

Mid-Continent Public Library
2015-2016 Customer and Community Research
Final Report
January 29, 2016

Introduction

In November and December 2015, a multi-stage research study was conducted by Patron Insight, Inc., on behalf of the Mid-Continent Public Library.

While the methodology and the specific questions varied, the key topics addressed in each of the research processes included the following:

- **The Library’s “brand,”** meaning what individuals think of most often when they think about the Library.
- **The Library’s “place”** in the communities it serves, meaning its perceived impact on the quality of life, its level of importance in comparison to other “public services,” and the likelihood of support for a potential ballot issue.
- **The Library’s “challenge”** in finding common ground between those who recognize and appreciate what a library is today (and what it could become in the future), and those who remain stuck in the era of Card Catalogs.

The research data and interpretations that are presented in this report were collected via three methods:

- Interviews with 11 Key Opinion Leaders, to gain knowledge and recommendations from individuals who look at the Library more globally than might a typical member of the community. (The list of Key Opinion Leaders who participated is included at the end of the section on the interviews.)
- Questions inserted into the annual online Customer Survey, distributed by the Library to its cardholders, to gather opinions from those who know the Library best.

- A random-digit dial telephone survey of 500 registered voter heads of household – male or female – in Jackson, Clay and Platte counties (in appropriate proportions, as identified by the Library), to learn the thoughts of a broad cross-section of residents. There was also a question up front that confirmed that the potential respondent did not live within the boundaries of the Kansas City Public Schools. The questions that were added to the online Customer Survey were drawn from the telephone survey, to offer an opportunity for comparison between the two audiences on certain topics.

After this introduction, this report is divided into three sections: Key Opinion Leader interview findings, the telephone and online research results, and a summary.

Note: When the word “Library” appears with a capital first letter, it means Mid-Continent Public Library. When the “l” is lowercase, it means libraries in general.

Key Opinion Leader interview results

Eleven Key Opinion Leaders from various segments of the region were interviewed – one on one – to determine their perceptions of, and suggestions for, Mid-Continent Public Library.

The opinions expressed by those who were interviewed ended up placing the individual in one of two groups. (These groups were not identified, or even considered, prior to the interview process; they simply developed as an effective way to present the diversity of opinions heard during the conversations.)

Group 1 consisted of individuals who have an ongoing, direct relationship with MCPL that results in a clear and distinct benefit to the Group 1 member, to his or her organization, or to those being served by that organization, such as through a philanthropic entity.

An example of the former is school districts, where the benefit is a partnership with the Library. The latter includes those from the civic and philanthropic community who see the Library as a community asset (providing access to knowledge to all residents) and an important plus in community and economic development activities.

When asked to rank order the importance of the Library, as compared to other public service entities and community-focused organizations, most of the Group 1 members would place MCPL in the top one-third. The balance placed the Library in the middle one-third. (A list of such entities and organizations was read to the participants, before the “Where would you place the Library?” question was asked.)

Group 1 members unfailingly said they believed that the Mid-Continent Public Library was better than average, as compared to other library systems, while also generally admitting that they didn’t have extensive knowledge of other such systems – they just know that MCPL is stellar.

The basis for this high grade was captured in phrases, such as “it’s a great resource for gathering people,” “they have unique programs and they work to be innovative,” “the Library really understands it customers’ needs,” and the Library is “integrated into the community.”

There was also strong praise from Group 1 for the Library’s leadership and for its active willingness to partner with other community entities on activities that would contribute to economic development.

Those in Group 2, who did not directly benefit from the Library in the same way that those in Group 1 did, were a bit more pragmatic in their commentary.

For example, they would place the Library in the middle one-third or the bottom one-third, in terms of its importance, as compared to other public service entities and organizations. Their top one-third was dominated by safety and health care-related entities.

Aside from the ranking question, their opinions on Mid-Continent Public Library were somewhat more general.

For example, the Library was described as a “basic community resource” that is “well-positioned in the community.” Most of the Group 2 participants also offered praise for the Library’s “strong programming, its efforts to be innovative to bring “knowledge to the people,” and that it seemed to have a “good plan for the electronic resource age.”

Others were not quite as complimentary, with thoughts ranging from “libraries are in a state of transition” (MCPL included) to more blunt comments, such as that libraries are “stuck in history.”

When all the Key Opinion Leaders were asked where the Library could improve, and also provided an opportunity to offer any other thoughts and comments, the answers included:

- Need to stay ahead of the curve.
- Look for new partnerships.
- Be the research arm for community development.
- Need better communication and outreach to educate residents on all the Library has to offer.
- Eliminate duplication of services.
- Shelve any plans for iconic buildings.
- We are truly blessed to have such a resource.
- We would have had a different – and worse – conversation a year ago.
- The beauty is in community connections; that is their great virtue.
- Synergy works to build resilience in the community, and the Library helps us do that.

The opinions on the Library’s chances to pass a ballot issue were extremely mixed.

To increase the odds of ballot box success, the recommendations included the following:

- More people need to understand what the Library has to offer.
- They need to show me.
- Be better at PR and marketing.

- Show me your partnerships.
- Co-brand with Kauffman.
- Show me why libraries are important.
- Explain why new buildings are needed.
- Show how we are going to get the best bang for our buck.

As will be demonstrated in the report on the telephone and online surveys that follows shows the range of opinions about the Library, its role in the community, and the likelihood of ballot success varied significantly.

The Key Opinion Leader interview participants were as follows:

Bill Brown – Chairman, Lee’s Summit EDC

Ron Scheiber – Commissioner, Platte County

Dr. Dennis Carpenter – Superintendent, Hickman Mills School District

Sheila Tracy – President, Northland Chamber of Commerce

Scott Cooper – Executive Director, Hillcrest Transitional Housing

Leanne Resinger – Director, Kansas City Civic Engagement for the Kauffman Foundation.

