Date:

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Technology Delivers a World of Reliable Information to (Your Town) Public Library

Need to find a Time magazine article from three years ago? Want to research the horse industry? Need a refresher before that big test? Head to the (Your Town) Public Library.

Within the four walls of the library, citizens can access millions of magazine articles, dozens of dependable reference materials, and a host of medical, scientific, consumer and business resources. All of it is available at your fingertips, according to (Library Director) (Your Name), and all of it is thanks to Digital Prairie, the statewide online databases that are available to all Oklahoma libraries.

"Once upon a time, the only information you could conveniently find in your library was restricted to the materials inside the building," (Your Name) said. "Those days are long gone. Today, we have access to materials that were once found in only the largest libraries."

(Your Name) said librarians have always helped citizens find the right books and periodicals to answer their questions. The Internet has made this mission even more critical.

"Anyone can be a publisher on the Internet, so you have to be careful to make sure the information is reliable," (Your Name) said. "Is it from a reputable source, or is it just someone's opinion?"

" That's what makes Digital Prairie so useful. All of these materials are from respected national publications and reference resources to assure their accuracy."

(Your Name) said library patrons can also access Digital Prairie remotely from home and office computers. "This is especially helpful if you need reference

information for work, or if your child needs homework assistance. If you have a computer connected to the Internet, all you need is a library card."

Oklahoma's public libraries rank in the top ten out of the 50 states in online connectivity. Combine this capability with Digital Prairie, and the state's public libraries are offering unprecedented access to information. That access also comes at a cost-savings to taxpayers.

Susan McVey, director of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL), says Oklahoma has been able to negotiate statewide licenses for the various databases in Digital Prairie. "This saves tax dollars and gives smaller libraries access to resources they could never afford on their own."

McVey said ODL has helped public libraries excel in information technology through one-on-one consultation, specialized training, assistance with the national E-Rate program, and the procurement of state, federal and private funds. "It's a great example of working together and pooling resources, and public library patrons are the winners."

Digital Prairie was initiated with an appropriation from the state legislature, and is now funded with annual dollars from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services.

(Your Name) said the new information technology is even helping improve access to the most popular resource in libraries—books.

"Online information is great, but it won't help if you want to read your favorite author, check out a book on a particular topic, or find something to read to your children." (Your Name) said.

"If we don't have the book you're looking for, we can borrow it from another library. Libraries have always borrowed materials from each other through Interlibrary Loan, but the new technology helps us do this faster and more efficiently since we can ask to borrow materials electronically."

"If we can't find the book in-state, the Department of Libraries can help us borrow a copy from libraries worldwide."

(Your Name) says citizens can also borrow DVDs, CDs, audio books, large print books, graphic novels, and government documents through Interlibrary Loan.

"Our mission hasn't changed. We're still here to meet the informational and recreational needs of our community," (Your Name) says. "But today, we can provide so much more."

For more information on Digital Prairie or Interlibrary Loan, drop by the (Your Town) Public Library, call (Phone Number), or visit (Web Address).

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