

Libraries

Libraries provide a valuable informational and educational resource to county residents. Public library facilities were first created in the cities of Sioux Falls and Dell Rapids. In 1960 voters outside these two cities approved the Minnehaha County library system which initially operated from a central library in Hartford and more recently in Crooks, along with branch libraries in most of the cities. In 1995, the rural library system combined with the Sioux Falls Public Library to form the Siouxland Libraries, serving the entire county with the exception of Dell Rapids where a city library is still operated. In addition to the Sioux Falls downtown main library and two city branch libraries, Crooks serves as the primary rural facility with outlying branch libraries in Baltic, Brandon, Colton, Garretson, Hartford, Humboldt and Valley Springs. A book mobile serves several remote locations and some of the more populated rural areas.

The name Siouxland Libraries was selected with the future in mind. Sioux Falls' geographic location at the southern end of Minnehaha County provides the opportunity to expand the library system to serve Lincoln County residents. In this same respect, the libraries in Dell Rapids and Canton have the opportunity to join the Siouxland system.

The rural branches operate from a variety of facilities, including a school, community center and freestanding buildings. The organization of a broader library system and technological changes have prompted an evaluation of the branch system. The public access catalog (PAC) available at some branches allows users to request books in the system and have them delivered to the site. Changes in use patterns are also occurring since residents living outside Sioux Falls now have complete access to the city libraries, resulting in reduced usage of the rural branches. It is possible that library services will be enhanced throughout the county by further automation, placement of public library terminals at common locations, and improvements in document distribution.