Jim Hampton – Executive Director, Clay County EDC

Robin Winner – Executive Director, Synergy Services

Jerimiah Morgan – Deputy Solicitor General, LDS Church

Ann Whitaker – Board President, Assistance League of Kansas City

Dr. Mike Reik – Superintendent, Platte County School District

Telephone survey of Jackson, Clay and Platte County registered voters and an Online survey of MCPL customers – introduction

A random-digit dial telephone survey was conducted with 500 head-of-household (male or female), registered voters living in Jackson, Clay or Platte counties. One other stipulation was that those from the Jackson County segment **could not** live within the boundaries of the Kansas City Public Schools.

The telephone survey covered topics such as identifying the words that would best describe Mid-Continent Public Library (a brand exercise), agreement or disagreement with a series of statements about libraries in general, perceived likelihood of support at the ballot box for a variety of public entities and organizations, and the level of support for a tax levy increase for MCPL that would address facility needs and that would extend the hours of service at certain locations, among other topics.

During a similar time period, Mid-Continent Public Library was conducting its annual online survey of customers, and Patron Insight was given the opportunity to add questions to that survey. Those questions dealt with the likelihood of support for ballot proposals from various public entities and organizations, the word exercise to identify elements of MCPL's brand, and the support level for a potential tax levy increase proposal from the Library.

In reviewing this data, it is very important to remember that the telephone survey process employed for this study produces results that are statistically reliable, on these topics, at the time this survey was conducted. Taking the combined adult (over 18 years old) population of a little more than 765,000 in the three counties, the Margin of Error for data in this report reflects the views of the entire survey group of 500 respondents is 4.4%, at the 95% confidence level.

Online surveys have less statistical reliability, because they include only those individuals who make an effort to take part. As a result, certain demographic characteristics – particularly the location of the respondent's residence – are typically out of balance with the accurate information for that characteristic.

Make no mistake, however: Online research produces extremely valuable information. It is simply important to remember that, when a question appears on both a telephone and an online survey, the data from the phone survey has a higher degree of statistical reliability.

The results below are grouped by topic. The telephone survey questions are presented in the order they appeared in the survey itself. The online results are shown in a cross-tabulation format, to allow for easier comparison between the results for the two survey methodologies.

Topic: The importance of various public entities and organizations, including “the public library”

After answering the questions that qualified individuals for participation in the telephone survey, the respondents were read a list of various public entities and organizations.

As the list was being read, participants were asked to say, “Yes,” if they or a family member had “interacted” with the entity or organization “within the last year or so.” Interacted was defined in the question as being “personally used, visited, were served by, or directly benefited from the specific organization or public entity.”

The purpose of this question is to read aloud the list of public entities and organizations that will be discussed in the questions that follow.

Nonetheless, it is still interesting to note that “the public library” scored 47%, placing it second out of 10, only being topped (with a score of 63%) by “Recreation programs and facilities, such as parks and swimming pools.”

The set of questions that followed presented the same list of public entities and organizations. As each one was read, the participant was asked to state what he or she thought the likelihood of community support for a tax increase would be, if the need for such a tax increase could be demonstrated. The answer options were “Very likely,” “Somewhat likely,” “Not very likely” and “Not at all likely.”

Combining the “Very likely” and “Somewhat likely” responses, telephone survey participants were most optimistic (91%) about support for a tax increase for “Recreation programs and facilities, such as parks and swimming pools.”

In second place, with a score of 81%, was the fire department, followed very closely (at 80%) by “the public library.” Two other entities had scores over 50%: “Local public school district” (73%) and “Higher education facilities, like colleges, community colleges and career training facilities” (63%). The lowest score – at 15% – was for “Public services, like water, wastewater and trash pickup.”

Online survey respondents were a bit more positive overall, with results ranging from 70% (each) for “Higher education facilities like colleges, community colleges, and career training facilities” and “Public services, like water, wastewater and trash pickup” to 84% for the “fire department.”

“The public library” scored 79%, placing it in fourth place (again, out of 10).

These results suggest that the Library is held in high regard by both the cross-section of residents represented in the telephone survey and the Library customers who expressed their views via the online survey.

It is important to remember, however, that this is a “for instance” type of question rather than one about a specific proposal. Even so, Mid-Continent Public Library clearly would begin any conversation about a proposal knowing that there is general appreciation and support for its programs and services.

Note: Questions 1-3 confirmed that the individual was a head of household (either male or female), a registered voter, and that he or she did not live within the boundaries of the Kansas City Public Schools. Because a specific answer was required on these questions for the person to continue with the survey, those questions and answers are not displayed here. Results on questions with percentages may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding. It is also important to remember that any verbatim comments that appear in this report are each one comment, by one person. Had they been indicative of a trend, they would have appeared in enough quantity to merit presentation in the chart of responses that appears below the question. In addition, the question language for questions that appeared on both surveys is presented in this report using the telephone survey wording.

4. In what county is your residence located? *Number of respondents in each county for the telephone survey is based on the general population distribution in the areas served by Mid-Continent Public Library, as identified by MCPL. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed. Number of respondents in each county for the online survey was based on the number of customers (meaning individuals with a library card) that decided to respond to the request to participate.*

Response	Number/Telephone survey	Number/Online survey
TOTAL	500	11,287
Jackson County	295	6,285
Clay County	145	3,358
Platte County	60	1,644

5. My first question asks you to think back over this entire year, 2015. Which of the following have you or a family member interacted with – at least once – during the past year? By “interacted,” I mean you, or a family member, personally used, visited, were served by, or directly benefited from the specific organization or public entity. As I read this list, please say, “Yes” or “No.” Choices were read to respondents and were rotated to prevent “order bias.”

Response	Percentage/ Telephone survey
Recreation programs and facilities, such as parks and swimming pools	63%
The public library	47%
Local hospital	41%
Public services, like water, wastewater and trash pickup	36%
Local public school district	31%
Higher education facilities, like colleges, community colleges and career training facilities	18%
Police department or Sheriff’s office	12%
Ambulance services	10%
Public maintenance, such as street repairs	9%
Fire department	7%

As you know, citizens are often asked to support additional funding for construction or renovation projects in their communities. I’m going to read the same list again. After I read each one, please tell me how likely you think most people in INSERT RESPONDENT’S COUNTY NAME County would be to support additional funding for that specific program, service or entity, if a need could be demonstrated? I want to know if you think people would be “very likely,” “somewhat likely,” “not very likely,” or “not at all likely.” Choices, except where indicated, were read to the respondent, and the items being evaluated were read in the same order heard by the respondent on question 5.

