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Renovations complete at Broken Arrow, Hardesty libraries

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Posted: Monday, December 29, 2014 12:00 am



Annie Stauffer browses for library books in Broken Arrow, Okla. on Tuesday, December 23, 2014. The bookshelves were lowered during a recent renovation to make browsing earlier for patrons. MATT BARNARD/Tulsa World

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By NOUR HABIB World Staff Writer | 1 comment

BROKEN ARROW — The new-carpet smell still emanates at the Broken Arrow Library, a few weeks after the branch reopened.

But the renovation at the library brought more than just new carpet. The Broken Arrow branch, 300 W. Broadway Ave., along with the Hardesty Regional branch, 8316 E. 93rd St., recently moved to a new service model that Tulsa-City County Library officials say will better serve 21st-century users.

At the Broken Arrow facility, that meant new self-checkout machines, lower shelves and plenty of new signs.

"That sounds like kind of a small thing, but part of our service model is creating a space where customers can navigate the library on their own terms," said Broken Arrow Library

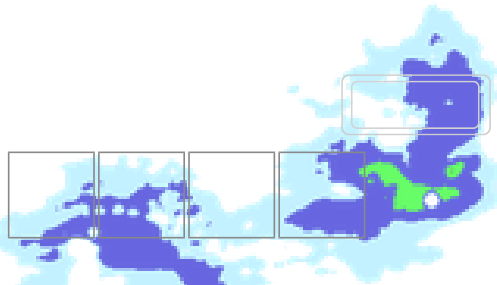


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Weather widget for Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, showing Cloudy Breezy, 33° F, HI: 37°, LO: 23°, and a map of the region.



manager Rebecca Howard.

During her first visit to the Broken Arrow Library after its renovation, Annie Stauffer was complimentary of the changes.

“It’s more welcoming, more friendly,” she said.

Stauffer noted that the signs and lower shelving do help with navigation.

“You can see from one side to the other where you need to go next,” she said.

Signs hanging from the ceiling include the traditional “Children’s Fiction” and “Young Adult” locations but also designate a “Tween” section. On the walls in capital letters the words “Ask,” “Check out” and “Holds” also help guide people.

Stauffer said she likes the new self-checkout machines, which save library users time because they don’t have to stand in line at a checkout desk.

“I have three kids, so the quicker we can get in and out of here, the better,” she said.

Stauffer also thinks the more modern feel will appeal to younger users, including her teenage son.

“He’s not going to feel like he’s at some ‘old’ library,” she said.

The changes at Hardesty also include the lower shelving and new signs and checkout machines. Noticeably missing are the large help desks on the first and second floors, which have been replaced by much smaller “Ask” desks on the perimeters of the library.

A large gathering area on the second floor at Hardesty features “functional” furniture, with such features as USB plug-ins and traditional outlets for charging electronic devices. Its one of the ways the library is trying to meet the needs of 21st-century users, said Kimberly Johnson, who was in charge of the renovation projects as the library system’s deputy director and chief innovation officer.

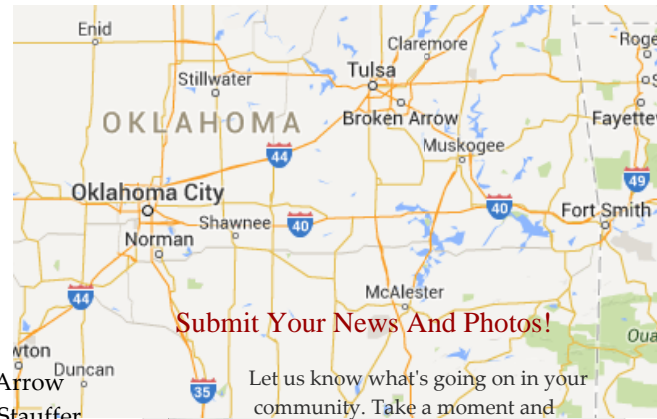
The new models also include iPad lounges where library users can browse through digital magazines and newspapers from around the world.

Johnson said the renovations turned out exactly as they were envisioned.

“Our customers are adapting to the changes, are embracing the changes and are excited about the changes,” she said.

Johnson said the library system has always been on the “cutting edge” of technology but that most of it was only available online.

“Now our buildings are being reconfigured to feature what we’ve been doing online all



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along," she said.

For example, visitors can now download e-material by scanning physical QR codes available at the new-model branches.

The new model also calls for library staff members to be out on the floor assisting customers at their "point-of-need." Many will be holding tablets as they walk around to help them answer customer questions on the spot.

Howard said the model will involve some training for staff, who are now being told that while they are out on the floor they should be "customer-focused." Much of the processing work will occur behind the scenes, she said.

In addition to Hardesty and Broken Arrow, the temporary Librarium location at 1110 S. Denver Ave., as well as the Brookside branch at 1207 E. 45th Place, have the new models in place.

Johnson said she expects three or four more branches to move to the new model in 2015.

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Ann McWhortor posted at 11:46 am on Mon, Dec 29, 2014.



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The bright colored machines did draw the kids attention but they weren't faster when I took 3 kids to the Hardesty Library last week. The new machines are not just for checking out books and that seemed to be tying them up. There was a line at all of them. Some people were standing there waiting for their turn to get help. There was only one person available to help.

If they lowered the shelving does that mean there is now a smaller selection of books to choose from?

Martin Library, which is considerably smaller than Hardesty, now seems to have a bigger selection of books, audio books and large print books than Hardesty seems to have now. I don't really think the lowering of shelves was made to make the library feel more friendly.

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