

RIVER BLUFFS REGIONAL LIBRARY



Carnegie Branch
Placed on the National Register of Historic Places on May 20, 1999

TENTH ANNUAL REPORT

1998 - 1999

RIVER BLUFFS REGIONAL LIBRARY

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RIVER BLUFFS REGIONAL LIBRARY

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RIVER BLUFFS REGIONAL LIBRARY

BRANCHES

EASTSIDE

1904 North Belt.....816-232-5479
St. Joseph, MO 64506-2201
Mon.-Thurs. 9-9, Fri.-Sat. 9-6, Sun. 1-5
Fax.....816-236-2137

DOWNTOWN

927 Felix.....816-232-7729
St. Joseph, MO 64501-2799
Mon.-Thurs. 9-9, Fri.-Sat. 9-6, Sun. 1-5
Reference.....816-232-8151
Reference Fax.....816-232-7516
TDD.....816-236-2160
Children's.....816-232-3812
Administrative Offices.....816-232-4038
Administrative Offices Fax.....816-279-3372

CARNEGIE

316 Massachusetts.....816-238-0526
St. Joseph, MO 64504-1449
Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat. 10-6, Tues. & Thurs. 10-7
Fax.....816-238-9438

WASHINGTON PARK

1821 North Third.....816-232-2052
St. Joseph, MO 64505-2533
Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat. 9-5, Tues. & Thurs. 12-8
Fax.....816-236-2151

SAVANNAH

514 West Main.....816-324-4569
Savannah, MO 64485-1670
Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat. 9:30-6, Tues. & Thurs. 9:30-8
Fax.....816-324-3562

INTRODUCTION

An annual report tries to make sense of the year just past, in telling how and why this particular year was different from all of the others.

At the River Bluffs Regional Library, the 1998-1999 year was characterized by important anniversaries and historic recognitions.

January 19, 1999 marked the tenth anniversary of the signing of a contract by the Boards of Trustees of the St. Joseph Public Library and of the Rolling Hills Consolidated Library to form a cooperative service for Andrew and Buchanan Counties, called the River Bluffs Regional Library.

June 30, 1999 marked the completion of ten years of this service to the public.

The Carnegie Branch, soon to celebrate its 100th anniversary, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on May 20, 1999.

Recognizing that public libraries should continue to make sense of the lives of the community we serve, in its business meeting of May, 1999, the library Board took a major step and confirmed its intent to make a decision before August 24, 1999, the deadline for ballot measures to be submitted in the November 2, 1999 election, regarding elections to increase levies in the St. Joseph Public Library and Rolling Hills Consolidated Library districts. The last times there had been votes on funding in the Rolling Hills Consolidated Library and St. Joseph Public Library districts were 1982 and 1986, respectively. Current revenues could no longer adequately support the services and facilities of the River Bluffs Regional Library, and it was clearly time to do something.

PUBLIC SERVICES

After ten years of service, the mission of the River Bluffs Regional Library continues to be to provide materials and services to meet the informational and recreational needs of the citizens of Andrew and Buchanan Counties in Missouri.

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

A major goal of the library continues to be to encourage 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. The most tangible evidence of this commitment continues to be the Summer Reading Program. Enrollment in the 1998 Summer Reading Program, Summer Readers = Adventure Seekers, totaled 3,107, as compared with the previous year's record-breaking count of 2,921.

Close on the heels of the end of the Summer Reading Program came a poetry contest for young people, sponsored by the Friends of the River Bluffs Regional Library. Participation in the contest greatly exceeded staff expectations. Winners in the two age groups (grades 3 – 8 and

grades 9 – 12) read their poems at the Eastside Branch at a program also featuring humorist poet Steve Rideout. In addition, the winning poems were posted on the library's Web page (www.rbrl.lib.mo.us).

Other types of programming, sometimes provided by special volunteers, continue to help stimulate a love of books and reading amongst toddlers and preschoolers. To promote the importance of public libraries in the lives of people of all ages, a priority of the Missouri Library Association has been to encourage and plan for visits by local legislators to public libraries. State Representative Dan Hegeman, accompanied by his son, read a book to a storytime at the Savannah Branch in late October of 1998. He then supplied copies of the book to all of the children in attendance.

Although fewer in number than those for children, programs for adults continue to be given both at the library and off-site. A program on "Investors' Resources at the Library" was given on two Tuesdays in the late summer of 1998 at the Savannah Branch. Some of the resources featured were shown through the library's public access to the Internet.