6. Police department or sheriff's office

Response	Percentage/Telephone survey
Very likely	4%
Somewhat likely	17%
Not very likely	63%
Not at all likely	9%
Don't know (not read)	7%

7. Local public school district

Response	Percentage/Telephone survey
Very likely	8%
Somewhat likely	65%
Not very likely	19%
Not at all likely	3%
Don't know (not read)	4%

8. Higher education facilities like colleges, community colleges, and career training facilities

Response	Percentage/Telephone survey
Very likely	13%
Somewhat likely	50%
Not very likely	29%
Not at all likely	6%
Don't know (not read)	2%

9. The public library

Response	Percentage/Telephone survey
Very likely	27%
Somewhat likely	53%
Not very likely	12%
Not at all likely	2%
Don't know (not read)	5%

10. Local hospital

Response	Percentage/Telephone survey
Very likely	5%
Somewhat likely	38%
Not very likely	51%
Not at all likely	4%
Don't know (not read)	1%

11. Public services, like water, wastewater and trash pickup

Response	Percentage/Telephone survey
Very likely	1%
Somewhat likely	14%
Not very likely	63%
Not at all likely	17%
Don't know (not read)	4%

12. Recreation programs and facilities, such as parks and swimming pools

Response	Percentage/Telephone survey
Very likely	48%
Somewhat likely	43%
Not very likely	5%
Not at all likely	1%
Don't know (not read)	3%

13. Fire department

Response	Percentage/Telephone survey
Very likely	22%
Somewhat likely	59%
Not very likely	18%
Not at all likely	0%
Don't know (not read)	1%

14. Ambulance services

Response	Percentage/Telephone survey
Very likely	14%
Somewhat likely	30%
Not very likely	47%
Not at all likely	8%
Don't know (not read)	2%

15. Public maintenance, such as street repairs

Response	Percentage
Very likely	<1%
Somewhat likely	16%
Not very likely	45%
Not at all likely	28%
Don't know (not read)	10%

Telephone and Online results

Results from the telephone survey respondents in rank order, based on the combined “Very likely/Somewhat likely” percentage, along with the results from the online survey on the same questions, plus a breakdown of the online survey responses by county.

Organization or public entity	Overall score/Telephone survey	Overall score/Online survey	Clay County	Jackson County	Platte County
Recreation programs and facilities, such as parks and swimming pools	91%	75%	75%	77%	70%
Fire department	81%	84%	84%	85%	83%
The public library	80%	79%	82%	81%	75%
Local public school district	73%	81%	82%	82%	78%
Higher education facilities like colleges, community colleges, and career training facilities	63%	70%	69%	71%	69%
Ambulance service	44%*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Local hospital	43%	71%	73%	70%	69%
Police department or sheriff’s office	21%	81%	82%	82%	78%
Public maintenance, such as street repairs	16%	76%	69%	81%	77%
Public services, like water, wastewater and trash pickup	15%	70%	70%	71%	68%

**Ambulance Service was inadvertently left out of this set of questions in the online survey.*

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Very likely/Somewhat likely” percentages from the telephone survey regarding the respondent’s level of support for a ballot issue for the organizations and public entities listed, which would lead to a tax increase, by age of the respondent, county of residence and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with the “overall” score, because 15 respondents refused to answer this question.

Organization or public entity	Overall score	18-34 (n=89)	35-54 (n=209)	55 or older (n=187)	Jackson County (n=295)	Clay County (n=145)	Platte County (n=60)	Female (n=278)	Male (n=222)
Recreation programs and facilities, such as parks and swimming pools	91%	89%	91%	91%	92%	90%	92%	90%	92%
Fire department	81%	80%	79%	82%	83%	79%	72%	79%	82%
The public library	80%	76%	80%	83%	79%	81%	85%	77%	84%
Local public school district	73%	66%	75%	76%	72%	75%	78%	74%	73%
Higher education facilities like colleges, community colleges, and career training facilities	63%	64%	62%	65%	60%	67%	72%	61%	67%
Ambulance services	44%	48%	45%	41%	46%	41%	40%	45%	43%
Local hospital	43%	48%	42%	43%	46%	37%	47%	42%	46%
Police department or Sheriff’s office	21%	27%	20%	19%	21%	21%	27%	22%	21%
Public maintenance, such as street repairs	16%	12%	16%	17%	19%	14%	10%	17%	15%
Public services, like water, wastewater and trash pickup	15%	18%	16%	12%	16%	12%	15%	15%	14%

Cross-tabulation: “Combined “Very likely/Somewhat likely” percentages from the telephone survey regarding the respondent’s level of support for a ballot issue for the organizations and public entities listed, which would lead to a tax increase, by whether or not the respondent has children under 18 in the home and whether he or she has personally “used the services of a library in Jackson, Clay or Platte County” over the last year. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Presence of children in the home” will not square with the “overall” score, because 19 respondents refused to answer this question.

Organization or public entity	Overall score	Children under 18 at home/Yes (n=135)	Children under 18 at home/No (n=346)	Personally used the library in the last year/Yes (n=236)	Personally used the library in the last year/No (n=264)
Recreation programs and facilities, such as parks and swimming pools	91%	90%	91%	84%	99%
Fire department	81%	82%	80%	72%	90%
The public library	80%	81%	80%	72%	90%
Local public school district	73%	75%	70%	66%	82%
Higher education facilities like colleges, community colleges, and career training facilities	63%	59%	65%	56%	72%
Ambulance services	44%	53%	40%	42%	45%
Local hospital	43%	43%	44%	38%	50%
Police department or Sheriff’s office	21%	23%	20%	18%	25%
Public maintenance, such as street repairs	16%	19%	15%	14%	19%
Public services like water, wastewater and trash pickup	15%	16%	14%	16%	16%

Topic: General familiarity with, and use of, the Mid-Continent Public Library

The survey then focused the attention of the respondents exclusively on the Mid-Continent Public Library.

A total of 89% said that they were aware of the name “Mid-Continent Public Library,” before it was read out loud in the introduction to this section of the telephone survey.

