



Director's Report

DATE: April 19, 2021

Administrative

I was enlisted by ALA to promote their grant, Libraries Transforming Communities, Focus on Small and Rural Communities. I spoke with several groups and individuals in Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia and Florida concerning the grant opportunity. I am happy to announce that the Monticello and Warren Branch Libraries will receive the \$3000 grant. I completed the 990N forms for the Region's Friends of the Library groups and sent copies to the groups.

I corresponded with Representatives Mark McElroy, Mike Holcomb and Vivian Flowers concerning disapproval for House Bill 1368, which would prevent city and county sales and use tax levies from becoming effective on January 1 or June 1. Because HB1368 limits special elections that would levy or change the local sales tax rate to the third Tuesday in May or the second Tuesday in November, there would not be enough time for a county or city to certify the election results for a change in the tax rate to be effective on July 1 or January 1, respectively. The Advocates for All Arkansas Public Libraries has also been instrumental in getting HB 1903 filed. This bill would exempt the purchase of digital books and electronic subscription from sale and use tax when purchased by a public library.

I have finished the yearly Library Annual Survey required by the Arkansas State Library in order to qualify for state aid. Some good news, the Arkansas State Library will soon receive \$2.66 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The vast majority of those funds will be distributed through non-competitive grants to public libraries in the state. I was asked to be on the committee to decide the process of structuring the broad categories for which funds can be requested, as well as determining a fair distribution formula that honors the spending priorities set out in the legislation

Technology

We have added two more school districts with access to the Sora app. Student at Dumas and Lake Village have been granted access to our Overdrive collections.

Branch Updates

As of April 1st, all branches of the Region are back to normal working hours. We still have restrictions in place for now and will continue to monitor the state and county numbers. I believe about half of the staff are vaccinated at this time. We have also lifted quarantine material as of Friday.

We have sent out the Summer Reading material to the branches. The dates are set and most branches have set programs in place. We are still working on the adventure packet for two age groups.

All of the Branch Managers attended the Children Services Workshop presented by the Arkansas State Library via zoom. This year's keynote speaker was author and illustrator, Jarrett Krosoczka.

Lake Village and Eudora both received Giving Tree grants to purchase a Silhouette machine and equipment to use for programming. Monticello is the test case for a new program idea. They have begun checking out sports equipment. We believe this will be a great success and hopeful will be added to a few more of our branches.

Community Engagement

The Monticello StoryWalk is still going strong. We change the story once a month and love seeing families enjoy the walking trail and reading. Jane Pelki is still working on a grant for a Storywalk in Star City.

The headquarters crew and I spent a couple of days helping the City of Wilmar with organizing the volunteer run city library. We weeded donation books and help organized for better browsing.

Meetings & Workshops Attended

- ALA, Libraries Transforming Communities Grant – January 26 – via Zoom
- Branch Manager Meetings, January 27, March 3, March 31 – via Zoom
- Big Talk for Small Libraries webinar, February 26 – online
- ARSL Leadership Institute meeting, March 11 – via Zoom
- Arkansas Children Services Workshop, March 12 – via Zoom