

Opening New Doors in Rural Communities



Lane County Library
Serves:
1,700+ patrons
Kan-ed member since:
October 21, 2002

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In late 2006, Kan-ed awarded funds to the State Library of Kansas to be distributed to public libraries around the state for the Enhanced Library Meeting Rooms (ELMeR) Project. The program provided funds to establish rooms in local libraries with state-of-the-art, high definition teleconferencing equipment. Lane County Library was one of the ELMeR recipients, receiving \$15,000 for equipment. Ruby Martin, Director of the Lane County Library, said they began using their ELMeR in February 2008 to conduct a wide variety of activities over the Kan-ed network. Topics that have been covered range from educational programs to discussions with community members, county commissioners and others about the pros and cons of the Holcomb coal plant. Book discussions, workshops for librarians, and special programming for schools have also been offered.

“We’ve done two [programs] with the Lee Richardson Zoo in Garden City and third graders.” Martin said, “It’s just been an absolute success. They are able to have real live animals there. And they do a lot of interaction. They have programs they have prepared for the year, so they let you know what’s available. They have a lot of visual aids that they send out to go along with the program. The kids just absolutely love this!”

Martin also talked about an opportunity for community members that involved a high school student who conducted a workshop on digital cameras. “We did a hookup with Dodge City and they had a high school student that talked about taking pictures with a digital camera and some of the ways you can clean up those pictures. He was good...he talked about different software programming to correct pictures.”

Martin described a unique request from a local bank that called her to ask if the Lane County Library could be written into the bank’s pandemic disaster plan. As she explains, “That would be one way they could communicate out if they needed to; if there was a pandemic where you can’t have face-to-face they could use videoconferencing to talk to other people out there.”

When asked about how the community has reacted to the ELMeR, Martin said, “I’ve had very good response...I can tell that just because the recurrence of the same teacher using different parts of this...she keeps coming back for programming. That’s one way of telling success -when they want to do it again, and again, and again.”

She went on to say, “We’re able to provide the educational opportunities. We’ve never had that chance before with what’s out there now. It has also opened new doors in the types of services that we can provide to our community. That’s also been something new for us. My belief in all of this is that these rooms, this equipment, was meant for the rural communities where we don’t have the opportunities like the larger communities. I really think this is where they need to be. To provide something that we have never experienced...what’s happening is a lot of neat things!”

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