THE LIBRARY’S MISSION

Building a stronger community by enabling lifelong learning and enrichment.

THE LIBRARY’S VISION

A thriving Library that is an integral part of the lives of the community.
We’ve put the finishing touches on fiscal year July 2020–June 2021, and what a year it was. Difficult? Yes. Never before, in most of our lifetimes, had anyone experienced an ongoing pandemic of this magnitude.

We made it through, thanks to a creative and flexible Library staff. They continued offering library services in every way possible while working to keep everyone safe. They stayed connected with you whether it was through virtual storytimes, at the drive-up window, through Walking Books home delivery, the Mobile Library or outdoor “landmark” tours. As vaccinations became available, things improved and we restored library hours and, still masking, added back in-person programs.

We have appreciated the support that everyone extended to The Library and our staff. It has been great to hear “Thanks” from so many of our patrons for being there, and to hear how much it has meant in your lives to have access to library services.

One Instagram fan found solace online: “I love the Libby app! It has been a sanity saver over the pandemic.”

Facebook fan Kerry Welch wrote “...I sincerely appreciate the creative efforts and all that our library has done to help carry people through this pandemic.”

It was a rough year, indeed, and we thank you for sticking with us in the ways you feel comfortable.

Let’s work toward and hope for a better year!

Regina Greer Cooper, Executive Director
# Total Revenue & Operating Reserve Carry-Forward

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Overdue Fines and Fees</td>
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<td>Grants/Contributions/State Aid</td>
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**Total Revenue & Operating Reserve Carry-Forward**: $17,382,962

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# Total Expenditures

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<td>Operating Reserve Carry-Forward</td>
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**Total Expenditures**: $17,382,962
The Library staff and patrons were still learning what “normal” was by July 2020, as the new fiscal year began in the early days of COVID-19. The district had reopened on May 26 after closing for over nine weeks due to the pandemic. The masking, social distancing and sanitizing that seemed so foreign after branches reopened in May had become routine.

It was harder, however, getting used to quiet libraries. No storytimes. No concerts. Visitors returned slowly; the more cautious ones kept the drive-up windows and self-checkout machines busy. Meeting rooms remained off limits. All branches scaled back hours of operation until mid-2021. Library coffee shops closed for lack of foot traffic. All in-person programs would not resume until late 2021.

Through it all, an innovative staff helped everyone cope during COVID while ensuring their safety and safe distance. Families stayed engaged with the Library safely with programs that took them outdoors, like the Hidden History Hunt, or entertained virtually with a Library original video cooking series and virtual author interviews. Storytimes went live on Facebook each week. Patrons took the Library home in crafty Takeout Kits, Imagine Kits, Book Bundles and Grab Bags. The annual Holiday Store for kids went online for the first time, and delivered gifts to home…..
branches for pickup. Patrons avoiding in-person visits enjoyed extended time on sites such as Ancestry Library Edition through 2021 to make family research possible from home.

The Library also purchased laptops for in-house checkout so patrons could social distance while using a computer. And cardholders could check out one of 27 new Chromebooks for 12 weeks to work remotely — a project supported by coronavirus relief funds through the office of the Secretary of State.

As vaccines became available in spring 2021, many library services resumed. Meeting rooms reopened for the public in June. Outreach staff resumed visits to community groups. People could again get one-on-one computer help sessions. The Mobile Library resumed normal service. Public iPads and computers were reinstalled at all the branches. Travelers were on the move again, so passport service resumed at the Library Center and Library Station by appointment.

MOBIUS lending resumed after halting in March. One librarian shared the joy she witnessed: “When I informed a patron on the phone about MOBIUS being available again, she was so excited that she said, ‘I think I’ll go get myself dessert to celebrate!’”

At the request of the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, library branches hosted a successful series of COVID-19 vaccine clinics for the public and library staff. More than 200 vaccines were given at the clinics.

Better days would be ahead as the 2020–2021 fiscal year came to a close. New or expanded hours and Sunday openings in the next fiscal year would mark what we hoped would be the beginning of a better “new normal.”

I just love everything about our community libraries! The possibilities are endless with a library card! I love the programs you have for my littles, not having to spend a fortune on books, being able to be surrounded by my favorite things: books!

