



## KAN STEP Project Funds Unique Library and Food Basket in Riley

**T**he city of Riley, a community with a population of about 950 located in west-central Riley County in northeast Kansas, was the recipient of a Kansas Department of Commerce KAN STEP grant of \$299,932 for materials and professional services to construct a new Library and Community Food Basket. The Kansas Small Towns Environment Program (KAN STEP) is a self-help program for communities to address water, sewer, and public building needs. These grants require the use of volunteers to match Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funds. KAN STEP provides direction, technical assistance, guidance, and support to help with these community projects.

**Above: The new Riley Library and Food Basket faces east on Broadway Street. A previous building was demolished to make way for the new KAN STEP project.**

**At right: Great workmanship is shown in this stairway and railing.**

The project in Riley was designed by Dan Hall of BG Consultants, Manhattan. It is a 2,376 sq. ft. wood frame building on a concrete slab. The street location is on Broadway in downtown Riley where a local business previously existed. That building was demolished to make way for the new facility with a retail cost estimate of \$526,770. This includes volunteer labor, donated land, equipment and services valued at \$226,838.

The dimensions of the new building are 20 by 119 feet. The facility houses the City Library (20 by 50 feet), ADA accessible restrooms,

mechanical and storage rooms (each 10 by 12 feet) and the Community Food Basket (20 by 40 feet). The library has a reading area located in the mezzanine level, a unique feature of the new building. Entrances are from the street level in the front with an air-lock entry. Rear entry is from the alley at the street level which is also ADA accessible. The building interior is finished with insulation between exterior walls and



drywalls, interior walls painted, flooring and utilities installed.

The project sparkplug was Gary Mills with grant administration provided by Rose Mary Saunders of Ranson Financial Consultants, LLC, Wichita. KRWA provided inspection services and technical assistance to the volunteers. Gary Mills and Dale Farmer both worked on the project from start to finish. Many other volunteers worked on the project including Chuck Downey, Tom Mchough, Ted Johnson, Ray Schultz and Pat Marden.

The Riley Community Food Basket is a combined effort by ten area churches in the Riley area. The Food Basket serves all of northern Riley County and is totally financed by donations from the churches and private individuals/organizations. The Food Basket is open each Saturday from 9 to 11 AM. Saturday staffing is provided by the churches whose members volunteer to do the work. Doris Fritz, City Clerk, stated that the Food Basket will see 12 to 17 families weekly on average with about 40 to 55 people in those families.

The Food Basket has been in operation for about fifteen years. The previous building was in the basement of the Presbyterian Church which has a steep, narrow staircase that limits access. This new facility allows delivery of supplies at the rear entrance which is much more convenient than the previous location. Doris Fritz provided the following information regarding the services provided at the Food Basket:

“Our clients must meet income guidelines but we never turn anyone away. They must provide proof of residence in the area we serve. We provide Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets to anyone that has the need; all they must do is sign up. We usually have 30 to 35 baskets. We also do an Adopt A Family program each year. Those in need of assistance can sign up their children and we find donors to provide Christmas gifts. Every year since I started working with the program, we have had more donors than children available. We are truly blessed in this community and surrounding area. All funds given to support the Food Basket go directly toward food and household products. We are completely volunteer based.”



This photo shows a section of the library taken from the mezzanine level.



A ribbon-cutting and open house was held at Riley's new Library and Food Basket on November 17, 2013. Pictured are (second row) Brenda Kientz, Food Director for the Community Food Basket; Gary Mills and Dale Farmer who both volunteered on the project from start to finish; Riley Mayor David Shover; Chuck Downey, volunteer; and, Charlotte Shawver, Library Board President.



The building provides better access to the Riley Food Basket; the Food Basket is a combined effort by ten area churches in the Riley area.