
Community support saves Daniel Boone Area Library

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Special to The Mercury

BIRDSBORO — There was good news delivered recently about the Boone Area Library. The library is in a strong fiscal position and will not close according to Wanda Druzba, president of the board of trustees of the library, located 129 N. Mill St., Birdsboro.

"A year ago we were in desperate straits, and now all bills are paid (except for the mortgage on the building). Money is in the bank and we don't foresee any problems," Druzba said at the Oct. 21 Amity Township Board of Supervisors meeting.

Druzba told the board that library patronage has increased by 200 people since last year at this time, when library staff feared the library would have to close its doors for good. Library lending has also increased by 65 items (including books, music, DVDs, etc.).

She said it was the community support from individuals, businesses, and the three supporting municipalities of Amity, Birdsboro and Union that have allowed the library to pull itself out of the financial hole it was in from a line of credit, the building mortgage, as well as building repairs and expensive utility bills.

"None of this would have been possible without Pat Mascaro's matching grant of \$25,000 that was offered at the end of 2008," said Druzba.

"That grant was a push to get more municipal support, and the municipalities really dug deep, and we really appreciate it because we could pay off our line of credit, make repairs (old toilets are gone and water bills are lower), and make building repairs," Druzba said.

The recently approved state budget, which reduces funding to all libraries by 20 percent, will affect the Boone Area Library, said Druzba, but the impact of the \$18,000 revenue loss is still undetermined.

The administration will monitor the library's financial status throughout 2010 and possibly seek a reduction in the state-mandated operating hours if the financial gap doesn't close.

Druzba said the state funding reduction will be slightly offset by Berks County's 6 percent funding increase with the elimination of the county's bookmobile.

Another current fundraiser is the annual holiday raffle. Six tickets can be purchased for \$5 and more than 15 items that will be raffled off on Dec. 12. Items ranging from jewelry, kids toys to home decorating items are offered as prizes.

"Many county libraries are worse off than we are," said Druzba. "There won't be any major changes at the Boone Area Library, which does have an ongoing revenue stream.

"Love for the library is being carried over to this year," added Druzba.

She said the library administration had witnessed its highest patronage in 2008, which was surpassed in 2009 with 200 more people who sought use of the library's computers, as well as participation in the free computer classes

computer classes.

"Participation in the weekly storytime at St. Paul's United Church of Christ Church, Douglassville, on Friday mornings has increased 25 percent from last year, and the Boone Area Library's preschool themed story times with activities is also very popular," said Druzba.

Preschool storytimes are Mondays at 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and Fridays at 1 p.m. A "Mommy & Me" storytime meets Wednesdays at 11 a.m.

Druzba said there are still many ways for individuals to help the library.

"The library could use one more volunteer representative from Union Township and one more from Birdsboro," said Druzba.

The Friends of the Boone Area Library meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the library.