The results on any question dealing with a respondent’s “awareness” need to be taken with a small grain of salt. Even though the question had language that would make it easier to say, “No,” if that was, in fact, the case, it is very likely that some participants answered, “Yes,” so as not to appear out of touch to the interviewer.

As such, while it is unlikely that 89% of the telephone survey participants were actually familiar with the name prior to this study, it is a safe bet that the percentage is well over 50%.

Having addressed that issue, the survey asked respondents “about how many times” they, themselves, had used the services of a library in Jackson, Clay or Platte County “over the last year or so” and how many times they had accompanied someone on a library visit over that same time period.

The most important data from these questions is the percentage of those who recall visiting the library themselves or accompanying another person on his or her visit – no matter how many times – and the percentage of those who say “Zero” to one or both questions.

This information tells us the percentage of users and the percentage of non-users who participated in the telephone survey. It is likely that at least some of the users provided a visit total that does not completely match with what actually happened, but those who said “Zero” are probably accurate with that answer.

Again, the goal of these questions is define the size of the user audience and of the non-user audience, not to analyze the differences between usage frequencies.

The next few questions have to do with one of the entities we have been talking about, and that’s the public library. Jackson, Platte and Clay County are the home of a network of 31 library locations that are all part of the Mid-Continent Public Library system.

16. Were aware of the name – Mid-Continent Public Library – before I mentioned it just now? It’s OK if you weren’t aware; many people that we’ve talked to so far have not been aware of that name.

Response	Percentage
Yes	89%
No	11%
Don’t know/not sure (not read)	<1%

17. Thinking back over the last year or so, which of the following best describes about how many times you, personally, meaning for yourself, have used the services of a library in Jackson, Clay or Platte County. This could be in person at the library, itself, or online. Would you say...? Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Zero	53%
1 time	8%
2 to 5 times	14%
6 to 10 times	9%
11 or more times	16%
Don’t know/not sure (not read)	0%

18. What about accompanying someone – such as a child, a parent or a friend – when they were using the library? About how many times in the last year or so have you accompanied someone when they were using library services in Jackson, Clay or Platte County? Is it... Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Zero	56%
1 time	9%
2 to 5 times	23%
6 to 10 times	3%
11 or more times	8%
Don’t know/not sure (not read)	1%

Topic: The elements of Mid-Continent Public Library's brand

The survey then presented participants with a list of words that might be associated with the Core Values of a business, a sports team, a person, an organization, or a public institution. Research participants were asked to select, from that list of words, ones that they believed would represent the Core Values of the Mid-Continent Public Library.

The difference in the results between the telephone survey of a random group of registered voters in the counties served by MCPL, and the customers who chose to participate in the online survey, is very informative and suggests more of a “benefit of the doubt” view among typical residents than with customers.

For example:

- Eleven of the Core Values were selected by more than 50% of the respondents for the telephone survey; three of those 11 were 95% or higher. Among the customers who took part in the online survey, five words were selected by 50% or more participants.
- While the percentages differ, the three most frequently selected words were identical between the two surveys (although the second- and third-most selected words switched spots). Those words: “knowledge”, “affordability” and “education.”
- The other words to score at least 50% on the online survey were “community” (59%) and “reliability” (50%).
- Below the 50% line, the range of responses was fairly narrow. At the top on the telephone survey was “value” (46%) down to “commitment” (15%). A low score on this exercise does not necessarily mean that the respondent believes MCPL is not, for example, “fun” (which scored 30% on the online survey). It’s simply that they would not identify it as a Core Value that guides the Library and its decision-making.

What this suggests is that an individual’s perception of the Library is significantly influenced by whether he or she is a customer. Even considering that slightly more than 50% of the telephone survey participants who said that they, themselves, had used library services or they had accompanied someone who had, there was a definite difference in the point of view between the randomly selected, telephone survey participants and the customers who chose to take part in the online survey.

At least 50% (actually, at least 59%) of the telephone survey respondents selected 11 of the 21 words, or more than half. The words they selected at this level are scattered among a variety of topics, including areas such as the Library's purpose ("education" and "knowledge"), its operating practices ("honesty" "integrity" and "reliability") and the feeling one has when accessing services ("comfort" and "people").

While, on one hand, it is positive that typical residents associate the Library with a long list of characteristics, it also indicates that the brand among this audience is not clearly defined.

The brand appears to be somewhat more clearly focused among the customers who participated in the online survey. The words selected by at least 50% of this audience suggest the Library's brand, as they see it, is one of a good resource for users and a valuable member of the community. Specifically, the customers' words were "knowledge," "affordability," "education," "community" and "reliability."

This different point of view will be important if the Library launches a campaign for a levy increase. Area residents will need to better understand the "library of today," and then connect that understanding to the changes being proposed. They will also need to see beyond the walls of the Library and begin to associate MCPL with economic and community development.

Online survey participants were also asked to identify a phrase or sentence they might use to describe the Library to someone who was new to the area.

Given the high level of participation on this question – Jackson County, 4,759 responses; Clay County, 2,544 responses; and Platte County, 1,236 respondents – the results were searched for key words, to see what would be top of mind, as the respondent offered his or her description.

Words with a notable level of use were then divided into three groups, based on the frequency of use. This question appeared after the segment where the survey provided the words. While many of the words below are a repeat of the responses from that list, there are also some interesting additions.

Those groups, and their key words, were as follows:

Tier 1:

- Resource
- Books
- Great place
- Reading material
- Friendly
- Convenient
- Staff
- Service

Tier 2:

- Learn
- Source
- Knowledge
- Good place
- Easy access
- Great access
- Helpful

Tier 3:

- Meet
- Kids
- Asset
- Nice
- Awesome
- Valuable
- Branches
- Great selection

Customers, most of whom are probably settled into a routine when it comes to the Library and how they use it, will need to see how these changes will benefit them – specifically – and the community. In other words, for example, “extended hours from 6 to 8 p.m. on Sunday” should be the secondary message, falling in behind “Library hours that are a better fit with your busy life.”

