

## History of the Williamsburg Community Library

The Williamsburg Community Library began as a dream of several local leaders, Kenneth Messick, Dennis Norton, Charles Gilkey, Sam Schnider, Jim Reedy, and Cliff McCurdy. It became a reality in December, 1983. All library staff, the director, and governing board efforts have been volunteers for 25 years. The Library had its grand opening in 1985 with several shelves of books in Williamsburg City Hall. By 1987, needing more space, the library expanded to the former storage area and city jail behind City Hall, with volunteers doing the remodeling.

The first few years, the library spent most of its budget, from the city council, on children's books. Many other books were donated. In 1990, the library started a video section and in 2005 an audio C.D. section. Artist Randall Bennett (1975 Williamsburg High School graduate) donated the copyrighted logo (see front) for use on stationery, postcards, note pads, bookmarks, book bags, calendars, and t-shirts. The first librarian, Donita McMillan, was appointed in 1984. Directing library services since 1986 has been Eloise Bennett with the assistance of library staff and under the supervision of the Board of Directors.

Planning and fund-raising, including memorial donations, for the construction of a new library building gained momentum each year. By 2004 the building fund had reached \$85,000 and was the basis for seeking a Community Development Block Grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce. On February 1, 2005, Williamsburg Mayor Charles Gilkey received notification from Governor Kathleen Sebelius that the city of Williamsburg was awarded a KAN-STEP Grant (CDBG Grant) for \$371,005. This comprised 60% of construction costs. The remaining 40% was provided by library funds and the labor value of the work of the USD #287 school vocational housebuilding class taught by Troy Ifland and the work of many community volunteers.

The new library held groundbreaking ceremonies on June 5, 2005, and construction started on July 5. The library is located at 107 S. Louisa, site of the former railroad station, and named Santa Fe Park. Leadership for the new building efforts has been provided by a Community Building Committee, Architect Hans J. Fischer, AIA, Lawrence, Kansas; KAN-STEP Certified Administrator Bob Hosack, APA, Chanute, Kansas; Library Board of Directors, and the Library Staff, with overall construction

supervision by our own Master Builder David Link. Official opening ceremonies were held Saturday, May 27, 2006.

Williamsburg citizens approved establishing the library as an official legal library, accepted by the Kansas State Library, on the public ballot in April 2007. Moving the collection and furnishings to the new building commenced in July 2007.

Williamsburg area citizens are pleased and proud of our beautiful new facility. The Board of Trustees and staff continue to complete furnishings and add new services as time and funds permit.