

House Finance Committee

House Bill 49 Testimony

March 29, 2017

Good morning Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding House Bill (HB) 49 and Ohio's public libraries.

My name is Debbie Saunders and I am the Director of the Bossard Memorial Library in Gallia County. It is an honor to be here today to share two specific examples of how the Gallia County District Library and other public libraries across Ohio are serving our 8.7 million Ohio Library cardholders.

My library serves a county population of over 31,000 Ohioans. In 2016, we circulated over 185,000 digital and physical items to our Library patrons, including non-traditional items such as bicycles for use on our local bike path.

As the community center of Gallia County, we believe in providing unique educational and cultural opportunities to those we serve, that many would not experience otherwise, due to geographic and economic barriers.

In the fall of 2016, our library became the first library in the world to host the widely-renowned Bodies Revealed exhibition. At over 5,000 square feet, the Bodies Revealed exhibition provided visitors an unparalleled chance to explore, experience, and celebrate the wonder of the human form. This exhibition featured the human body in unprecedented detail in a manner normally reserved for medical professionals. Visitors were able to view eight full body specimens as well as hundreds of carefully-preserved specimens from various systems of the

human body. These visitors also learned about human anatomy and the effects that disease and unhealthy lifestyles have on our bodies.

In the three months that this exhibition was at the Gallia County Library, 19,555 visitors came to see Bodies Revealed. Visitors came from at least 34 different states including Kentucky, Indiana, and North Carolina, as well as from 59 of Ohio's 88 counties. At least 6,500 of these visitors were students ranging from middle school age up through the post-secondary level. Many of these middle school and high school students attended as a school field trip, traveling up to three hours by bus one-way, with several districts noting that had it not been for the Library providing this exhibition at no admission charge, their students would not have had the opportunity to go on a field trip at all this year.

Students in some districts even raised their own funds to provide the bus on which to travel to Gallia County to see Bodies Revealed. Medical and nursing students from Ohio University, Marshall University, the University of Rio Grande, Shawnee State, and THE Ohio State University, among others, visited the exhibition to supplement their current studies. Nursing professionals, seasoned in their field, commented that they gained knowledge to apply in their everyday work with patients. Our local medical facility, Holzer Health Systems, conducted continuing education sessions for medical professionals in the exhibit area.

I received countless emails, phone calls, and letters from patrons of all ages expressing their appreciation for the opportunity to see Bodies Revealed. One local high school student wrote, "I really enjoyed having the Bodies Revealed exhibit at our local library. I was very impressed that we were the first library to host the exhibit. Everything was fascinating to me. I plan on becoming a physician's assistant, so I look forward to getting to learn more about the human body."

Not only did those who visited the exhibition benefit, but our local economy benefited as well. During the run of Bodies Revealed, it became common to see out-of-county school buses and tour buses in the parking lots of local restaurants. Those traveling from out of our area stayed in local hotels. Local businesses indicated an increase in traffic during this three month time period as well.

This project was funded through the Public Library Fund, as well as through our local property tax levies. The Library Administration and Board believe we will continue to realize great returns on the investment of Library resources allocated to this exhibit should one youth be compelled to pursue a career in medicine, life sciences, forensics, or any such related field, as a result of experiencing this exhibition.

The second example of how our library and several other library systems in the state are serving our communities and Ohio's taxpayers is through mobile hotspot lending programs, such as our Wi-Fi to Go program, which recently launched on March 13.

We believe it is important for internet access to be available in every household. The Gallia County District Library strives to assist in bridging the technological gap that exists in our county by lending Wi-Fi mobile hotspots to our patrons, many of whom cannot afford internet access. Even those who can afford internet in the home may have a very limited data plan. By circulating these low-filtered devices, we are providing patrons with the opportunity to "borrow the internet" to use at home, in their small business, or while traveling within the United States. I have one of the Library's twenty Wi-Fi to Go hotspot kits with me today. As you can see, each kit contains the mobile hotspot, charger, and instruction guide. Patrons use this hotspot, along with their own personal device such as a smart phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer to gain internet access.

We realize the demand is great for internet access in our county, as these twenty hotspots were checked out or reserved within the first 2-3 hours they were initially offered to the public. Currently, our library has over 100 patrons on the wait list for one of these hotspot kits. On our program's launch date, one of the first borrowers represented a homeschooling family, who was grateful to have the hotspot to use, after citing how expensive it is to purchase data. Another patron who resides near the Gallia/Lawrence County line was ecstatic that she could access the internet through one of our hotspots, given the remote location of her residence in the county.