19. I'm now going to read a list of Core Values, some of which might come to mind when you think about, for example, a specific business, a sports team, a person, an organization or a public institution. These are words that describe how you see that person or organization, based on how they live their lives or conduct their business. They represent "who they are," when you think about them. As I read each one, please say, "Yes" if this is a Core Value that you would associate with the Mid-Continent Public Library system, based on what you know or what you may have heard about from others. *List was read and rotated.*

Response	Percentage
Knowledge	99%
Affordability	97%
Education	95%
Comfort	75%
Honesty	74%
Integrity	72%
Community	71%
Quality	68%
Reliability	63%
People	60%
Customer focus	59%
Value	46%
Entertainment	44%
Responsiveness	42%
Trust	41%
Positive outlook	38%
Family	35%
Creativity	28%
Fun	19%
Connection	16%
Commitment	15%

Telephone and Online results

Results from the telephone survey respondents in rank order, along with the results from the online survey for the same words, plus a breakdown of the online survey responses by county.

Response	Overall percentage/ Telephone survey	Overall percentage/ Online survey	Clay County	Jackson County	Platte County
Knowledge	99%	71%	71%	71%	69%
Affordability	97%	62%	62%	62%	61%
Education	95%	66%	67%	66%	64%
Comfort	75%	37%	39%	37%	36%
Honesty	74%	28%	29%	29%	28%
Integrity	72%	27%	26%	28%	26%
Community	71%	59%	60%	58%	60%
Quality	68%	43%	44%	43%	43%
Reliability	63%	50%	50%	50%	51%
People	60%	34%	35%	33%	34%
Customer focus	59%	39%	39%	38%	40%
Value	46%	44%	44%	43%	44%
Entertainment	44%	39%	42%	38%	39%
Responsiveness	42%	33%	33%	33%	34%
Trust	41%	30%	30%	31%	28%
Positive outlook	38%	33%	34%	32%	35%
Family	35%	32%	34%	31%	29%
Creativity	28%	27%	28%	27%	24%
Fun	19%	30%	33%	29%	28%
Connection	16%	26%	26%	26%	24%
Commitment	15%	26%	27%	26%	27%

Topic: Statements that could be associated with libraries

To dig more deeply into the Library’s brand with typical area residents through the phone survey, a “statement exercise” was then conducted.

The wording that introduces this section says that the sentences which are going to be read to them are statements that “other people have said about libraries, based on their own experiences, or on what they have heard about libraries from others.” After each statement, respondents were asked whether they “Strongly agree,” “Agree,” are “Neutral,” “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree” with what was said.

The sentences themselves were extremely diverse. For example, “Libraries…” “are great partners for school districts,” “are in a state of transition,” “help foster a sense of community” and “are important to the quality of life in a community.”

Looking at the combined “Strongly agree” and “Agree” percentages, all but one statement (“are needed to bridge the digital divide,” with 45%) scored at 52% or higher. Seven of the statements were at 90% or higher. This data suggests that most of the statements were viewed as an accurate description of libraries and the various roles they play.

What is particularly informative from this exercise is a review of just the “Strongly agree” percentages, which indicated which statements resonated the most.

Only four received a “Strongly agree” score of 50% or higher (in this case, it was actually 59% or higher). Those statements were…”Libraries…”

- Are great partners for school districts – 74%
- Are a safe place to access all kinds of information – 68%
- Are a great resource for accessing all kinds of information – 65%
- Are important to the quality of life in the community – 59%

These results are somewhat more encouraging than the “word” exercise earlier, because these highly rated statements cover both library services (statements two and three above), and the role of a library (statements one and four).

Cross-tabulations are displayed for each statement, based on the demographic characteristics of the respondent and on where he or she lives. In reviewing these cross-tabulations, it is important to remember that the Margin of Error for each subgroup is more than 4.4% – sometimes substantially more – because the number of respondents in that group is a small subset of the total of 500 participants. As such, it is best to look for trends – such as a group whose scores are all (or mostly) higher or lower than those of the other groups found within that subgroup.

Thank you for staying with me through that list. Now, I am going to read you some statements that other people have said about libraries, based on their own experiences, or on what they have heard about libraries from others. After I read each statement, please tell me if you strongly agree with the statement, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. Let's begin. Public libraries...Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents. Questions 20 through 33 were rotated, after which questions 34 and 35 were asked – with no rotation.

20. Are important to the quality of life in a community.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	59%
Agree	35%
Neutral	5%
Disagree	1%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know (not read)	0%

21. Are a great resource for accessing all kinds of information.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	65%
Agree	32%
Neutral	2%
Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know (not read)	0%

22. Are needed to bridge the digital divide.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	31%
Agree	14%
Neutral	44%
Disagree	7%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (not read)	3%

23. Bring the power of knowledge to all people.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	49%
Agree	46%
Neutral	4%
Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know (not read)	0%

24. Are significant partners in community-wide efforts, such as economic development.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	26%
Agree	42%
Neutral	23%
Disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know (not read)	1%

25. Are an underutilized resources in most communities.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	39%
Agree	51%
Neutral	2%
Disagree	5%
Strongly disagree	<1%
Don't know (not read)	2%

26. Provide needed educational programming.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	32%
Agree	60%
Neutral	7%
Disagree	1%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know (not read)	<1%

27. Are important to those who are searching for a job.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	17%
Agree	43%
Neutral	22%
Disagree	9%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (not read)	8%

28. Are an important resource for entrepreneurs.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	12%
Agree	40%
Neutral	37%
Disagree	3%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (not read)	7%

29. Help foster a sense of community.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	23%
Agree	54%
Neutral	18%
Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know (not read)	4%

30. Are a safe place to access all kinds of information.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	68%
Agree	31%
Neutral	<1%
Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know (not read)	0%

31. Are a good gathering place for people in a community.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	31%
Agree	44%
Neutral	14%
Disagree	9%
Strongly disagree	2%
Don't know (not read)	1%

32. Are great partners for school districts.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	74%
Agree	23%
Neutral	2%
Disagree	0%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know (not read)	<1%

33. Provide a personal approach.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	18%
Agree	58%
Neutral	15%
Disagree	3%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (not read)	5%

34. Are in a state of transition.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	24%
Agree	47%
Neutral	21%
Disagree	<1%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know (not read)	9%

35. Are places that most people associate with checking out books and not much more.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	13%
Agree	71%
Neutral	10%
Disagree	2%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (not read)	4%

Cross-tabulation: “Strongly agree” percentage and combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage for each statement about libraries. Results are presented in the rank order for “Strongly agree.” Boldface type is used to provide some visual variety, making reviewing this data easier.

