

... AND ELSEWHERE IN NEVADA

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Amargosa Valley Community Library  
Amargosa Valley, Nevada

Amargosa Valley, Nevada, is rural in about every sense of the word! It is located about 100 miles north of Las Vegas, 20 miles from the Nevada Test Site and close to an hours drive from Death Valley, California. Amargosa Valley has a population of 1800.

The Amargosa Valley Community Library was instrumental in acquiring grant funds from the Fleischmann Foundation which helped build a community center. A portion of those funds was earmarked for the construction of a new library. With help from the school district, county and U.S. Government, a bond election was held to raise funds not covered by grant money. The election passed overwhelmingly in favor of the construction of the center - a new library, clinic and multi-purpose building. The clinic is now almost completed and the library and multi-purpose buildings will be started after the first of the year.

Since the 150-student school has no library, the Amargosa Valley Community Library also functions as school library, funded in part by a contractual agreement with the school district. The first use of the fledgling library by the school children was achieved by bussing the children from the school once a week. Bookmobile service was an invaluable aid at this time since book selection and quantity were very limited. Once the library was fully established in 1979, the service was discontinued.

Though still a relatively small library, it has come a long way since its formation in the fall of 1976 when a production of "Winnie the Pooh" performed by the Rainbow Company of Las Vegas, Nevada, was held in order to raise funds to purchase necessary materials to open the library. A total of \$40 was realized and, though small, it was sufficient for a start. Housed in a portion of a barracks building acquired from the Nevada Test Site, it consisted of some shelving provided by a now-inactive group of citizens - the Death Valley Lions Club. Books to occupy this shelving were entirely from donations made by local interested patrons. Help for this ambitious enterprise was entirely volunteer and remained so for the next five years.

In 1978, the county was approached with a request for a more permanent building since its present location was a part of the Amargosa Valley Improvement Association, a local community group, and was used in conjunction with other community functions. A used 8 foot by 40 foot office trailer was made available to the library and this became their first permanent "home". All that was needed to get things rolling now was some funding. Again, the county was approached for aid and agreed to a \$600 grant with a commitment of \$400 annually thereafter. Also, the contract with the school district allowed a per-student fee to cover books and expenses.

By 1980, it became readily apparent that a new or larger library was desperately needed and, again, with the support of the county, construction of a 14 foot by 45 foot addition was started on a nearby county structure which housed the fire department. Included at this time was a small office for the Sheriff's Department. The new addition, which now houses the present library, was dedicated on February, 1981, with Governor Robert List officiating.

By mid-1984, the new home of the Amargosa Valley Community Library will be a reality with a total area of 2,000 square feet. The total book collection in the present library now exceeds 6,500 volumes. The school children now have access to the library on a daily basis and circulation averages 750 to 800 books per month.

During its relatively short history, the Amargosa Library has made quite an impact on the community by providing many and varied programs for the education and enjoyment of the residents. Especially notable was a fortepiano concert by Susan Duer, who is known throughout the United States. Also sponsored was a magic show, various dramatic performances and art shows, including two seminars by Lucile Spire Bruner, a noted Las Vegas artist. The annual summer reading program and story hour for the school children is provided during vacation time. Additional projects are planned for the future.

On file are various government documents to help keep the public aware and informed. A set of the Nevada Revised Statutes is available to the patrons; a complete holding of information on the testing activities regarding the proposed Yucca Mountain Nuclear Repository and various publications relating to the proposed pup fish refuge issue are also available.

Amargosa Valley has a large proportion of Hispanic people and, though there are Spanish books and publications available, there are plans in the near future to expand services to these people. Input will be readily forthcoming from the soon-to-be formed "Friends of the Library" which will include members of the Spanish community.

The Senior Citizens play a large part in this community and the Talking Book Program is being offered to those who qualify and would benefit. They

are being encouraged to use the library to increase their ideas for crafts and other projects they may plan for the future.

The library plans to undertake an oral history project which may turn involve the entire populace. This should be of benefit to everyone, both in information acquired as well as in the wealth of good feelings and communication. The recent acquisition of a portable video recorder/tuner and camera will aid this project.

The Amargosa Valley is an area where access to news and information sources is limited to television and one radio station. Until just recently there was no syndicated newspapers. Therefore, the Amargosa Valley Community Library has been required to obtain or have available a more extensive range of information on a variety of subjects than would usually be expected of a small library. It also serves as a resource center for the local mining and agriculture industry, teachers, community organizations and the general public.

The library is a vital link with the development of the community. There is a strong future for both.