

**Ventura County Library System
Director's Report
February 4, 2010**

City of Ventura Libraries

On November 3, 2009, City of Ventura ballot measure A failed 44%-56%. This general sales tax measure would have provided funding to keep Wright Library open. The San Buenaventura Friends of the Library had managed to fundraise over \$100,000 which kept Wright Library open from July, 2009-Nov. 2009. With no further funding available, Wright Library was closed on Nov. 30th, 2009.

Staff from Wright Library, with the exception of the City Librarian position, which was eliminated, were transferred to Foster. The most popular collections such as New Books and DVD's as well as some of the most popular Children's materials were transferred immediately.

Currently, City staff and County staff are negotiating with the Ventura Community College about future use of the building. VCL would like to see Children's programming, in particular, taking place at the Wright Library.

VCL staff are targeting March 31, 2010 as the date to have both collections consolidated at Foster Library. The second floor at Foster will be exclusively for use by children and their families and caretakers. This floor will be named "The Helen P. Wright Children's Department" and Mrs. Wright's portrait and a plaque will be hung on the wall.

The San Buenaventura Friends of the Library are working with city staff to develop a strategic planning process that includes community involvement.

Southern California Library Cooperative

On November 18, 2009, the 45 member libraries of SCLC voted unanimously to offer membership to the Ventura County Library System. The final step in this process will be a vote by the State Library of California, possibly in February. Our membership in Black Gold Library System would end on July 1, 2010, when our membership in SCLC begins.

As Oxnard, Thousand Oaks and Moorpark are members of SCLC, we are looking forward to opportunities for closer cooperation and innovative library services county-wide in the future.

Negotiations with Thousand Oaks

The City of Thousand Oaks and the CEO's office of Ventura County have had several meetings to discuss the continuation of payments by the County to the City. No decisions have been made and discussions are continuing.

Gates Broadband Summit

The Gates Foundation and the State Library of CA held a summit on bringing broadband to all libraries in California in December in Sacramento. All 181 public library directors in California were invited to the summit. The summit was very interesting and I brought back several ideas for new services to the public. However, most library directors seemed of the opinion that while bandwidth is important, it is not nearly as important as funding for basic library services or replacement of aging buildings. In addition, the keynote speaker, Tim O'Reilly, a well known publisher of technology books, began his presentation by saying, "Don't worry about broadband, its going away and will be replaced by wireless handheld devices very quickly".

Wireless Access

In late December, we began to leave wireless access on in our branches 24/7, with the exception of Camarillo, where there is no access to the parking lot after hours. Within two weeks, we had over 200 hits during hours that the libraries are closed even though we have provided no publicity. These hits were present at all branches. This is a simple, low cost way we can give extra value to our users who may not be able to access our wireless during our business hours.

Personnel

In March, 2009, the Principal Librarian in charge of Technical Services retired. We left the position vacant through the summer and fall and reclassified it down to a Senior Librarian.

In November, 2009, we hired Sandy Schmitz, from the Berkeley Public Library to take over the modified duties. Sandy was at Berkeley when I was director and I know the quality of her work, her passion for public service and her willingness to look at processes and find ways to make them more effective and efficient.

VCL is truly lucky to have several library students on staff. In a time where many libraries are struggling to find new dedicated librarians, we are growing our own. This month, Gladstone Buckner, who works at the Camarillo Library, graduated from San Jose State University School of Library Science.

California Library Association

The California Library Association held its annual conference in Pasadena in Oct., 2009. I was Program Chair and the conference focused on community partnerships and new ways of doing things in economically difficult times. I was elected Treasurer of CLA for a three year term, which will require occasional travel to Sacramento.