Response	“Strongly agree” percentage	Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage
Are great partners for school districts	74%	97%
Are a safe place to access all kinds of information	68%	99%
Are a great resource for accessing all kinds of information	65%	97%
Are important to the quality of life in a community	59%	94%
Bring the power of knowledge to all people	49%	95%
Are an underutilized resource in most communities	39%	90%
Provide needed educational programming	32%	92%
Are a good gathering place for people in a community	31%	75%
Are needed to bridge the digital divide	31%	45%
Are significant partners in community-wide efforts, such as economic development	26%	68%
Are in a state of transition	24%	71%
Help foster a sense of community	23%	77%
Provide a personal approach	18%	76%
Are important to those who are searching for a job	17%	60%
Are places that most people associate with checking out books and not much more	13%	84%
Are important resources for entrepreneurs	12%	52%

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage on the telephone survey for each of the statements about libraries, by age of the respondent, county of residence and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with the “overall” score, because 15 respondents refused to answer this question.

Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage (Libraries...)	Overall score	18-34 (n=89)	35-54 (n=209)	55 or older (n=187)	Jackson County (n=295)	Clay County (n=145)	Platte County (n=60)	Female (n=278)	Male (n=222)
Are a safe place to access all kinds of information	99%	100%	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Are great partners for school districts	97%	99%	97%	96%	98%	97%	97%	97%	97%
Are a great resource for accessing all kinds of information	97%	98%	98%	97%	98%	99%	92%	99%	96%
Bring the power of knowledge to all people	95%	92%	95%	97%	95%	98%	95%	96%	94%
Are important to the quality of life in a community	94%	93%	94%	94%	94%	96%	90%	94%	93%
Provide needed educational programming	92%	92%	92%	92%	92%	91%	98%	92%	92%
Are an underutilized resources in most communities	90%	90%	90%	91%	91%	87%	97%	89%	92%
Are places that most people associate with checking out books and not much more	84%	79%	83%	87%	84%	83%	85%	83%	85%
Help foster a sense of community	77%	67%	82%	75%	77%	77%	80%	79%	75%
Provide a personal approach	76%	75%	74%	80%	75%	77%	85%	78%	75%
Are a good gathering place for people in a community	75%	66%	74%	79%	75%	76%	78%	76%	73%
Are in a state of transition	71%	71%	69%	71%	71%	67%	75%	70%	71%
Are significant partners in community-wide efforts	68%	69%	69%	67%	68%	70%	65%	68%	69%
Are important to those who are searching for a job	60%	53%	57%	67%	57%	63%	68%	59%	61%
Are important resources for entrepreneurs	52%	45%	57%	50%	52%	50%	57%	53%	50%
Are needed to help bridge the digital divide	45%	45%	46%	42%	43%	50%	38%	45%	44%

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage on the telephone survey for each of the statements about libraries, by whether or not the respondent has children under 18 in the home, and whether he or she has personally “used the services of a library in Jackson, Clay or Platte County” over the last year. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Presence of children in the home” will not square with the “overall” score, because 19 respondents refused to answer this question.

Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage (Libraries...)	Overall score	Children under 18 at home/Yes (n=135)	Children under 18 at home/No (n=346)	Personally used the library in the last year/Yes (n=236)	Personally used the library in the last year/No (n=264)
Are a safe place to access all kinds of information	99%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Are a great resource for accessing all kinds of information	97%	99%	97%	100%	96%
Are great partners for school districts	97%	99%	96%	99%	96%
Bring the power of knowledge to all people	95%	96%	95%	97%	95%
Are important to the quality of life in a community	94%	95%	94%	100%	89%
Provide needed educational programming	92%	92%	92%	92%	92%
Are an underutilized resource in most communities	90%	87%	97%	93%	88%
Are places that most people associate with checking out books and not much more	84%	84%	84%	84%	84%
Help foster a sense of community	77%	78%	76%	78%	77%
Provide a personal approach	76%	79%	77%	91%	64%
Are a good gathering place for people in a community	75%	71%	76%	78%	72%
Are in a state of transition	71%	68%	71%	72%	69%
Are significant partners in community-wide efforts	68%	70%	68%	71%	66%
Are important to those who are searching for a job	60%	58%	61%	62%	58%
Are important resources for entrepreneurs	52%	57%	50%	57%	47%
Are needed to help bridge the digital divide	45%	46%	44%	48%	41%

Topic: Support or opposition to a levy increase proposal, if the election were held today

The telephone and online surveys then asked respondents questions related to a potential ballot issue for “construction and renovation projects throughout the entire library system, and for increasing services to meet the needs of customers.”

The first question on this topic was (paraphrasing): If there was an election today on such a proposal, how do you think you would vote? (The answer choices were “Strongly favor it,” “Favor it,” “Neither favor it nor oppose it,” “Oppose it” or “Strongly oppose it.”) The same general question was asked of the online survey participants.

The combined “Strongly favor it/Favor it” percentage was 56% for the telephone survey respondents and 70% for the online participants.

No matter what their answer was, telephone survey participants were then presented up to three possible tax increase levels that might be associated with this proposal.

Using the same answer choices (with “Lean favor” and “Lean oppose” added, should the interviewer believe that would best describe the respondent’s views), participants were asked how they think they would vote on a proposal, if it resulted in a tax increase of \$35 per year for the owner of a \$150,000 home. The combined score of “Strongly favor it” and “Favor it” was 57%.

Those who selected “Strongly favor it” or “Favor it” (or who were placed in the “Lean favor” category by the interviewer) skipped the other two tax questions, under the assumption that an individual who supports a higher tax increase would also support a lower one.

