

## Director's Report



**DATE:** May 13, 2024

### **Administrative**

The annual survey was completed and submitted with just a few hiccups in the new platform. All branches completed their annual inventory lists. In April I attended the Public Library Association Conference held in Columbus, Ohio. Lots of programs on the state of libraries and censorship. I was contacted by the President of the Arizona Library Association about facilitating their annual association retreat being held in April. Their association had created a strategic plan that included revising their Bylaws and Handbook. The retreat focused on revising the association's Bylaws.

I was recently contacted by the law firm representing the defendants in the lawsuit against Act 372 and asked to relate how the Act would affect small and rural libraries. If it goes into effect as is, libraries would have to dedicate a room to house books that may be considered by some harmful to minors. If left on the shelves, they could be the basis for criminal liability for library staff.

### **Technology & Branch Updates**

The Eudora Branch flooded in April after 12 inches of rain fell in a short period. We were able to get the water off fairly quickly and dried. We did have some damage to the Internet equipment but the floor seems to be good. The Monticello Library has received a grant from the American Library Association Libraries Transforming Communities Grant. Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities offered more than \$7 million in grants to small and rural libraries to increase the accessibility of facilities, services, and programs to better serve people with disabilities. To be eligible, a library must have a legal area population of 25,000 or less and be located at least five miles from an urbanized area, in keeping with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) definitions of small and rural libraries.

The Monticello Branch Library applied for funds to install a permanent Storywalk along their walking trail. Monticello Branch Manager, Shannon Rodrigues and I have been researching the different types of exhibit bases and frames and speaking with other libraries before we purchase. Monticello Branch also received a donation from the Elgenia Ross family to be used for a wall mural in the children's area of the library.

Dumas Branch Library recently received a grant from Clearwater for the purchase of a new AWE Learning children's Literacy Computer. These all-in-one touchscreen computers do not require internet and come preloaded with award winning content in science, technology, reading, engineering, and art & music.

### **Community Engagement & Outreach**

I attended the Crystal Bridges Art Initiative in Bentonville at the end of February. In March we held our annual Summer Reading Workshop for Managers and Library Assistants. This year we also reached out to neighboring library systems to join us. Camden, Hamburg and Hampton libraries all accepted the invite. It was a great day of sharing program and craft ideas for the theme "Adventure begins at Your Library." After lunch participants enjoyed "Choose Your Own Adventure" game suited for teens or families, explored audience participation stories and other programs that will engage students during the summer.

The Region distributed 19,000 eclipse glasses for the Solar Eclipse. We enjoyed lots of pictures of patrons enjoying the event with their glasses. We collected all returned or used glasses to be passed on to other organizations.

I was notified by the Southeast Arkansas Reading Council that the Region was nominated for their Agency in Literacy Winner. SEARK Reading Council is a part of Arkansas Literacy Association that promotes professional development and literacy throughout the state of Arkansas. We were honored at a dinner at Los Arcos where we learned the Southeast Arkansas Regional Library was also named the state winner! We will be recognized at a dinner this summer in Little Rock.

### **Meetings & Workshops Attended**

Crystal Bridges Art Initiative – Bentonville, AR February 22 -23, 2024

SEARL Summer Reading Workshop – Monticello, AR, March 28, 2024

Public Library Association Conference– Columbus, OH, April 3 – 5, 2024

Arizona Library Association Retreat – Phoenix, AZ, April 15 – 16, 2024

Arkansas Reading Council Banquet – Monticello, AR, April 22, 2024