



Director's Report

DATE: April 20, 2020

Administrative

Of course the biggest thing this quarter has been dealing with a pandemic virus. On March 16, the Regional Headquarters received word from Drew County that all county buildings would be closed to the public. In the days that followed other counties followed suit. A Pandemic Plan that outlined a plan of action was sent to the board for approval. The plan was also sent to Regional staff. As of today all branches are closed to the public, all library programs suspended, extended due dates on all material. We will override any fines and expanded the amount of material for checkout. At this time, we are still offering curbside service. All branches have been given guidelines on disinfecting material as it is returned. Headquarters has provided hand sanitizer, Clorox wipes, and disposable gloves. Our Wi-Fi is available in the all parking lots 24/7. Instructions on how to issue virtual library cards were sent to all branches. We have stocked our 4 free little libraries. We have also directed all branches to have a cart with free material so anyone without a card can have something to read. We are literary reinventing ourselves as we discover new ways to reach and serve our public. I am extremely proud of the Southeast Arkansas Regional Library headquarters staff, branch managers, assistants and part-time employees who have adapted and have shown their creativity in the past few weeks.

I have also been working on the Annual Public Library Survey that is a requirement for receiving State Aid. I filed the 990 N postcard for the Monticello, Star City, Dumas, McGehee, Lake Village and Warren Friends of the Library groups. We assembled and delivered the nine iPad kiosks for the 2020 census.

Technology

We are still having some connectivity issues with our Webserver. I have been in contact with our circulation software company (TLC) and our tech support. Our server will be up for replacement later this year. I am looking at the cost of converting to cloud hosting. The cost is about the same however with cloud hosting, it will not matter if our Internet goes down, branches will still have access to the circulation software.

We have also received quotes for dedicated fiber in Monticello. Our Internet has been slow for the past few years, but during school closings, it has been extremely sluggish.

Branch Updates

In this section I want to report on some of the ways our branches are staying connected with their communities. In addition to curbside service, we are offering coloring/activities sheets, either in the bag of books or in packets left outside the door. Many branches are holding virtual storytimes, conducting virtual classes, offering tips for the day, holding bear

hunts and many fun and useful activities. We have linked resources on our website concerning the COVID-19.

Before the shutdown, nine staff members attended the Children's Services Workshop in Ferndale. The guest speaker was Sherry Norfolk, internationally acclaimed performer, artist, and workshop leader. Sessions included Storytelling through photograph, Putting the Child's Needs First, and Library Life with Teens, just to name a few.

Before CoVid19 shut our doors, we have been working on refreshing the children's area in the Star City Branch. The Arkansas Department of Corrections made a custom 6-foot bench with underneath storage. They are also working on a seat cushion that should be ready soon.

In February, I met with Chicot County Judge Ball and a representative of the Clements Architecture firm from Little Rock at the Dermott Branch Library concerning replacing windows and casing, doors and replacing lighting. We will be working on grants to help fund this project.

Community Engagement

In February we held our annual Workshop. The morning session was devoted to Regional housekeeping items and Summer Reading. Managers had the opportunity to share ideas, ask questions, and discuss ways to make Summer Reading better. Our afternoon session was on the 2020 Census and was open to the public. We had 7 visitors to attend the session. Jennifer Wann, Arkansas State Library, Library Development, gave an overview of the upcoming 2020 Census and revealed the ipad kiosk that would be used for the public to register for the census.

Meetings & Workshops Attended

- Arkansas State Library Board meeting – Little Rock, AR
- SEARL Workshop – Monticello, AR
- Public Library Association (PLA) Conference – Nashville, TN
- Chicot County Judge – Dermott, AR
- King Foundation – conference call
- Branch Manager Meeting – online meeting
- Arkansas Library Association, Bylaws Committee – online meeting