

Partnership
begins

The boards of the Rosebud County Library and the Board of Colstrip met with the County Commissioners September 10, 1988 at 6PM at the Blue Spruce. Present were Commissioners Hank McCaffree, and Malcom McRae and Forsyth board members Mariellen Lee, Albert Martens, Jean Dahlman, Alan Rolston, Hazel Walter, Esther Dean, Librarian and Colstrip board members Retha Jakeway, Dolly Fandrich, Cliff Young, Keith Brighton, and Megan Fite, Colstrip School Librarian. Esther Dean thanked everyone for coming.

Albert Martens, Chairman opened the meeting to informal discussion at 6:55PM.

Megan Fite stated that Colstrip should be very proud of its library. It is staffed and operated completely by volunteers. They have a good selection of books and are expanding. Each year they have a fundraiser to keep it going. Retha as Chairman of the Board has trained the volunteers. Dolly is presently Chairman. Western Energy provides the building. It is one of the oldest structures in Colstrip, a two story frame house which has been remodeled. Western Energy insures the building. The Board has \$10,000 insurance on the contents.

Albert asked what the library budget was? They did not have a financial statement at hand. They stated they had a spaghetti dinner this year which raised \$450. They have received \$5,000 from the county budget for the past 2 years.

Jean raised the question, "What do you want for the library?" Dolly responded that they would like a half-time librarian. At present library hours are 9:30-11:30, 2-4, and 7-9 most of the time. The hours are irregular because it is a volunteer effort.

Mac stated that from reading the statutes it is legal to form a branch library, but that would be up to the Library Board. Since the budget has been set for this year, there would be no funds available at present.

Megan asked what percentage of the mill levy would Colstrip Library get and how many dollars would be generated? Albert said that the library budget is about \$53,000. At present the levy is .217. By law, the county may levy up to 5 mills for library services. Mac replied that you first decide what's needed and then set the mill. The Commissioners have been trying to secure land in Colstrip from Western Energy. If Western Energy donates the land, Rosebud County will build a building to house Human Services. The 2 level building will have a daylight basement with the lower floor used for Senior Citizens and Library Services.

Megan expressed concern over being a branch library. She felt they would be subservient to the main library and wondered how the collections, purchasing and voting rights would be handled. She stated they have their own profile and a unique reading group. She further felt they would give up autonomy and not have control of the library. Ed said that the Library Board is composed of 5 persons appointed by the County Commissioners. As vacancies occur they will fill 2 or 3 seats from the Colstrip area. Esther suggested the board could be extended to have advisory members. Mac remarked that we can only have one County Library. Both libraries need to enter budgets either as one or broken down which then must be approved by the County Commissioners. The Librarian's salary is set by the board and she serves at their pleasure. The county seat is here. Forsyth's population is about 2500, and Colstrip is about 4700 at present.

The question was raised, "Is the Library Board geographic?" Hank responded that serving on the board has been based on having an interest in the library and what's best for the county. Esther said that in years past we have had board members from the Colstrip areas. Megan stated that the library serves the Southern part of the county besides Colstrip.

Alan remarked that he felt the libraries needed to cooperate and not compete with each other. Hank added that the libraries can share books and that each can specialize in their own area.

Albert said that the Colstrip Board should submit a letter requesting to become a branch library if this was their desire. We will have the County Attorney draw up an agreement and schedule a meeting to finalize plans. Megan wanted to know if this would be an irrevocable agreement. She felt the Colstrip Board should call Sara Parker to determine this.

Albert called for a resolution. Jean moved we establish a branch library in Colstrip, seconded by Mariellen. Motion carried

A meeting was set for Thursday, October 24th at 7:30 at the Rosebud County Library basement.

Mariellen thanked everyone for coming. She expressed her pleasure at the cooperation of those present. Cliff stated that he also was pleased at the cooperative spirit and would look forward to working together. Ed commented that all people in Rosebud County are pretty much the same whether they live in Forsyth or in Colstrip. All are entitled to library services.

Mariellen moved to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Hazel Walter, Secretary