Public libraries provide many online resources to patrons that are only accessible to those with internet access. An example of one such service that our Library provides is *Gale Courses for Public Libraries*, which deliver hundreds of engaging, instructor-led online courses focused on professional development, technology skills, and personal enrichment to transform lives and foster positive changes in our community. *Gale Courses* are tied to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' fastest-growing occupations, thereby aiding in workforce development. Through our Wi-Fi to Go program, we enable patrons to "borrow the internet" to access these online courses and many other resources they would not have access to otherwise, outside the Library's walls.

It has been a privilege to share with you two of our most recent and notable library programs. Those of us who work in public libraries are passionate about the work we do, for each day, we have the opportunity to witness firsthand, the incredible difference we are making to improve and enhance the quality of life for those we serve in our communities in this great state of Ohio.

At this time, I would be happy to entertain any questions you may have.

# The Columbus Dispatch

September 29, 2016

## ‘Bodies Revealed’ exhibit lands in Gallia County

by Rita Price, The Columbus Dispatch

The Bossard Memorial Library is hosting "Bodies Revealed," an exhibition featuring whole and partial bodies and organs treated with a plastic silicone polymer to retain their startlingly natural appearance. The popular displays have been viewed by millions worldwide, yet never before at a community library, said Bossard director Debbie Saunders.

GALLIPOLIS -- Delicate, intricate and brightly colored, the specimen seemed more sculpted than preserved. Jessica Coleman had no idea that the human respiratory system -- specifically, a bronchial tree and its spidery vessels -- could be a thing of beauty.

"It almost looks like an art piece," the 17-year-old said.

Coleman and her classmates from the nearby University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College generally rely on textbooks and lectures for their introduction to



anatomy. But from now through Dec. 31, students and families and the general public, including visitors to this Appalachian community, have rare access to the real deal.

The Bossard Memorial Library is hosting "Bodies Revealed," an exhibition featuring whole and partial bodies and organs treated with a plastic silicone polymer to retain their startlingly natural appearance. The popular displays have been viewed by millions worldwide, yet never before at a community library, said Bossard director Debbie Saunders.

And, unlike other venues, the library is not charging an admission fee.

"Here, we just believe in the educational value of it," Saunders said. "We felt the return on investment would be great in terms of opportunities for people in southeastern Ohio, and into West Virginia and the surrounding area."

Road trips to metro areas and museums are out of reach for many in Gallia County, and schools in the region often struggle to afford field trips. The Bossard has a long and proud history of aiming to make up some of the difference, said Robbie Jenkins, president of the Gallia County District Library Board of Trustees.

For information about the exhibit or to reserve a visit, go to [bossardlibrary.org](http://bossardlibrary.org) or call 740-446-7323

Library officials also have brought in animals from the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, sharks from the Newport Aquarium and a local version of Antiques Roadshow.

"We don't have to be followers," Jenkins said. "Hopefully there will be people who say, 'You won't believe what they have in Gallipolis.'"

The bodies exhibit just opened this week in the library's new Riverside Room and already has more than 4,200 reservations.

If the experience inspires even a few young people "to be a nurse or a doctor, a medical assistant, an artist -- the expense is worth it," said Jenkins, a local businessman and fourth-generation library board member.

The library, which has tax-levy support, expects to spend about \$225,000 on the three-month exhibit, including a \$95,000 licensing fee, marketing and set-up costs.

Saunders said the board carefully weighed previous controversies surrounding Premier Exhibitions, whose "BODIES...the Exhibition," displays human remains

that could include the unclaimed bodies of incarcerated or executed Chinese prisoners. That exhibit came to Columbus several years ago.

"We were convinced that was not true, although we had to provide a disclaimer to that affect," said Roy Glover, chief medical director for the bodies exhibits. "None of us had gone to China to personally retrieve the bodies ourselves."

The bodies and specimens in "Bodies Revealed" also come from China, Glover said, but none were unclaimed and all were supplied by laboratories that have certified the deaths were natural and donated by family members.

Premier doesn't provide the donation forms, Saunders said, but offers other origin and inspection information as part of the exhibit contract. "It was definitely something we had to consider in making the decision," she said. "It's a very valid point of discussion."

Dr. Joshua Bryant, a resident at Holzer Medical Center, first saw a Premier bodies exhibit in his hometown of Pittsburgh. This week, he was on hand at Bossard to answer questions and help enrich the experience for visitors who, for the first and maybe only time in their lives, could peer inside skulls and chest cavities, study a stretching muscle or marvel at a stringy, full-body-length display of blood vessels (humans have about 100,000 miles of them).

"It's still such a humbling experience," Bryant said. "They're us. They are our bodies."

