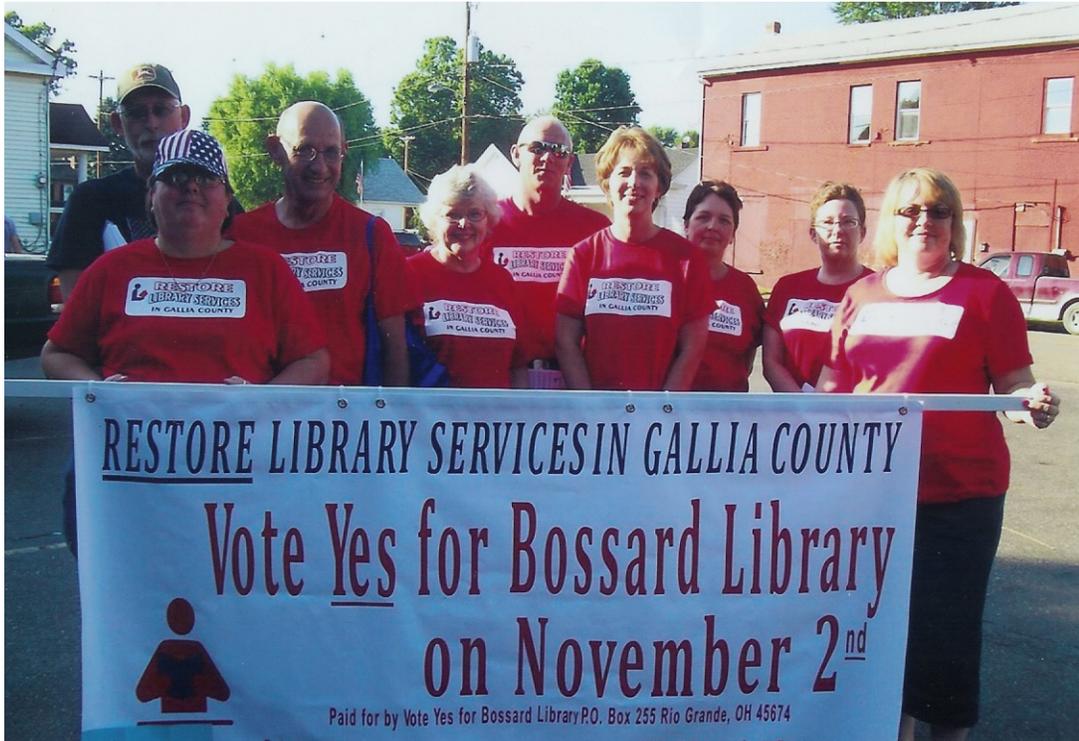


January 2011

Dr. Samuel L. Bossard Memorial Library of Gallia County
By Debbie Saunders, Library Director



After having to reduce library hours, staffing, and services due to the 2009 reductions in library funding, the Library Board and Administration of the Dr. Samuel L. Bossard Memorial Library of Gallia County believed in providing the local electorate with an opportunity to "Restore Library Services in Gallia County." Thus, this became our campaign slogan for the new operating levy that was on the November 2, 2010 ballot.

After our levy committee was established, we began to make plans to promote this important ballot issue. As the "kickoff" to the campaign, the library staff marched in our local Fourth of July parade, displaying a large banner with our campaign slogan as we distributed fact sheets about the levy along with candy for the children along the parade route. Each staff member wore a t-shirt that featured our campaign slogan as well.

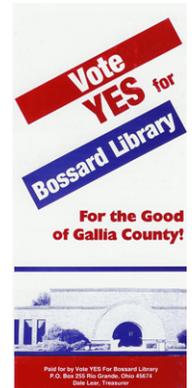
One of our staff members volunteered his time to create and maintain a Facebook page dedicated to the ballot issue. We used this social media forum to answer frequently asked questions about the levy, such as why the levy was needed, how much it would cost the owner of a \$100,000 home, etc. We also used this forum to remind voters to go to the polls to vote on Election Day.

Inside the library, we had a large display entitled "How is Your Library Funded?" Through this display, we educated the public as to how the library is funded by using graphs, including a graph to show the magnitude of the Public Library Fund reductions. To answer levy-related questions, we provided levy "fact sheets" near this display as well.

Through our local board of elections, we obtained daily listings of those voters who requested an absentee / early voting ballot. Since this list is updated daily, we promptly mailed a postcard to each of these voters, as we knew they were likely to vote since they personally requested a ballot!

We also campaigned door-to-door in many areas of the county. We distributed levy fact sheets to those who answered their door. For those who were not home, we placed a levy-related door hanger on their front door. These door-hangers were printed with facts about the library levy.

We purchased yard signs to raise awareness about the levy. These signs were placed strategically in areas of the county that are traveled most heavily. We also placed a billboard advertisement about the levy on a major highway within the county. Lastly, near Election Day, we placed one ad in our local paper asking for the community's support of the issue.



Finally, Election Day arrived! By the end of the evening on November 2, our levy was reported as having passed by thirty votes! Of course, with this narrow margin, the levy wasn't certified for a few weeks. After the provisional votes were counted, the library levy was certified and passed by a total of 41 votes!

As a result, library hours will be restored from the current 48 to 67 per week! We will now be able to offer Sunday hours to the public that we serve. The Library will be adding nine additional staff. In addition, our homebound patrons will be provided book delivery every two weeks rather than just one time per month. Our library will also be able to reinstate our Bifolkal programming in the local nursing/residential facilities.

In summary, even though our Library Board and Administration recognized that given the current economic environment, this may not be the optimal time to place an issue on the ballot, we believed it was important and necessary to provide our patrons with an opportunity to restore their library services! As the Library Director (and campaign coordinator), I am very thankful that the voters have spoken – and were so supportive of their local library that they want to do just that – so...let the restoration begin !!!

--Debbie Saunders, Library Director
740-446-7323
saundede@oplin.org