For library users of all ages, the year was characterized by the increasing use of the Internet at public terminals. At its business meeting in November, 1998, the library Board revised its Guidelines for Public Access to the Internet to allow for the use of e-mail by library customers.

In contrast with the provision of access to the Internet and other new technologies, programs about the past are an important feature of the library's services. Western writer Don Coldsmith, the author of some 35 books, 150 magazine articles, and 1,300 newspaper columns over the last 26 years, gave programs "It All Happens Here," on how the history of the West is all around you, and "Writin' the Range," a talk for inspiring writers, at Missouri Western State College and the Patee House Museum in the spring of 1999.

The past is available to library users in other formats besides just books, like videos. The most popular videos throughout the system are those on foreign travel, the Holy Land in particular; domestic travel, National Parks, and the West in particular; dance and workout; wild animals; pets, particularly cats; and how-to.

Not all library customers are able to travel to one or more of the library's five facilities. Library materials may be mailed to those needing this service. Deposits of books are also rotated regularly to nursing homes, businesses, post offices, day care centers, and the Buchanan County Jail. For day cares, materials are selected which are appropriate for particular age groups. In addition, programming has been provided. Day cares have also participated in the Summer Reading Program by helping their groups to read and turn in book logs. Day cares have attended programs scheduled on-site at the libraries as well.

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.

Increasingly, information is available in non-book formats.

MOREnet (the Missouri Research and Education Network) has added three Gale databases (literature, science, and history) to the resources licensed for statewide school and public library access. Products made available in 1998 included Ebsco Host (a magazine index and full-text database), Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia, World Almanac, Ebsco Animals (an index and full-text database of animals), Health Source Plus (a citation and full-text database of health and medical journals and pamphlets), ERIC Indexes, and Academic Search (a citation and full-text database of scholarly journals).

The "A" list consists of those authors whose books are automatically ordered for the library. The list was revised in 1998-1999, based on input from the acquisition supervisor, the branch managers, and the adult services specialist. It currently covers approximately 190 writers.

A major gift of Civil War genealogical materials was received by the Downtown Library.

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.

In conjunction with this, the library encourages the development of staff members by participation in workshops, conferences and courses related to the employee's job.

Two senior administrative staff attended the Summer Institute on Excellent Customer Service, sponsored by the Library Administration and Management Association, a division of the American Library Association, in St. Louis. Several points of potential interest were made. One of them was that a public library can be seen as a not-for-profit business. As a business, a public library should treat users as customers who are buying a service. Staff of public libraries should recognize that they are competitors in the information market, making it necessary to tailor services to meet customer needs. Although the other "competitors" may sell information, public libraries are the only institutions with personnel trained to facilitate access to that information, ensuring that a customer will leave satisfied enough to return. Public libraries should also take a proactive stance with their customers in meeting their information needs; for example, librarians know how to retrieve and synthesize information, such as that coming from the Internet. Finally, excellent customer service must involve all levels of the system.

There was a one-half day session for administrative staff in February of 1999 to educate them about new networked and other automated resources.

The development and continuing education of Trustees also continues to be critically important in a world of rapidly changing public libraries.

In mid-September, a tour for Trustees was held of all five River Bluffs Regional Library facilities, an integral step in making a decision about going to the voters to ask for more revenue.

The 1998 Fall Trustees Conference, "Building a Better Board Team," sponsored by the Missouri State Library in Jefferson City at the end of September, was attended by three Trustees. The conference featured nationally acclaimed presenter Dan Cain, highlighting such topics as essential qualities of the board of the 90s, the board member's job description, and better board meeting strategies.

The full library Board also had a retreat in late February of 1999. Topics included planning and a review of recent public library construction projects.

Joint Board-staff development on subjects of mutual interest and commitment is also important. Two Trustees and two staff members attended a workshop in May of 1999 sponsored by the Missouri State Library in Columbia on "Marketing Missouri's Libraries."

Volunteers continue to be important in providing the services of the River Bluffs Regional Library. At the Washington Park Branch, for example, volunteers are an integral part of the efforts to offer the Summer Reading Program both on site and through day cares and the St. Joseph School District Summer School.

The library had other types of help in the 1998-1999 year as well. An English major from Missouri Western State College worked on several projects for an internship, under the guidance of the youth services specialist. This included designing library coloring books for storytimes, presenting information on a specific branch, written on a child's level. She also helped staff with planning and presenting the Book Lover's Club on various types of writing, scrapbooks, pop-up and shape books, book jackets, and other book-related book topics.

