

Two-Way Videoconferencing at Coffey County Library

by Mary Markwalter, Administrator, Coffey County Library

In January 2007, we applied to the State Library of Kansas for a Kan-ed grant in the amount of \$15,000 in order to purchase two-way videoconferencing equipment to enhance our community room at the Coffey County Library Burlington Branch. After reviewing the pilot project report provided by the State Library and visiting with a Lifesize sales representative, we located local consultant Gregg Clarkson in order to assess our needs.

In March, I was able to attend a demonstration of the Lifesize equipment at the Kan-ed offices in Topeka. I liked what I saw and decided that Lifesize was the product we wanted to purchase. Our consultant agreed with me and he started researching Lifesize. He located a Lifesize distributor in North Carolina who could give us the best price on the unit we wanted to purchase. Because of this we had enough grant money to purchase some components. We talked to local businesses and found that they thought they would make use of an electronic white board and a document camera.

We had an extra DVD player, laptop computer and projector in our Central Office that we could designate for exclusive use with the Lifesize unit. We are now considering purchasing a small C.P.U. to allow for easier and faster use of the electronic white board.

The benefits of having the components are that they can be used independently of the Lifesize unit. Therefore the components themselves, which were relatively inexpensive, greatly enhance our Community Room.

I started releasing information throughout our community about the two-way videoconferencing equipment in February 2007. In March we started getting calls to reserve the Community Room and use the new equipment. We started receiving and installing equipment in April 2007. In May a local bank was the first entity to use the equipment to offer training.

In June we hosted an "Open House" and invited the public to come in for a demonstration of the Lifesize equipment. Our local newspaper came and interviewed me about the equipment and possible uses for it. Three of five Coffey County Commissioners attended the open house and asked some very good questions about usage, pricing and possible installation at our other five branches.

The Lifesize two-way videoconferencing has been well received by Coffey County individuals, businesses and government officials.