Respondents who were against the proposal (or who were undecided) at a \$35 per year tax increase were then asked about a \$22 per year increase instead, with the understanding that the number of projects would be reduced and the expanded services would be more limited, if this was the tax increase. Combining those who were supportive at \$35 per year, with those who became supportive at \$22 per year, the “Strongly favor it/Favor it” percentage rose to 65%.

Those who continued to be in opposition, or undecided, were then offered a proposal that would result in a \$10 per year tax increase, with the understanding that the renovation/expansion projects and the increase in services would be significantly less. The combined “Strongly favor it/Favor it” percentage increased to 72%.

Taking the 4.4% Margin of Error into account, the increase in support from the highest tax level to the middle level, and from the middle level to the lowest level, were both greater than the Margin of Error.

That means two things:

First, the Library begins the discussion about a levy increase with a good foundation. The mood of the county, the length and complexity of the November ballot, and the presence of any other proposals that have a tax increase that appear on the same ballot will have an impact on these results. But, at the time this survey was completed, the idea of such a proposal is met fairly positively by typical residents.

Second, the tax increase level will be extremely significant, as voters make their decisions on the Library's proposal. The growth in support from tax increase level to tax increase level makes this abundantly clear.

(This may seem like a statement that could apply to any proposal that includes a tax increase: Cost will play a big part in the voter's decision. However, if the change in support from tax level to tax level was, for example, 1-2%, it would indicate that cost is less important than how the voter views the proposal. It would also mean that the scores are, statistically speaking, identical, because they are within the Margin of Error.)

The final ballot issue question asked both telephone and online participants how they think such a proposal would do – no matter how they, themselves, would vote.

The news here is not terribly encouraging, as 45% of the telephone survey respondents and 53% of the online participants said they thought it would either "Definitely pass" or "Probably pass." Taking the Margin of Error into account, the highest possible percentage on the telephone survey, at the time it was completed, is 49.4% (looking at the optimistic side of the Margin of Error). For the online survey, the results could dip to as low as 48.6% (looking at the pessimistic side). In essence, no matter how you look at it, right now, the current level of support could be insufficient to pass a proposal.

Taking the data in this section in total, the message is, "*I would support it* – and more so, if the cost was lower – but I'm not sure how others would vote."

36. Again, thank you for staying with me. We are almost done. My next question is this: If Mid-Continent Public Library asked residents to support a ballot issue that would provide funds for construction and renovation projects throughout the entire library system, and for increasing services to meet the needs of its customers, how do you think you would vote, if the election were held today? Would you...Choices, except where indicated, were read to the respondents.

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	17%
Favor it	39%
Neither favor it nor oppose it	25%
Oppose it	11%
Strongly oppose it	2%
Don't know (not read)	7%

37. What if the proposal resulted in a tax increase of about 35 dollars per year, for the owner of a \$150,000 home? If the value of your home is greater than \$150,000, your taxes for this proposal would be higher. If your home value is lower, your taxes for this proposal would be lower. If a proposal that would result in a tax increase of about 35 dollars per year was placed on the ballot by the Mid-Continent Public Library, would you...Choices, except where indicated, were read to the respondents. "Lean favor" and "Lean oppose" were added to the questions that included tax figures to provide an option for a participant whose response would place them in one of those categories.

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	11%
Favor it	46%
Lean favor (not read)	1%
Lean oppose (not read)	2%
Oppose it	23%
Strongly oppose it	3%
Don't know (not read)	14%

38. What if, instead, the proposal was for fewer renovation and construction projects, and included a more limited increase in services, and it resulted in a tax increase of about 22 dollars per year for the owner of a \$150,000 home? Would you strongly favor it, favor it, oppose it, or strongly oppose it? *Asked only of the 210 respondents who did not answer “Strongly favor it,” “Favor it” or “Lean favor” on question 37. “Lean favor” and “Lean oppose” were added to the questions that included tax figures to provide an option for a participant whose response would place them in one of those categories. Responses for the three “Favor” categories are the combined responses from questions 37 and 38, under the assumption that an individual who is in favor of a higher tax level would also be in favor of a lower one. Choices, except where indicated, were read to the respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	11%
Favor it	54%
Lean favor (not read)	1%
Lean oppose (not read)	2%
Oppose it	21%
Strongly oppose it	3%
Don't know (not read)	10%

39. What if, instead, the proposal was for even fewer construction and renovation projects, and included a very minimal increase in services, and it resulted in a tax increase of about 10 dollars per year for the owner of a \$150,000 home? Would you strongly favor it, favor it, oppose it, or strongly oppose it? *Asked only of the 169 respondents who did not answer “Strongly favor it,” “Favor it” or “Lean favor” on question 38. “Lean favor” and “Lean oppose” were added to the questions that included tax figures to provide an option for a participant whose response would place them in one of those categories. Responses for the three “Favor” categories are the combined responses from questions 37, 38 and 39, under the assumption that an individual who is in favor of a higher tax level would also be in favor of a lower one. Choices, except where indicated, were read to the respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	11%
Favor it	61%
Lean favor (not read)	2%
Lean oppose (not read)	<1%
Oppose it	17%
Strongly oppose it	2%
Don't know (not read)	7%

40. Why do you believe you would oppose a ballot issue for the Mid-Continent Public Library that would fund construction and renovation projects, and an increase in services? *Asked only of the 95 respondents who answered “Lean oppose,” “Oppose” or “Strongly oppose” on question 39. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrase and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Don't want taxes raised	58
Not needed/there are higher priorities	26
Other (see below)	11

Verbatim “other” comments

We should focus on the infrastructure.

I do not read books. People don't support this kind of thing, unless they have children. My son is 41.

I currently don't use their services. Would not benefit me.

Kids are going to college, which is expensive. All current taxes are unfair. Home value goes down, but taxes remain the same. They should try to raise the money some other way.

Taxation is getting out of hand.

There are other needs within the county that are more important. Our roads need to be repaired.

I don't go to the library enough and wouldn't benefit from it.

Mid-Continent Library services are not evenly available. They concentrate on one location in each community and neglect other areas. In Lee's Summit, they are closed on Sundays. I want to know how they will improve their services and increase personnel and materials. They are open on Sundays in Kansas City, Missouri. For example, the Red Bridge Mid-Continent Library is open on Sundays.

