10.

During the year a systemwide assessment of telephone service and equipment began.

Follow-up to the auditor's recommendations to management was begun.

In the late spring staff experimented with e-mail software, since the miniframe upgrade planned was to include the installation of such a system.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The library goal for community relations is to communicate the availability of the wide variety of information, materials, and services of the library and promote the ways they meet the informational and recreational needs of library users and potential users.

The Friends of the River Bluffs Regional Library continues as the auxiliary group most responsible for helping to achieve this goal on an ongoing basis. Through annual membership drives and biannual book sales, the Friends promote the library in a number of ways. In the fall of 1994 the Friends purchased a banner for the north side of the Central Library. As part of the 1995 membership drive, the first edition of a Friends newsletter was sent out. Library services also are highlighted during Friends-sponsored programs, such as the appearance of Susan-Sylvia Scott portraying Amelia Earhart in late April, a program which was cosponsored by Missouri Western State College. In recognition of National Library Week and National Volunteer Week, in the spring of 1995 the Friends Board approved the purchase of T-shirts for regular library volunteers.

A regular feature in the St. Joseph News-Press has been a "new books" column. Previously compiled by the former associate director, the column now is rotated amongst the various members of the staff Administrative Council.

During the last year the library also was given a page in The Saint Joseph Telegraph, which is assembled using new desktop publishing software acquired by the library. This software and a scanner which the library purchased greatly enhance the library's ability to promote its resources and services through the production of various graphic materials.

During a tea in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Runcie Club, which for the past 30 years has made generous donations to the library, the portrait of Constance Fauntleroy Runcie which hangs in the Central Library was loaned for a public exhibit. The presence of the portrait during this important event reminded club members and guests of the ongoing relationship between this organization and the library.

Another way for community organizations to promote the library in general and the library's relationship to various organizations in particular is to volunteer time for a project with tangible results. One example of this in the fall of 1994 was when members of the South Side Business Women's Association planted flowers around the flag pole in the park surrounding the Carnegie Branch. With other volunteers they also cleaned the park.

The public's impressions of the materials and services of the library were reviewed in a Board meeting in November of 1994 which discussed the results of the focus group discussions and town hall meetings held earlier in the spring.

To clarify how the public can provide further input to the Board of Trustees, the Board at its business meeting in December of 1994 adopted Guidelines for Communications Between the Public and the Board of Trustees of the River Bluffs Regional Library. This document was used on many occasions in ensuing months with various members of the public.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

The library goal for interagency cooperation is to cooperate with other libraries, political subdivisions, organizations, and programs to carry out the mission, roles, and goals of the River Bluffs Regional Library both within the library's service area and beyond. This goal was carried out in various ways throughout the 1994-1995 year.

Through the work of the deputy director for outreach services, the library continued to have representation on the St. Joseph Youth Alliance. In particular, the deputy director served on the planning committee for FACES (Finding and Accepting Cultural and Ethnic Strengths) sponsored by the Youth Alliance at the East Hills Mall in late October. At a welcome booth where "passports" were to be distributed for stamping, she handed out short bibliographies on different cultures prepared by library staff. The approximately 300 children and their parents who attended the event found these materials entertaining and informative. A display at the Central Library inspired by materials produced by the St. Joseph Youth Alliance featured "52 Ways to Appreciate a Child."

The deputy directors for public services and outreach services worked together on a project where \$1,000 worth of materials for the East Side Human Resource Center was purchased. This involved the acquisition of an encyclopedia and a collection of multi-ethnic children's materials to be available for the center's programs and tutoring, career training, nutrition, health and recreation programs.

Library staff worked on arrangements for a regional literacy conference held in Kansas City in late October of 1994. Besides drawing participants from the St. Joseph Area Literacy Coalition, the event also is cosponsored by the Adult Education Division of LIFT Missouri (Literacy Investment For Tomorrow), the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Missouri Humanities Council, the Missouri Literacy Association, the Missouri State Library, and the University of Missouri Extension Service. Topics were grant writing and a visit to an Even Start Center. A panel discussion also was held on interagency cooperation.