— Facebook fan
Beth Bradley
On the Road and Out of the (Takeout) Box!

When families couldn’t come to The Library, we sent it home in paper sacks for kids to unwrap and explore. Thus began Imagine Kits and Library Takeout Kits. They were available at every branch and Mobile Library, and contained everything but the librarian to keep youngsters busy and learning. Reading and craft activities invited children to learn about dinosaurs, with supplies to make their own. Kids made and modeled crowns, handmade puppets and the wildly popular Flapping Dragon.

Librarians also offered tips for parents coping with the pandemic with helpful articles and ideas on the Parents and Racing to Read blogs on the Kids Page, thelibrary.org/kids.

Talking in front of a camera, whether it’s live or being recorded, isn’t easy, but Youth Services staff made it look seamless. They recorded songs, rhymes, challenges, book talks and storytimes that children could enjoy — even dance to! — at home, online.

Young readers across the Ozarks were treated to a virtual visit with Newbery Award winner Tae Keller, who talked about her journey to being an author, how she edits and rewrites her books, and what winning the Newbery Medal this year has meant to her.

“— A parent

“We are the Shuffits and we love the library! We are so grateful to still be able to interact with the library during the pandemic. We are loving the takeout projects! Thank you for continuing to share fun and learning with our family!”

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The pandemic halted in-person storytimes, so the Youth Services staff recorded many of their virtual storytimes on location, featuring the Springfield Conservation Nature Center, Dickerson Park Zoo and parks across Greene County communities.
Storytime & More went on location to share stories and promote fun sites for family outings. Kids could tune in to watch virtually on Facebook and the Kids Page. The library crew made stops at the Railroad Historical Museum, Dickerson Park Zoo, the Springfield Art Museum and the Springfield Conservation Nature Center.

The Summer Reading Program, known for filling auditoriums with kids and zany performers, had a different vibe when those events went virtual. Some 3,714 youths participated in the 2020 reading program, a 55% drop from 2019 and another symptom of the pandemic’s stress on families burdened with child care and schooling options.

The summer’s bright spot: Participation in the Summer Reading To Go program dipped by less than 10%. Staff took summer reading activities to sites where children were served by other agencies — Boys & Girls Clubs, child care centers and camps, and food distribution sites. Its success underscored the value of providing library services and programs to our community in diverse and multiple ways and locations.

As one parent posted on Instagram: “The kids finished their summer reading! Pandemic or not, I want them to develop a love of reading and the best way to do that (in my opinion) is read and be read to. My 6-year-old can fully read and my 3-year-old wants to learn. I’m so proud of both of them.”

“...Thank you so much for the storytime on the go packet. Storytime was such a huge part of our weekly routine before the pandemic and we had so much fun with the activities and books you all selected.”

— Teresa Simpson

Library Bingo challenged children to check out a cookbook and make a recipe from it with a grown-up or friend, so dad Eric Hall and son Philip took the challenge and made muffins using a kids’ cookbook.

Kaylin dove into his Takeout Kit filled with fossil facts and supplies to make dino fossils. The kit included an added challenge to use a library resource to learn more about prehistoric beasts, which Kaylin did — enough to name each of the dinos using only their fossil remains.

Cub Scout Pack #289 visited the Midtown Carnegie Branch to learn about garden seeds and toured the Heirloom Seed Library before each scout selected four seed packets to take home and start their gardens.
A creative library staff used technology and a can-do spirit to bring programs to their audiences when the pandemic halted in-person events. It was a year of virtual “firsts” for children’s programs. YouTube, Facebook and Zoom allowed kids to practice reading to a dog, or dance during a storytime, and provided a stage for Springfield top chefs to bring their cooking secrets to the masses.

Many people who toughed out the pandemic at home were inspired to tidy up the homefront, and they found help in a five-part series, “Clutter Busters,” on Zoom. Amity Farr of Simple Fly Life focused on tips for reducing clutter and streamlining home life to save time.

The Library also kicked off a new series, “We Need to Talk,” designed to provide a safe space to ask hard questions about tough topics. The virtual programs drew large virtual crowds with topics such as “White Privilege” and “What is Gender Identity?”