I support and understand the importance of having a good community library, but what they have is fine.

It is not something that I go to and I'm not crazy about more taxes.

More of my property tax goes to the library than for roads.

41. Whether you, yourself, would support it or not, what do you think would happen in an election on such a proposal from the Mid-Continent Public Library, if the election were held today? Do you think...*Choices, except where indicated, were read to the respondents.*

Response	Percentage
It would definitely pass	2%
It would probably pass	43%
It would probably fail	20%
It would definitely fail	6%
Don't know (not read)	29%

Telephone and Online

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Strongly Favor/Favor” percentages for general support of a ballot issue and for support at each potential tax increase. Also, the combined “It would definitely pass/It would probably pass” prediction of results, if a ballot was fielded by MCPL, by age of the respondent, county of residence and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with the “overall” score, because 15 respondents refused to answer this question.

Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage	Overall score	18-34 (n=89)	35-54 (n=209)	55 or older (n=187)	Jackson County (n=295)	Clay County (n=145)	Platte County (n=60)	Female (n=278)	Male (n=222)
A ballot issue in general/ telephone	56%	54%	56%	56%	57%	53%	55%	53%	59%
A ballot issue in general/ online*	70%								
\$35 per year tax increase for the owner of a \$150,000 home/ telephone	57%	53%	58%	58%	56%	59%	60%	55%	60%
\$22 per year tax increase for the owner of a \$150,000 home/ telephone	65%	63%	65%	66%	65%	65%	68%	63%	68%
\$10 per year tax increase for the owner of a \$150,000 home/ telephone	72%	67%	73%	72%	71%	72%	75%	71%	73%
Combined “It would definitely pass/It would probably pass” percentage/ telephone	45%	40%	49%	44%	44%	44%	53%	45%	45%
Combined “It would definitely pass/It would probably pass” percentage/ online**	53%								

*Ballot issue in general, online, by county: Clay, 68%; Jackson, 73%; Platte, 68%

**Likelihood of passage, online, by county: Clay, 52%; Jackson, 55%; Platte, 52%

Telephone only

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentages for general support of a ballot issue and for support at each potential tax increase. Also, the combined “It would definitely pass/It would probably pass” prediction of results if a ballot was fielded by MCPL by whether or not the respondent has children under 18 in the home, and whether he or she has personally “used the services of a library in Jackson, Clay or Platte County” over the last year. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Presence of children in the home” will not square with the “overall” score, because 19 respondents refused to answer this question.

Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage	Overall score	Children under 18 at home/Yes (n=135)	Children under 18 at home/No (n=346)	Personally used the library in the last year/Yes (n=236)	Personally used the library in the last year/No (n=264)
A ballot issue in general	56%	57%	55%	70%	39%
\$35 per year tax increase for the owner of a \$150,000 home	57%	58%	57%	65%	49%
\$22 per year tax increase for the owner of a \$150,000 home	65%	67%	59%	75%	55%
\$10 per year tax increase for the owner of a \$150,000 home	72%	73%	66%	79%	64%
Combined “It would definitely pass/It would probably pass” percentage	45%	47%	45%	50%	41%

Demographics:

The final three questions – one of which was simply recorded by the interviewer, rather than being asked – provided data on the respondent’s age, whether or not there were children under 18 in his or her home, and gender. This data was used to create the cross-tabulation groups.

My final two questions will help divide our survey responses into groups.

42. Is your age...*Choices, except where indicated, were read to the respondents.*

Response	Percentage
18 to 24	2%
25 to 34	16%
35 to 44	19%
45 to 54	23%
55 to 64	21%
65 or older	17%
Refused (not read)	3%

43. And, finally, do you have any children under the age of 18 living in your home?
Choices, except where indicated, were read to the respondents.

Response	Percentage
Yes	27%
No	69%
Refused (not read)	4%

44. RECORD GENDER

Response	Percentage
Female	56%
Male	44%

Summary

The telephone survey of registered voters in Jackson, Clay and Platte counties, and the questions from that survey that appeared on the Mid-Continent Public Library's annual online customer survey, affirmed the following:

- The services provided by MCPL branches are greatly appreciated.
- MCPL is an important member of the communities being served by its branches.
- MCPL has strong leaders and the organization itself is always looking for areas where it can improve.

This is outstanding news, because it means that both customers and average residents hold MCPL in high regard. The Library is delivering what libraries are *supposed* to deliver: good products and services, facilitated by helpful and friendly staff, in an organization constantly seeking to improve and to be an asset to the community.

The downside is that neither audience appears to be interested in broadening that “definition” very much. The data shows that customers are primarily focused on what the Library does for them right now, while the typical resident has a positive, but rather basic, view of the Library. Even the Key Opinion Leaders who said they consider MCPL to be superior to other libraries also admitted that they don't really have a point of reference for that statement. But, based on what they see and hear, the Library's performance is superior.

Two other, very specific issues surfaced from all this research.

First, those who spoke about how the Library has grown and advanced in what it provides were a scant handful of the opinions shared. This appears in subtle ways scattered throughout the surveys and the conversations, but it is very clear in the “How would you describe Mid-Continent Public Library to someone who was new to the area” question in the online customer survey.

Words like “technology,” “Internet,” and “visionary” were nowhere to be found. This is more evidence that the definition of MCPL is focused on the here and now.

Second, the idea of being an “asset” to the community split into two interpretations of that word. For the most part, customers and typical residents who participated in their respective surveys used the term more generally. They would likely say the same thing about all the public entities and organizations that were discussed – they all make the community a better place to live.

Key Opinions Leaders (and small groups of customers and typical residents) went further. They see MCPL as a vital part of community and economic development efforts. Companies and individuals who are considering relocation options are drawn to communities where the public entities and organizations are good now and always working to get better, add more services, etc.

Any possible ballot issue will be greatly helped by *expanding the brand* of the Library. That's because happy customers and generally satisfied residents may find such a proposal unnecessary, because "the Library is already great." This will need to go beyond introducing residents (and even customers) to existing services they may not use, or even know about. It must firmly establish Mid-Continent Public Library as a key partner in the community and economic development efforts.