

Self Improvement

New technology to make library a more efficient place for patrons, staff

A self-checkout computer has been in use at the Belt Branch for a few years, but with the library's recent investment in new library management technology, this convenience will soon have a bigger presence in the Belt and Savannah branches.

In October, the library began switching from a bar-code-based management system to track materials to a radio-frequency identification system, also called RFID. If you were in the branches the last few months, you may have seen staff scanning books out in the shelves; what they were doing was tagging books with tiny antennas and scanning the bar codes onto the tags.

The tags will be read by scanners in the new checkout stations, new Service Desk scanners and new security gates at branch entrances. The advantage is that the scanners can read and record the ID numbers instantaneously – even a stack of seven books at one time. And if a book isn't checked out properly, the security gates will notify library staff with a beep.

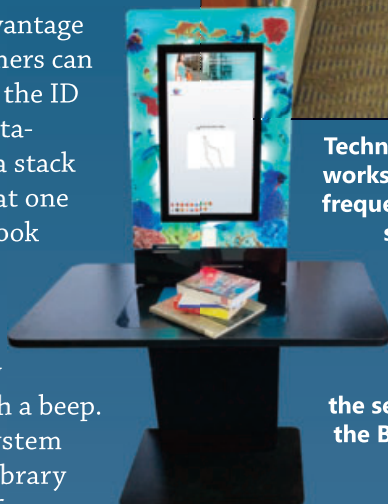
The RFID system will make the library more efficient for users and staff, library Director Michelle Mears said.

Users will be able to check out materials quickly with



Technology services librarian Bridgid Reeves works at tagging books with the new radio-frequency identification system. In a matter of seconds, she put a tag with a tiny radio antenna on the inside of a book, ran the book over a scanner that detected the book's bar code number and sent it to the antenna.

LEFT: A manufacturer's rendition of the self-checkout stations coming soon to the Belt and Savannah branches.



the self-checkout stations and avoid waiting at the Service Desks. Scanners in book return slots inside the branches also will remove returned items from accounts as soon as they are deposited.

For library staff, the system should cut down on materials leaving the library without being checked out and allow for faster inventories. Inventories will be done using an electronic wand that can read the tags without removing materials from the shelves and also show if an item is on a wrong shelf.

"Once something is out of place, it's really hard to find in a collection of 160,000 items," Mears said.

Another benefit for staff is the reduction in the need to check in all materials by hand, eliminating a tedious chore that has the potential to cause repetitive-motion injuries and freeing up staff to work more with library users. "With well over 350,000 materials in circulation in a year, that's a lot of repetitive motion for our staff," Mears said.

The antenna tags will contain the barcode number of an item but no personal data of the person who checked out the item. The scanners detect the signal within a limited distance, so library users don't need to worry about

other types of scanners picking up signals, Mears said.

Tagging of materials began in mid October and will

The Shifting World

Some might think so, but libraries aren't living in the past

There is a myth that libraries (and library staff) don't like change, that we would rather live in an idyllic past where libraries were a bastion of silence, card catalogs were in use, and a stern look from a librarian would halt any shenanigans that were about to commence. OK, maybe we do wish the stern look was still as effective today, but the rest of the stuff is old news with good riddance!

Silence meant that all of the activity in a library was happening inside people's heads, individualized and not shared. You read, studied, and sat in silence, maybe with an occasional whisper to a tablemate. Now, staff and visitors want to talk to each other about good books and engage with each other for human contact. We want people to not be afraid to ask questions and to learn new skills. Young children need an atmosphere where they can see reading and learning as a joy and not a chore.

Once you got to the library in the past, the hardest part was finding what you needed. If you were too scared to ask the stern-faced librarian, you had to figure out how to use that large piece of furniture called a card catalog. Sounds crazy, I know, but that wood cabinet with the multitude of drawers was one of the most sophisticated inventory and finding tools ever invented up to that point. When computers came along, libraries were one of the first places to see another way to access all the information on those thousands of index cards for faster and more complete searching.

No one really wants to live in the past. We may have nostalgia for the way things used to be, but we are thankful for the advancements of modern life and for modern libraries. Now you can search the collection from home or office in seconds and either

check out a digital copy or place a reserve to pick up curbside on your way somewhere. And even when we can't be together in person, we can have virtual meeting rooms on our desktop computers or join an online program with our mobile phone.

The world may seem like it moves at the speed of light, but our libraries will always be a space where you can slow down and appreciate the world and your place in it.

Michelle Mears, *Rolling Hills Library Director*
mmears@rhcl.org

Other ways to reach and follow us

Text the library at **816-287-9828** using these keywords, and we'll help with your account:

Status for account information **Renew all** to renew everything on your account


Renew due to renew overdue items **Help** for a list of available commands

or text anything else to start a conversation with a librarian.

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Browse

a quarterly publication from Rolling Hills Library that is sponsored by the Friends of Rolling Hills Library

Rolling Hills Library

www.rhcl.org

Belt Branch

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816-232-5479
HOURS: 9-8 Mon-Sat
12-6 Sun

Savannah Branch

514 W. Main, Savannah
816-324-4569
HOURS: 9-7 Mon-Fri
9-5 Sat/12-5 Sun

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1912 N. Belt, St. Joseph
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Bookmobile & Outreach

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The board generally meets at 6 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month.