It Happened, Virtually, @ The Library

The Library’s first virtual craft program, Make a Woven Wall Hanging, was hosted by the Schweitzer Brentwood Branch. Seventy-one people watched the program over two days on The Library’s channel, youtube.com/SpringfieldGreene.

“
We had a gouda thyme participating in the Library’s virtual Foodie Trivia tonight! Team ‘Chewy Decimal System’ didn’t win... but I did accomplish my goal of making the most food puns.

— Patron Matt Simpson

Adults logged on for a virtual tour of one-room Schoolhouses of the Ozarks with David Burton, county engagement specialist with the Greene County MU Extension Office. Viewers asked questions and offered their own stories. They also received a printable list of schoolhouse addresses for their own driving tour.

The Holiday Store, where children usually get to shop for others in library “stores,” were content to window shop through a virtual store in December 2020. Children coped with the COVID safety measures by filling out and emailing gift orders from the items on display in the Library concourse, knowing their items would be delivered to their neighborhood branch within three days.

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With so many families facing tragic losses due to COVID-19, The Library provided them with an opportunity to discuss topics such as grief and advance care planning. The fourth year of Death & Dying: Conversations on End-of-Life Matters went virtual with area professionals to give people a foundation for starting conversations with loved ones.

Even virtual trivia was possible! The first in a series, Fun and Festive Holiday Trivia, proved it so. Twelve teams logged onto Zoom to test their holiday IQ. Trivia team “Yule Shoot Your Eye Out!” squeaked to a win by one point.

Authors joined us virtually throughout the year. Peter Kageyama, author of “The Emotional Infrastructure of Places: Engaging Our Community Following the Pandemic,” kicked off a timely series about neighboring. Joining the virtual lineup was author Melody Warnick talking about loving where you live.

An Oh, The Horror series featured virtual interviews and Q&A sessions with Victor LaValle discussing his H.P. Lovecraftian novella; Matt Ruff, whose book inspired the HBO hit series “Lovecraft Country;” and Nebula Award-winning author P. Djèlí Clark on his novella, “Ring Shout.” Author Marta McDowell took us on an entertaining virtual romp through the White House gardens and her book “All the Presidents’ Gardens.” Other author talks on Zoom featured Daniel Kraus (“The Living Dead”); Nadia Bulkin (“She Said Destroy: Stories”); and Andy Davidson (“The Boatman’s Daughter”).

During this challenging time, I have enjoyed all the reading that the library provides and the convenience of picking up and dropping off books at my local Price Cutter. Thank you for all the work you do to make this possible.

— Patron
Barbara Brozowski

In a staff-produced series on YouTube, “Aisle 641: Tips to Make You a Top Chef,” Jenny Russo demonstrated how to make Italian wedding soup famous at Russo’s St. Michaels; Joe Gidman of Van Gogh’s Eeterie created Meatball Zuurkool; and Eleanor Taylor of Prairie Pie showed us how to make the perfect pie crust.

In the We Need to Talk series opener, White Privilege, 56 adults signed on to Zoom to take part in an informal conversation with Justyn Pippins, Southwest SCORE Diversity Chair; Sean Nevills, director of Health and Physical Education for DESE; and Tamarr Maclin, assistant director of programs at Drew Lewis Foundation.
The 2020–2021 fiscal year introduced new services that answered community needs for convenience and inclusion, help for businesses during the pandemic, and a little bit of kindness, for everyone.

Running late? No computer? We made it easy to renew library materials by telephone, 24 hours a day. Patrons can call 417-882-2087 and enter their valid library card number, walk through the prompts and renew items that aren’t on hold.

Library staff adapted our services to respond to the rapidly changing needs of small business owners and entrepreneurs. Through Business Connect, patrons can visit any library branch and get the help they need with research on useful services, databases, guides and programs for businesses and entrepreneurs.

We created a Niche Academy training to help business owners understand how to access and apply for CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program benefits. Staff partnered with Southwest Missouri SCORE to launch Tuesdays @ Two, an ongoing webinar series with topics focused on starting or growing a business, with a focus on pandemic-related challenges. The Library also co-hosted the two-day virtual SCORE E3 Women’s Conference; and partnered with SBDC and SCORE to host virtual training sessions about library resources for businesses.
Want to create a 3D item to demonstrate a new product? Need to create vinyl lettering for a sign, employee or club T-shirts? The Maker Space opened in the Midtown Carnegie Branch with useful tools for businesses, hobbyists and do-it-yourselfers. The equipment was possible with grants through the Friends of the Library and the Library Services and Technology Act.

