

Kan-ed Equipment Saves Time and Travel:

Makes Leadership More Available

The South Central Kansas Library System (SCKLS) has been using videoconferencing equipment purchased with Kan-ed Enhancing Technology Grant Program (ETGP) funds to attend distance meetings with other state regional library systems. According to Larry Papenfuss, Automation & Technology Coordinator for SCKLS, the goal was to eliminate the need for travel and thereby allow people to participate who normally would not be able to. He remarked, "Travel is an issue for a lot of our smaller sites where they just can't drive across the state." So, far, SCKLS has been able to use the equipment for eight meetings.

Papenfuss revealed that the major impact of the funding is, in fact, that "it has eliminated the need for staff to do a lot of travel. So, I guess the big impact of having the videoconferencing equipment is that we're seeing cost savings on travel, and cost savings on time since we are able to be in the office doing things while we would have been traveling. Especially since our state aid has been cut, this is becoming more and more crucial for us." Papenfuss further elaborated, "Our boss is really needed here more often to be able to answer questions. Of the four or five sessions that he's been in using this equipment, it's kept him from going to Topeka personally. Instead of being gone for the entire day, he's sitting in a meeting locally for about two to four hours, and then he's also available if something is needed immediately. We can interrupt him without interrupting an entire group of people. Our success story is that the equipment has made our leadership much more available to the needs of our system membership."

The equipment also is an asset for the community. Papenfuss described, "One meeting the equipment was used for was for all the community colleges in the state to meet. Our community college members were able to come here to participate. Again, it alleviates travel for them. It allows them to network, collaborate, and share information. I see this as becoming more and more crucial as time goes on." He also expressed interest in using the equipment for continuing education activities. Currently, few individual libraries maintain high-tech equipment, so distance meetings are not feasible. However, Papenfuss looks forward to the day when SCKLS can do some training sessions in which indi-

vidual library sites can host an audience so members who don't typically come to the sessions can attend.

Papenfuss expressed appreciation for everything that Kan-ed has made possible through the years, even beyond this one grant. He said, "We've participated in several Kan-ed grants over the years and without that funding, there's a lot of things that we could not have done. We moved here about three to four years ago now and basically came with no infrastructure, so we were very dependent on a lot of Kan-ed funds to help us get going initially. It's been very helpful to us."