Friends of the Library

The Friends support the library through volunteer and fund-raising efforts. The Friends board meets monthly.

Rolling Hills Library Foundation

The Foundation strives to provide financial support for large endeavors and future growth of the library by seeking substantial gifts from patrons and supportive foundations.



Timely Topic

Read forward, backward in time with Winter Reading Program

It's that time of the year, a time when the days grow shorter and the nights grow longer, a time that's perfect for cozying up with a good book. There's no better time to read, especially when prizes are thrown in.

The 2021 Adult Winter Reading Program runs from Jan. 4 through March 1, and if you haven't picked up on the clues yet, the program's theme is time. To be specific, "There's No Better Time to Read."

Participants are asked to read (or listen to) four books suggested by themes on the program reading log. Some of the themes are books set in the future, published the year you were born, a childhood favorite, alternate history and books published in the 1920s, 1940s, 1960s or 1980s. To help you decide what to read, the log has a list of the best-selling books in the United States from 1920 through 2019.

"The theme 'decades' was suggested by a Savannah Branch staff member last year when we were brainstorming possible future winter reading themes," said Belt Branch manager Kelly Morris. "The theme of time lends itself to a lot of different types of books, which is what we look for when choosing a theme. Historical fiction, in particular, is a very popular genre right now with many titles being set in World War I or World War II."

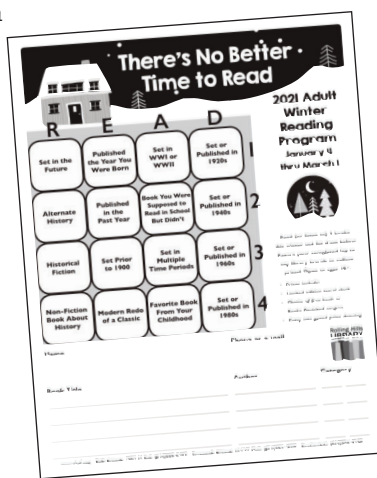
When they sign up, participants will receive a magnetic 2021 calendar. When they complete four books, they'll earn a limited-edition travel clock and a free book or Books Revisited coupon for a free book. They also will be entered in the grand prize drawing for a \$100 Walmart gift card.

Participants can sign up beginning Jan. 4 by picking up a reading log at the Belt and Savannah branches and the Bookmobile or by using the library's new online program platform, Beanstack. Readers will receive an extra grand prize drawing ticket as an incentive to use Beanstack.

The online platform offers several benefits, library Director Michelle Mears said. Patrons can track what books they've read, use the Beanstack

mobile app on their phones and devices and establish program accounts for their children under a parent's name. Participants will set their age range in their initial registration and will see only reading programs available to that age range.

"Once you sign up in Beanstack, you don't have to sign up for any future reading challenges," Mears said. "You will just click into a challenge to become a participant. It's really going to make it nice for parents."



Library users will be able to check out items or have staff do it

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continue through December. The goal is to have the new system in place in the early days of January.

While some library staff members have been tagging materials in the stacks, the Technical Services staff (who do the work of ordering and processing every item in the collection) have been tagging all new materials behind the scenes.

"It's easy to do, yes; it's extra work,

yes," said TS manager Jennifer George. "But I'm sure it will be worth it to cut down on theft, and it will make it easier to inventory the entire library."

Belt will have two self-checkout stations, one in the children's area and one near the main Service Desk. At Savannah, the station will be near the entrance. The Bookmobile won't have self-checkout capabilities but will benefit from the easier checkout and inventory processes.

The Belt self-checkout computer had 2,992 items pass through it from July 1 to Nov. 4, which is about 3 percent of the 107,000 items checked out from the library. Some libraries with RFID systems want 80 to 100 percent of checkouts to be done at self-checkout stations, Mears said. No such goals are planned for Rolling Hills Library, she said, because visiting with library staff is one reason why many people enjoy coming to the library.

An oldie-but-goodie cake

Sour cream, canned pumpkin and streusel make this a stand-out coffeecake

Here's an old recipe that the Cake Lady has had in her stack of recipes for years. Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day or just some weekend would be the perfect time to enjoy a piece of this cake with something warm to drink.

Sour Cream Pumpkin Coffeecake

½ cup butter
¾ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 eggs
2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup sour cream
1¾ cups of canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)
1 slightly beaten egg
1/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1/3 cup butter
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 cup chopped nuts

Cream butter, ¾ cup sugar and vanilla in mixer bowl.

Add 3 eggs, beating well.

Combine flour, baking powder and baking soda. Add dry ingredients to butter mixture alternately with sour cream.

In another bowl combine pumpkin, beaten egg, 1/3 cup sugar and pie spice. Spoon half of batter into 13x9-inch baking pan; spread into corners. Sprinkle half of the streusel mix over batter then spread pumpkin mixture over streusel. Carefully spread remaining batter over pumpkin mixture. Sprinkle remaining streusel over top.

Bake at 325 degrees for 50-60 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

Streusel recipe

Cut together brown sugar, 1/3 cup butter and 2 teaspoons cinnamon until blended. Stir in 1 cup chopped nuts.



Information about all library programs can be found at rhcl.org.



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