Supporters say the exhibits also offer powerful evidence of the damage done by smoking, alcohol abuse, cancer and heart disease, rates of which are high in Ohio's Appalachian counties.

"It highlights unhealthy lifestyles," Saunders said.

Many of the students touring the exhibit this week lingered at the display that positions a smoker's dark, scarred lung alongside that of a person who apparently didn't use tobacco. Some spoke of relatives whose habit left them tethered to oxygen tanks.

Tracy Herdman, a freshman at Rio Grande studying to be a nurse, was so taken with the exhibit that she wants to return with her family. The 18-year-old said she's never been one to wince at what lies below the skin.

"My aunt cut her hand one time, and you could see pretty far inside," Herdman said. "I took pictures."

Coleman, a Meigs County high-school senior who is getting early college credit through Rio Grande, had no trouble filling her notebook. "It's all very interesting," she said, staring into a case of perfectly preserved brains.

"Someone's whole life is right there," Coleman said. "Everything they've ever seen, done, thought."

She'd read about the central nervous system before, of course. But the book didn't do it justice.

*For information about the exhibit or to reserve a visit, go to [bossardlibrary.org](http://bossardlibrary.org) or call 740-446-7323.*

March 11, 2017

## 'Wi-Fi To Go' in Gallia

### Bossard unveils wireless internet hotspots to borrow

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GALLIPOLIS — Bossard Memorial Library will be unveiling available to borrow Wi-Fi hotspots Monday for community members to take home with an unlimited data usage for two week stints.

“In fulfilling Bossard Library’s mission to provide access to information and educational resources, the library is excited to launch the new Wi-Fi To Go service, which enables library patrons to borrow mobile wireless hotspots,” said Library Director Debbie Saunders. “We believe it is important for internet access to be available in every household. The library strives to assist in bridging the technological gap in our county by providing this service to our patrons.”

On Monday, library staff will begin circulating 20 kits, which contain the mobile hotspot, wall charger, USB cord, and instruction guide, all packaged in an official Bossard Library Wi-Fi To Go carrying case, for ease of transport.

In order to borrow a hotspot kit, patrons must be 18 years of age or older and have a Bossard Library card in good standing. At the time of checkout, the borrowing patron must present his or her library card and state-issued identification. The patron will be required to sign the library’s hotspot agreement. The loan period will be 14 days with no grace period and no renewals. A single hotspot can provide internet access for up to 15 devices.

Due to the expected high demand for these low-filtered hotspots, the library will accept reserves on the devices, provided no hotspots are currently available for borrowing. Saunders noted that patrons will incur overdue fines of \$2.50 per day, up to the \$80.00 price of the hotspot kit. Within 24 hours of the kit not being returned, the device’s data will be deactivated. Parents and guardians are responsible for the use of the hotspot by minors.

The complete lending policy can be obtained by visiting the library or on the Library's website at [bossardlibrary.org](http://bossardlibrary.org).

Saunders added that patrons will need a personal device to use with the hotspot in order to gain internet access. Examples of these devices include laptops, smart phones, tablets, and in some cases, desktop computers.

For assistance in the operation of these hotspots, borrowers may call the library's reference desk during normal business hours.

"These hotspots will benefit not only those who have no internet access in the home, but also those who have internet access, but have a limited data plan," Saunders said.

Saunders further noted that Bossard Library provides many online resources that can only be accessed by those with internet access.

"We hope to see an increase in the use of the many databases offered by the library with the introduction of the Wi-Fi To Go program at Bossard, namely Gale Courses for public libraries, which provides patrons with hundreds of free, online college-level courses in a variety of subjects," she said. "The library continues to provide public internet access computers for patron use within the walls of the library building as well as wireless access for those who bring their own personal devices such as tablets, smartphones, and laptops to the library. The new Wi-Fi to Go program, however, enables the library to provide wireless internet access to patrons when they are away from the library — be it at home, in the workplace, or while traveling within the United States."



Gallia County District Library Board of Trustees stand with the assembled mobile hotspot kits. From left to right are Leanna Martin, Graham Woodyard, Elaine Armstrong, Traci Good, Library Director Debbie Saunders and Robbie Jenkins. Not pictured are Larry Shong and Jay Caldwell.



The Herald-Dispatch

December 3, 2016



# Gallipolis library hosting free look at world-traveling anatomical exhibit

by Dave Lavender, The Herald-Dispatch

It truly is over the river and through the woods to grandma's house for our annual Thanksgiving trip up to see my wife's family on their farm in central New York.

This year, nearly three feet of snow greeted us for what I hashtagged #snowsgiving, which included some four days of snowshoeing in the beautiful rolling hills between

Syracuse and Ithaca. And we all have come back to Huntington, the bottle cap of the south, with a jumpstart to the winter and holiday season.

