



August 27, 2009

Agenda Item 6.0: Digital Stories Program

TO: Sacramento Public Library Authority Board Members

FROM: Nina Biddle, Manager, Central Library

RE: Sacramento Room Digital Stories Program

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. **Accept** this report on the Sacramento Room Digital Stories Program, direction and activities.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

One of the defining issues shaping the 21st century library has been the shift to digital media. In 2007, the California State Library launched a Digital Stories pilot program in response to a recommendation by futurist Thomas Frey, who advises libraries to preserve the memories of their own communities: "While most libraries have become the document archive of their community, the memories of a community span much more than just documents. What did it sound like to drive down Main Street in 1950? What did it smell like to walk into Joe's Bakery in the early mornings of 1965? Memories come in many shapes and forms."

The Sacramento Public Library was one of six libraries selected in 2007 to receive a grant from the California State Library to pilot a Digital Stories program, entitled "California of the Past." Equipment and training were provided at the outset. The project has been ongoing for two years at the Central Library, with financial assistance from the State Library.

Now a few months into the third year, Central Library has successfully met the goal of integrating the Digital Stories program into our operations; Central staff is coordinating the program independently. Staff has become adept at developing and producing digital stories. To date, 43 stories have been produced and are accessible electronically via the SPL web site and also as DVD's which are added to our local history collection in the Sacramento Room.

A digital story is a visual vignette, capturing a person on film, along with music and photos. Often the historic photographs from the Sacramento Room are brought to life through these films.

The initial focus of "California of the Past" has evolved into "Sacramento Stories," in which people talk about an aspect of their life or work in Sacramento. A few examples of stories include:



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- "How Sacramento Got Back on Track" Former Mayor Anne Rudin discusses development of the light rail system
- "Green Glory : the Early History of Sacramento Trees"
- "Oak Park's Minister Barber"
- "Second Saturday"
- "Sacramento Movie Houses 1900-1926"

A highly versatile medium, digital stories allow for endless creative possibilities.

The Sacramento Public Library Foundation has provided critical support and has worked with staff to plan a series of digital stories highlighting business and civic leaders; this is the focus of the stories for 2009/10.

Developing a digital record of Sacramento stories is key to successfully fulfilling the Library's responsibility to collect and preserve our unique history and cultural heritage. Interviews reveal far-ranging, remarkable stories from average people from all walks of life, as well as political and business leaders whose stories we need to preserve. By reaching out and creating digital stories, the Sacramento Public Library is able to best reflect and serve our community.

Digital Story Program Accomplishments

- Production of 43 digital stories about people, places and events in Sacramento County, available for viewing at <http://www.saclibrary.org/?pageId=902>
- Creation of a digital recording studio at Central as well as mobile recording equipment
- Enhanced staff knowledge and skills
- Positioning of Library staff to play a pivotal role in helping build and strengthen the community by fostering the development of personal stories
- Two digital story workshops for the community
- Two annual public screenings of the digital stories
- Development of a digital stories user group in Sacramento
- A procedural manual

Next Steps

The Library staff will continue to record the unique stories of Sacramentans. Staff is developing a plan to invite local residents, business and community leaders to come in and record stories. Our history is the collection of our stories.