Partnerships between the library and Head Start continued to be active in 1994-1995. Regular programs are provided through the youth services specialist to the South Ninth Street, the Horace Mann and the South 36th Street Head Starts. The youth services specialist also met with Head Start staff for an exchange of ideas in developing learning materials for the new Head Start Resource Center.

An ongoing way for River Bluffs Regional Library staff to promote reading is through participation in the International Reading Association's Book Fair held at the Pershing School. In the spring of 1995 approximately 500 parents and their children attended this event, at which the library youth

services specialist distributed flyers on the summer reading program, book-related craft sheets, board books for babies, and bookmarks. She also presented a program on Black folktales for children, wearing her African straw hat.

The library continues active involvement in the Missouri Public Library Directors Group, which met in St. Joseph in early May. The director and three deputy directors attended the program, which covered personal safety and library security, legislative news, an update from the Missouri State Library, and management styles.

The deputy director for outreach services represented the library in planning a second session of the Women's Financial Information Program. This program, designed by the American Association of Retired Persons and sponsored by the University of Missouri-Extension, gives women information about handling their finances. Library staff provided materials and bibliographies for the various sessions of this program.

A library assistant from the Savannah Branch served as the program chairperson on the Steering Committee for Savannah's Chautauqua held for a week in June of 1995 on the site of the last Chautauqua, 65 years ago, in Savannah's city park. All programs were well attended, and the Friends sponsored Elizabeth Cady Stanton's "Thunder from the Pulpit" on the final morning. Staff also helped to promote the afternoon children's programming, which drew in over a thousand children and adults.

SOME NUMBERS

	<u>FY 1994-1995</u>
<u>INCOME</u>	
Local tax income	\$1,741,362
State aid	39,879
Federal grant	17,461
Other	<u>135,952</u>
TOTAL	\$1,934,654
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
Personnel	\$1,123,479
Collection	286,396
Operation Expenditures	496,797
Capital Outlay	<u>38,682</u>
TOTAL	\$1,945,354
Total library holdings	443,655
Total items circulated	736,995
Registered borrowers	40,632
Attendance at children's programs	22,638

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The most important action taken during the 1994-1995 year, and the one which has potential for the most far-reaching results in the history of the River Bluffs Regional Library, was the issuance in the spring of 1995 by the Board of Trustees of a request for proposals from prospective library buildings consultants. The Board is seeking help in its long-range planning with the development of a master facilities plan, which will include a space needs assessment with accompanying information about costs, and written building program statements for the entire district. As a corollary to this project, the Board wants recommendations regarding the nature of services to be provided, staffing, and collection development. Suggestions regarding a package of operating and buildings and maintenance taxes and a chronology for future levy elections also is being sought.

The development of this master facilities plan will take into consideration present Board and staff perceptions about the assumption of roles systemwide and in individual branches. Special focus will be given to the similarities and differences between services offered in the downtown St. Joseph area and on the east side of St. Joseph. The appropriate role of the Central, or headquarters library, will be thoroughly examined, along with its potential for being located in a present library facility or a new library facility.

The methodology for this project will include input by the Board of Trustees of the River Bluffs Regional Library, the staff, local government officials, the Friends, volunteers, and other interested organizations and individuals to ensure extensive input. Six focus group discussions also will be held.

As of this writing the firm of Robert H. Rohlf, Professional Library Consultants, has been retained for this project. Mr. Rohlf and his partner have together done building planning and other projects for over 300 different assignments located in more than 33 states and four countries.

As we begin this work, the Board of Trustees and the staff of the River Bluffs Regional Library ask for the community's continued involvement and support. What is required in public library buildings is wholly dependent upon the nature of service to be provided. There are many options available, but they will have to be narrowed, tough choices will have to be made, and the final decisions on the vision of the Board and staff will be made by the voters of Andrew and Buchanan Counties. And this is the way it should be.

Dorothy Sanborn Elliott
Director
St. Joseph, MO
December, 1995