As the November 2021 Presidential Election approached, the Library Center and Library Station launched free notary service to assist citizens wanting to cast an absentee or mail-in ballot. The service was offered for any documents by appointment.

Librarians joined their colleagues nationwide working to create more diverse, equitable and inclusive spaces for staff and patrons. Staff undertook a diversity audit of The Library’s collection, examining available materials related to diversity including race/ethnicity, ability, religion and LGBTQIA. Staff formed an internal Inclusion Committee to guide everything from hiring practices to programs. The virtual series “We Need to Talk” dealt with issues ranging from race to LGBTQIA.

And a grant purchased “sensory safe” toys and tools to make visits to any library more comfortable for children and patrons with sensory issues, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder and developmental disabilities. The kits were funded with a Diversity & Inclusion grant from the Community Foundation of the Ozarks.

“The Lincoln School Collection” went live as a digital collection on thelibrary.org/lochist. It featured images of the people and stories of the Black lives that flourished at historic Lincoln School in Springfield. Herman Horn, Jr., who graduated from Lincoln in 1946, commented, “Lincoln High School was the cornerstone for every African-American that hit this town.”

“I love the Libby app! It has been a sanity saver over the pandemic.”
— Instagram fan cshauck

The Library invited the community to take part in 100 Acts of Kindness March 13–20 as a way to foster connections and neighborliness, in honor of the good neighbor himself, Mister Rogers. Patrons shared heartwarming stories and photos capturing about 40 acts of kindness. The Pattison kids drew pictures and wrote kind messages and quotes on the walking path in their neighborhood.
When we couldn’t be inside together, we went outside to stay connected with families. And the Hidden History Hunt was born. People of all ages picked up a history hunt guide and accepted the challenge to visit at least six of the 12 locations across Springfield. Rewards included an “I ♥ My Library” cling; selfie submissions earned a library book bag. The photos and the stories continued coming all summer, framing families under the Cloud House at Farmers Park, below downtown’s giant foot sculpture, and beneath The World’s Largest Fork.

Families already familiar with our outdoor StoryWalks® were happy to see them continue at a time when they yearned for safe, outdoor activities. Kids could stroll through Republic’s J.R. Martin Park as they read each page of “Big Dance” by Aoife Greenham posted on signs along the path. StoryWalks® also provided entertainment on foot at The Fairbanks, Timmons Temple at Silver Springs Park, the Railroad Historical Museum at Grant Beach Park and the Springfield Conservation Nature Center.

StoryQuest encouraged individuals, friends and families to go on a landmark scavenger hunt of sorts for a spring outing. Participants picked up a StoryQuest guide to locate the landmarks, got tips on further reading, and sent The Library staff a selfie taken at any site to be entered into a gift card drawing.

As the COVID-19 pandemic moved operations outside, Outreach Services Manager Allison Eckhardt modified her visits to community partners serving the underserved. As families visited drive-through pickup lines at food distribution sites, she handed out library materials and craft Takeout Kits for the children.

The Mobile Library staff made their rounds with the usual books, CDs and DVDs along with Takeout Kits for adults — a small wreath craft — and for kid and teens — doll-sized yarn stocking caps.
After the Mobile Library remained parked in the early months of the pandemic, it returned to the streets on Nov. 6, 2020, to the delight of patrons at the bookmobile’s 26 weekly stops. For the time being, staff only delivered holds, and there was no onboard browsing due to health safety issues. So the Outreach Services staff assembled book and DVD bundles, and grab bags of five items each for kids, teens and adults, for those who didn’t have holds to pick up, or just wanted to check out more items.

Families and adults who couldn’t travel to a library branch to pick up the activity-filled Imagine Kits could get them when the Mobile Library stopped in their neighborhood. Each kit had literacy tips along with a take-home activity for families to do together. One librarian observed, “This has been a great option for those families that are missing our in-house programming this summer.”