In another area, in December of 1998 the Board of Trustees authorized the addition of one full-time equivalent staff member, over and above what was budgeted for FY 1999, to help with the need to continue to provide excellent direct public library service.

A major change in staff occurred when, after twenty years of service to public libraries, Nancy Salfrank Huffman resigned as assistant director in March. In her job as assistant director, she had served as the library's chief liaison to the Friends of the River Bluffs Regional Library. She also had major responsibility for preparing and administering federal and other grants.

The company providing health insurance benefits for staff was changed in the FY 1999 year.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The library goal for administrative 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.

Throughout the history of the library, gifts and bequests from the private sector have continued to supplement tax revenues to maintain and improve library services.

In the fall of 1998, the library was given a check for \$15,625 from the estate of Katherine Tenner to be used for children's services in the Downtown Library.

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

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

An air-conditioning unit over the entrance to the Downtown Library was replaced.

Two microfilm readers/scanners/printers funded by an LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant of \$21,490 were acquired. The addition of this new equipment was to provide access to census information and back issues of local newspapers and microfilm that are borrowed from other institutions. The River Bluffs Regional Library obtained some of the very first of these machines to be received in the United States.

In the spring of 1998, building analyses of the Central (Downtown), Washington Park, and Carnegie Libraries had been completed by Ellison-Auxier Architects, Inc. These building analyses were to be used to determine the costs relating to any corrective action needed to provide safe public library service in these facilities, including adherence to all codes and legal requirements. The work also was to include recommendations regarding whether or not, with current construction costs, it is advisable to remain with one or more of the facilities in question with less space, equal space, or more space in those particular sites. Information in these reports also was to be used to prepare for the levy elections to fund needed improvements in library facilities. At a meeting in early June of 1998, Ellison-Auxier Architects, Inc. had pointed out that it would be up to the Board of Trustees to determine what is most critical to them.

In the 1998-1999 year, the Board of Trustees began following up on these building analyses.

The original roof of the Carnegie Library was replaced in the spring of 1999 at a cost of approximately \$90,000.

At their business meeting in December of 1998, prior to their final authorization for work on the Carnegie roof, the library Board allocated a maximum of \$50,000 for repairing, cleaning, and sealing the masonry and stone of the exterior of the Carnegie Library; painting and caulking the windows; replacing the downspouts, flashing, and gutters; and correcting the grading of the four sides of the Carnegie Library as needed to ensure positive drainage away from the building. The bid for this work was awarded in May of 1999.

Throughout the year the staff and Board struggled with other problems of deteriorating buildings. An investigation of backed up pipes at the Washington Park Branch called for an excavation, which meant that a large section of the store room floor was broken out, pipes

replaced, and the floor repoured. The cracked and split sewer lines had resulted in water coming in under the basement door and collecting in the interior stairwell, hallway, and storytime room. The brittle, cracked sewer pipes leaking beneath the floor had also resulted in foul smells and moisture problems.

The library Board spent a considerable amount of time in the 1998-1999 year reassessing sites for the replacement and expansion of the Eastside Branch, a process which had begun in 1993. Advertising for sites was done beginning in late January of 1999. Professional Library Consultants, the firm which had prepared a master facilities plan for the Board as well as recommended preliminary building programs for the Downtown Library and the replacement and expansion of the Eastside Library, was brought in to assess potential sites. This involved a look at both preexisting buildings and vacant land to be used for new construction.

SUPPORT SERVICES

In the 1997-1998 year, an important development had occurred when discussions began in earnest about the possible digitization of certain reference materials as well as records pertaining to the history of the library.

In the FY 1999 year, a staff task force began working on issues of preservation and digitization of these materials. The primary focus was to be on rare, irreplaceable materials with local/regional historical value. A goal developed in the fall of 1998 was to have every member attend at least one workshop on preservation issues, based on a particular assignment in the task force.

Work also began on inventorying old materials, including the archival records of the library.

In the spring of 1999, the last of the "dumb" terminals were removed and replaced by PCs. This culminated a project, in which four grants made possible the purchase of most of the equipment, to construct a network to provide direct public access to the Internet, CD-ROM databases, and access to the library's automated integrated system, Inlex.

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 to promote the ways they meet the informational and recreational needs of library users and potential users.

The Friends of the River Bluffs Regional Library continue to play a crucial role in promoting library services, raising funds, and acting as an advocate for the library.

In a program sponsored by the Friends, local Cajun storyteller Evelyn Wyble entertained enthusiastic audiences of all ages at Trails West! in 1999.