As has been the case in our years of travel to and from that part of the country, we have always stopped along our way to see my oldest sister and her family in Columbus and to also do some prime Dave Trippin' that has included in the past holiday trips to Niagara Falls, the "Christmas Story" house, the jaw-dropping Oglebay Resort's annual Winter Festival of Lights, and lots of cool stuff in Columbus from Zoo Lights to the mind-bending Bruce Munro light exhibit that was up at the Franklin Park Conservatory back in 2014.

Normally, our now teenage sons know where we are going, but on this last trip I kept it a mystery before blurting out as we were barreling up W.Va. 2 near Point Pleasant that we were (insert dramatic music here) - Going To The Library.

Although delivered with dramatic thunder, the news was greeted with two sets of highly raised eyebrows from the boys - who were super anxious to see the teen cousins with whom they video game daily online.

For other skeptics out there, let's just say the Dr. Samuel L. Bossard Memorial Library isn't just any library.

It is a library that is blessed to have the "Riverside Room." Opened in 2015, the room has hosted everything from local plays by the French Art Colony, presentations of Bigfoot and traveling shows by the Newport Aquarium. Now, through Dec. 31, there is room in the Riverside inn to help Bossard become the first library in the world to host Premier Exhibitions, Inc.'s "Bodies Revealed" exhibit, which has been seen by millions worldwide and that is, as advertised, "fascinating and real."

Utilizing Plastination, a German tissue preservation process developed in the late 1970s, "Bodies Revealed" lets visitors to the library get an up-close and inside look at real, whole and partial body specimens that give you a newfound appreciation for your

own organs and the complex skeletal, muscular, reproductive, respiratory, circulatory and other systems of the human body.

Safe to say after visiting "Bodies Revealed" you'll never look at a soccer kick, or someone smoking (oh, that nasty blackened lung) in the same light.

With many men displayed in athletic poses throughout the galleries, "Bodies Revealed" uses these real human specimens to show how muscles are used in movement, while using other bodies to show the damage caused to organs by overeating and lack of exercise. The exhibit also takes an equally fascinating and bizarre look into the earliest miracle of human life in the fetal development room, where fetuses from 14 to 24 weeks are on display.

While we were there we ran into Kimberly Inman, who saw "Bodies Revealed" in Chicago as a grad student and who was stoked to be able to share this living textbook with her students and fellow faculty at Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio.

Inman, who teaches anatomy at Shawnee State, said they brought 11 students - biomedical science majors and pre-med majors who clearly have an interest in learning about the body- as well as three faculty members to see the exhibit.

Walking the exhibit with her students, she said she was proud of how much they knew about the body and was using the exhibit to teach further.

"I've been pointing out the diseases that we can see, the enlarged hearts or the lungs that are clearly affected by pollution and smoking," Inman said. "I think it has been fascinating to see the variation from body to body here today."

Like many of the 11,000 visitors who have come from a multitude of states, as well as from all over West Virginia and Ohio, Inman was thankful the library has the foresight and funds to host the exhibit, and was surprised that a library had the space to do so.

"Being able to drive just an hour or so down the road and to see this type of exhibit that you would normally see in cities like Chicago or Cincinnati is really nice for them to be able to have this kind of experience," Inman said of her students. "One of the things that we were all surprised about was that a library would have this space to be able to host such a large exhibit."

Of the folks roaming the exhibit on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, no one was more fascinated or thankful in that the sea of families, physicians and college students than library director Debbie Saunders.

Saunders said all of the excitement at the library started when Robbie Jenkins, president of the Gallia County District Library Board of Trustees, asked her about the prospect of hosting the exhibit. They made inquiries, then investigated it themselves, taking a road trip in February to Greensboro, North Carolina, to see the exhibit on display.

Although the exhibit admission cost as much as \$40 in other places, Saunders said the library, which ponied up some \$220,000 to host the exhibit, wanted to make it free so anyone could afford it and so that schools could bring their students in our Appalachian region to see a world-class, unique exhibit that has never been closer than Columbus.

"Thousands of school groups have come hours away by bus so it has stimulated the local economy, but first and foremost it is the educational benefit that we have realized from this," Saunders said. "We have had med students from Marshall, and middle school and high school groups, and artists coming in and sketching, and just the general public coming in to appreciate it ... as Robbie said, if it inspires one person who attended this to go on and go into education or become a doctor it has been worth it."

While it is likely that fruit will someday be borne, we do know for certain two teenagers are less likely to doubt their dad when he says daytrippin' to a library can be equal parts fascinating and real.