The Library invited the community to take part in 100 Acts of Kindness for a week in March 2021 as a way to foster connections when we felt so disconnected by the pandemic. It capped a series of virtual programs on the simple art of being a neighbor. Many families turned those good deeds into outdoor projects, with chalk art, trash pickup and helping neighbors with outside chores. All ages got in the act, as one grandmother wrote, “My 4-year-old grandson shared handwritten notes with businesses that bring him joy to visit such as Discovery Center, SOMO Farm Supplies, Krispy Kreme, The Main Post Office, and Cowan Ace Hardware. He plans to do more but it will be after today. I told him he was spreading joy.”

Laura and Jeff Case posed for a selfie in front of Defeat of Bigfoot at Founders Park in Springfield during the Hidden History Hunt, an outdoor landmark scavenger hunt to liven up the days of COVID-19.

Johanna & Samantha Fronick and their brothers had SO much fun with the scavenger hunt over spring break! Thank you for the challenge. We honestly did discover areas we ordinarily would have missed.

— Patron Michelle Fronick

The giant fork sculpture in Chesterfield Village was on our summer Hidden History Hunt, and brought out some creative photography. (No children or other humans were harmed in the making of these scenes.)

Can you walk and read a book at the same time? You could with The Library. StoryWalks® appeared along school sidewalks and park paths so children and families could read a book as they took a stroll safely outdoors as the pandemic continued. The Library posted StoryWalks® throughout Springfield and Greene County sidewalks and parks.
Used books, CDs and DVDs donated at the 10 library branches are the lifeblood of the successful Friends of the Library spring and fall book sales. But when the Library closed from March–May 2020, donations halted, and the Spring Book Sale was canceled. For many, sheltering at home fueled a pent-up demand to declutter, because in July scores of people showed up for a two-week Book Donation Blitz on the Library Center parking lot. On Day 1 of the blitz, drive-up donations filled one 112-square-foot PODS container. By Day 3, the Friends were filling their fourth PODS. And then, someone drove up with a full U-Haul van.

When donations resumed at all the branches months later and Friends volunteers resumed pricing books and packing trailers, they got the green light for the Fall Book Sale. With a strictly enforced mask mandate, the Friends’ six-day sale at the Ozark Empire Fairgrounds E*Plex hit its sixth-highest sales total, raising $143,154.11.

When the COVID-19 pandemic lingered in the Ozarks in spring 2021, many people turned to reading and movie watching. All that cocooning led to a demand for books, and a record-shattering 2021 Spring Book Sale, grossing $172,653.88.
The 2021 Spring Book Sale was an even bigger surprise. Despite a mask mandate for shoppers and the ongoing pandemic, the Friends broke a record with $172,653.88 in sales.

Since their first sale in 1985, the Friends have raised more than $4 million to benefit all 10 branches of The Library.

The Friends return many of their fundraising proceeds in the form of grants for author events, music concerts and performances, branch furniture and equipment. Major grants in the past have funded the Mobile Library and the Library Express West 24-hour book kiosk. Here’s where grants went in 2020–2021:

- **Wee Read 2020**, $18,463
- **Plant upkeep**, $7,200
- **Branch needs, discretionary fund**, $25,000
- **Music programs**, $400
- **Maker Space at Midtown Carnegie Branch**, $4,000
- **Summer Reading program 2021**, $25,706
- **Author Brit Bennett (coming spring 2022)**, $5,000
- **Library Center auditorium chairs**, $21,034
- **Show Me Missouri website, showmemo.org**, $1,125

The bronze “Future Teacher” greets visitors at the Schweitzer Brentwood Branch as a memorial to former teacher and longtime Friends of the Library leader Jane McWilliams. The Friends commissioned the statue with a memorial fund.

Eager reader Lorenzo is ready to dig into his new book, funded through the Friends’ Wee Read program. That year the Friends funded $18,463 for books given to families during visits by Parents As Teachers staff.

The Friends’ signature Wee Read project provides free books and library resource packets for families visited by Parents as Teachers staff. Friends volunteers prepared 5,000 book packs for families in August 2020.

Siblings Marvin and Melinda Sokolik sorted through their stack before heading to the cashier. Marvin is a sale volunteer and has shopped the last four sales. “We love it. It’s like another holiday,” he said. Melinda added that parents, grandparents and other relatives make it to the sales, too. “The whole family is invested in it!”