An important way for the staff of the River Bluffs Regional Library both to help the community and to promote the visibility of the library is to participate in the annual United Way

Campaign. An editorial in *The St. Joseph News-Press* on November 9, 1998 praised "one of the highest donation rates (to the United Way of Greater St. Joseph) in the nation." The beginning of the editorial pointed out that "St. Joseph, Mo. is not one of the wealthiest cities in Missouri. Nor is it one of the grandest or most influential. Other places spend more on their schools and their libraries..." Nevertheless, the staff of the River Bluffs Regional Library put their money where their "heart" (in the language of the editorial) was and raised their corporate contribution to the United Way Campaign by 6% over their 1997 gift.

The library's Web page, www.rbri.lib.mo.us, continued to provide a gateway to information about the River Bluffs Regional Library and the wider world. A particular effort during FY 1999 was to share documents with the community related to library Board activities, like the minutes of meetings, agenda for meetings, and monthly reports to the Board of Trustees.

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.

Working with state legislators in promoting the interests of public libraries has always been a goal of the Missouri Library Association. State Representative Maurice Lawson continued to push for the recognition of the Carnegie Branch, the first branch library in the State of Missouri, as a local resource and important part of the history of the South Side of St. Joseph. Assisted by Clyde D. Weeks, who did extensive research and prepared the application, Representative Lawson was successful in having the Carnegie Branch listed on the National Register of Historic Places on May 20, 1999. The Board of Trustees of the River Bluffs Regional Library had confirmed endorsement of this action at its meeting in November of 1998, after considerable study of the possible ramifications.

Staff continued to work on other cooperative efforts throughout the year. The library received its second round of grant books provided by Progressive Community Services. This grant stipulated that United Cerebral Palsy and the library both receive new books on disabilities. The youth services specialist prepared an update to a bibliography for both UCP and the library.

Staff of the River Bluffs Regional Library continued to work with staff of other regional libraries, along with the Missouri State Library, on the possible revision of Chapter 182 of the Missouri Statutes. Currently, regional libraries are not specifically mentioned here.

An ongoing cooperative effort was staff participation, through the St. Joseph Area Literacy Coalition, in activities relating to Literacy Action Week, which in 1999 coincided with National Library Week. Events included Literacy Information Day at the East Hills Shopping Center; a spelling bee at Missouri Western State College; and a luncheon by invitation to honor volunteers in literacy.

READ from the START is a program developed by the Missouri Humanities Council to help parents and caregivers of young children to learn the value of reading from an early age. Locally, it has been sponsored by the St. Joseph Area Literacy Coalition, having been introduced

at the Savannah Library. In the spring of 1999, it was facilitated by Dr. Norma Bagnall, children's reading and literacy specialist. Sessions were held at the Washington Park Library, and they were coordinated with a preschool storytime. Participants received a certificate and a children's paperback book.

STATISTICS AND DATES

INCOME

Local tax income	\$2,079,193
State aid	49,795
Federal grant	19,450
Other	<u>172,263</u>
TOTAL	\$2,320,701

EXPENDITURES

Personnel	\$1,417,650
Collection	353,828
Operations	<u>513,009</u>
TOTAL	\$2,284,487

*Pre-audited figures submitted to the Missouri State Library at the end of the fiscal year. For audits of the River Bluffs Regional Library, the St. Joseph Public Library, and the Rolling Hills Consolidated Library, please contact the office of the director.

Population served:	97,715
Registered borrowers:	42,219
Total circulation:	653,138
Total library holdings:	427,213
Annual number of library visits:	272,376
Annual number of reference transactions:	39,312
Annual program attendance:	13,624
Total number of programs:	551

Reasons to Celebrate:

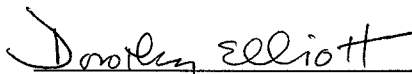
1989-1999	10 years	River Bluffs Regional Library
1890-2000	110 years	St. Joseph Public Library
1961-2001	40 years	Rolling Hills Consolidated Library

1902-2002 100 years Downtown Library/School District Administrative Building

THE FUTURE

The increasing discussions about seeking sources of new revenues, the work on the selection of a site for the replacement of the Eastside Branch, the work on the preparation of a building program for the Savannah Branch, and efforts relating to following up on the building analyses of three of the library's facilities took the library Board, staff, and the community in 1998-1999 even closer to a crucial decision, as the year 2000 approached.

It must be stressed again that a good public library system involves ongoing communication between the representatives of the library and the community they serve. This report is submitted with thanks to all of those constituencies.



Dorothy Elliott, Director
St. Joseph, MO

Staff Administrative Council
and
Board of Trustees