

## **Oswego Public Library and Southeast System Collaborate to Give the Library a "Makeover"**

by Roger Carswell, Director, Southeast Kansas Library System

Oswego Public Library recently received a "makeover" in partnership with the Southeast Kansas Library System (SEKLS).

Taking its inspiration from a similar project in New Jersey which was the subject of an article in *American Libraries* and a program at the 2006 Public Library Association Conference, the SEKLS Executive Board decided to plan for a makeover project in 2007. SEKLS budgeted \$15,000 for the project, with the expectation that the library selected for the project would contribute additional funds. Obviously, this amount would not allow for a "makeover" on the scale of the Extreme Home Makeover TV show. However, the main focus was on enhancing a library's appeal, and this proved adequate for that purpose.

A makeover committee was formed which discussed how the project would proceed and criteria for selecting a library. A medium-sized public library was desired for the project. Too small a building would greatly limit flexibility in planning, while a project in too large a library would not be viewed by smaller libraries as something they could emulate—one of the primary purposes of the project. Four libraries meeting the minimum criteria of 2000 square feet expressed interest. The committee visited these libraries and selected Oswego Public Library for the project.

After reaching an agreement with the Oswego library board to proceed with the project (to which they committed \$7,000), the committee brainstormed with the board and staff about various possibilities. A plan was agreed to and the work was accomplished between late spring and early fall of 2007.

The young adult area was relocated to a larger area. Features include a chrome café table and chairs, bombo stools at the computers, an area rug, a baseball chair, floor rockers, a neon graffiti board, and a metal magnetic bulletin board.

The children's area was re-organized around a large artificial tree installed in the corner, a bench around the base of the tree, and a garden trellis-like entrance.



***Oswego Library Has New  
Coffee Bar***

A little-utilized area at the top of the stairs was turned into a café area, with pub table and chairs, coffee bar, and newspaper rack.

Less extensive changes in the adult reading, reference, and computer areas included primarily new furniture, including adding legs to a small card catalog cabinet to make it into an end table.

SEKLS sponsors occasional bus tours to other libraries. This year, it was decided to feature Oswego Public Library as a centerpiece of the tour. SEKLS has an annual competitive grant program, whose purpose varies from year to year. For 2008, it has been designated for interior re-design grants. It's hoped that other libraries can take ideas they saw in Oswego or which were inspired by it and develop similar changes for a specific area in their own library. For more information and photographs of the makeover results, visit [oswegomakeover.blogspot.com](http://oswegomakeover.blogspot.com).



*Library users like their new quiet reading area.*