

# **Community Development @ Your Library**

A New Alliance for Progress

## **C.D. Study Report #226**

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A New Alliance for Progress

Collaborative project between

Kansas State Library  
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The *mission* of Community Development @ Your Library is to form an alliance that is committed to expand the capacity of libraries in the areas of (1) community and economic development, (2) small business and entrepreneurship. And the *vision* of the alliance is to enhance the economic life of communities across Kansas through the services of libraries and their staff.

## Analysis of the extension office survey

The overall goal of this project is to understand the role of public libraries in (1) community and economic development, (2) small business and entrepreneurship. In smaller cities with limited resources often, county extension offices serve as focal points of information for the libraries and small businesses. To determine the extent of the association between the libraries, small business owners with the local extension offices, this survey was carried out. Primarily Family and Consumer Science (FCS) extension agents in the county extension office were covered, however not all the respondents were FCS agents due to vacant FCS positions.

A survey with common questionnaire consisting of 8 questions (Exhibit 1) was conducted during 14-29 June 2004 with the Extension agents in the service jurisdiction of Southeast Kansas Library System (SEKLS). The fifteen counties serviced under the SEKLS are Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Coffey, Crawford, Elk, Greenwood, Labette, Linn, Montgomery, Neosho, Wilson and Woodson.

Out of the fifteen counties, 8 counties (53%) have one or more on-going extension educational program with the local public library. Summer reading program – 6 out of 15 counties - dominate the list of programs. Other educational program extension office have with the public library are nutrition (2 out of 15), time management program (1 out of 15), health (1 out of 15 – this includes asthma, blood pressure, and general health), kids cooking video distribution (1 out of 15), and heritage craft (1 out of 15) programs (Refer Table 1). Crawford and Wilson counties currently do not have any on-going education programs, however in the past they had summer reading, nutrition and weaving programs.

Table 1: Extension programs with libraries

<b>Activities*</b>	<b>No. of Counties</b>
Summer Reading Program	6
Nutrition	2
Time Management Program	1
Health	1
Heritage Program	1
Kids cooking video	1
No current programs	7

\* Counties with programs have more than one program

Community residents participate in many organizations. The Extension Council is one such organization where people active in local library can interact with people active in extension programs. At the time of the survey none of the librarians from the SEKLS counties serve on any of the county extension councils. However, there are other forums/venues where extension staff interacts with the library staff. Nevertheless, such interaction is not common across all the fifteen counties surveyed. About half (47%) of the counties surveyed interact with extension staff in programs such as Friends of the Library, summer reading programs, and National Library Week. Cherokee county extension staff and library staff serve as members on county tourism committee; local Farm Bureau Committees and local Vocational Agricultural Education program in the school districts.

Small business owners/entrepreneurs may seek information on starting a new business or improving the existing business from the local extension office. To determine the frequency of these calls, extension agents were asked how often the calls were received in a six-month interval. The responses were noted as '0' when the frequency of calls were less than 2 in six months interval and '1' when the frequency of such calls were more than 2 calls in six months interval. While eight county extension offices have received more than 2 calls from small business owners and entrepreneurs seeking information on business related issues, seven county extension offices have received calls less than 2 in the last six-months.

Generally, the extension agents provide the information requested by the local business owners and the entrepreneurs. Sometimes, the callers are referred to other sources for information depending on the information sought. In the survey, it is apparent that, local libraries are seldom referred as potential information source. Usually the requested information is located and provided to the callers. Public libraries in the SEKLS servicing counties are small and have limited resources. On the contrary, extension agents that this survey covered often receive information seekers referred by the local libraries.

All the surveyed extension agents expressed willingness to take a detailed survey if such a survey is mailed.

**Extension Agents Survey**

Community Development at your Library Survey Key :

1. Is this a good time to visit with you and interview you on the topic of relationship between extension and local library system?

- 0 No - End call, acknowledge thanks
- 1 Yes – go to question 2.

2. Are there any on-going extension educational programs with the local public library?

- 0 No – go to question # 4 (7 Responses)
- 1 Yes – go to question 3. (8 Responses)

3. What are the programs/Name those programs

4. Does the librarian or any representative of the local public library system serve for the extension council?

- 0 No – go to question # 6 (14 Responses)
- 1 Yes – go to question 5 (0 Responses)

5. What other venues/forums do the librarian/representative of the library interact with extension office/agents?

6. How often do the local small business owners/entrepreneurs contact your extension office requesting information?

- 0 Less than 2 times in six months (less frequently) (7 Responses)
- 1 More than 2 times (more frequently) (7 Responses)

7. In such situations, does the extension office in position to provide information?

- 0 No (1 Response)
- 1 Yes (13 Responses)

8. If the requested information is not available, where are the requesters directed? Is local library referred as a possible source of information?

- 0 No (not referred to local libraries) (9 Responses)
- 1 Yes (referred to local libraries) (4 Responses)

Not Applicable (1 response)

9. Are you willing to be contacted in the future on this topic of relationship between extension and local library system?

0 No (0 Responses)

1 Yes (13 Responses)

Not Applicable (1 Response)

10. End of questions. Thank the interview taker for the time.