The record-breaking 2021 Spring Book Sale drew Ashlee Iseminger, of Springfield, whose trip netted a tower: “I have a third grader who’s a big reader. I can’t keep him in books!”
We celebrated support from all levels of giving through the year, and we finally saw the long-awaited grand opening of a major gift from 2019 — the Library Station’s Play & Learn Center. It was funded with a $108,000 gift to the Library Foundation from The Stanley & Elaine Ball Foundation, managed by Central Trust Company.

Gifts and grants, small and large, reflected personal and community connections with The Library.

- Private donations totaled $7,539.73 during Give Ozarks Day: Rally for Recovery, presented by the Community Foundation of the Ozarks.
- Friends, family and Old Missouri Bank memorialized the late Jim Gorst, a former Library Foundation member, donating over $6,000 to purchase a stage for the Library Center auditorium.
- Library patron Greg S. Beard donated $2,500, and the Republic Walmart donated backpacks to outfit 20 family Adventure Backpacks for three-week checkouts.
• The Dollar General Literacy Foundation gave a $2,700 grant to fund four new StoryWalks® outside The Fairbanks community center.

• Private gifts funded three items in a Help-A-Librarian campaign: a bird feeder station and indoor viewing platform at the Republic Branch; primary toddler blocks for the Library Station; and a color-changing Light Table at the Schweitzer Brentwood Branch.

• The Library Foundation distributed $33,290 in grants to buy more books, fund the Death & Dying series, virtual programs, Takeout Kits and early literacy programs. It also granted $27,372 from the Laton Endowment for mobile hot spots for checkout.

• Bass Pro Shops donated a $4,968 grant to purchase 20 mobile hot spots at the Library Station to support under-resourced families as they work and study remotely.

• Farmers Gastropub’s $1,000 gift allowed expansion of the 2021 Heirloom Seed Library.

• The Local History & Genealogy Department received shelving to store and help preserve archival materials. This $1,450 purchase was made possible by a donor who gave $4,000 to support archival projects.
### By the Numbers in 2020–2021

- **837 Families** checked out free, family passes to the Discovery Center of Springfield.
- **1,398 hot spots** for remote internet access were checked out.
- **602,346 books, materials and digital materials** in the collection were checked out a total of 2,151,685 times.
- **5,999 people of all ages** visited the Mobile Library on its 26 weekly stops to neighborhoods and housing complexes.
- **2,850 travelers** applied for a passport at the Library Center and Library Station.
- **3,345 adults** attended 555 programs.
- **933 people** attended 395 Edge (computer lab) programs.
- **Librarians answered 128,520 reference questions.**
- **2,208 children** attended 130 programs just for them.
- **917 people** requested book recommendations through Your Next Read.
- **17,092 guests** used library meeting rooms for trainings and group events during 7,124 group bookings.
- **865,489 people** visited the 10 library branches. 247,065 visited through the drive-up windows; 612,425 came inside the branch buildings.
- **702,238 unique visitors** dropped by the Library website, thelibrary.org.
Springfield-Greene County Library District
Springfield, Missouri

The Library Center
4653 S. Campbell Ave. • 417-882-0714

Ash Grove Branch Library
101 E. Main St., Ash Grove • 417-751-2933

Fair Grove Branch Library
81 S. Orchard Blvd., Fair Grove • 417-759-2637

The Library Station
2535 N. Kansas Expressway • 417-865-1340

Midtown Carnegie Branch Library
397 E. Central St. • 417-862-0135
The Edge Community Technology Center and Maker Space: 417-837-5011

Outreach Services
4653 S. Campbell Ave.
Mobile Library/Walking Books: 417-883-6112

Park Central Branch Library
128 Park Central Square • 417-831-1342

Republic Branch Library
921 N. Lindsey Ave., Republic • 417-732-7284

Schweitzer Brentwood Branch Library
2214 Brentwood Blvd. • 417-883-1974

Strafford Branch Library
101 S. State Highway 125, Strafford • 417-736-9233

Willard Branch Library
304 E. Jackson St., Willard • 417-742-4258

Satellite Locations
Pick up and return only:
Library Express West, Orchard Plaza, 3872 W. Chestnut Expwy.
Price Cutter Book Stop, 3260 E. Battlefield Road