COVER TO COVER

Library and Archives News for the SRSU Community

The second floor of the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library was graced with creative works by Faculty Mo Eldridge of the Languages and Literature Department, and Shea Carley, Ramon Deanda, Gregory Tegarden, and Carolyn Barrientes of the Visual and Performing Arts Department, for the Provost's Annual Award Reception in October.

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Editor's note: Cover to Cover *is published three times a year. For the most current information about the Library and Archives, visit* library.sulross.edu *and follow us on* Facebook *and* Instagram *@srsulibrary*

Letter from the Director

Last we spoke, dear reader, the Library and Archives had some exciting projects in the works. Thanks to the commitment and determination of the Library and Archives staff and some strong supporting characters in Facilities, Finance, the Office of Information Technology, and the Provost's Office especially, we've acomplished some great things this fall.

In November we officially launched the Library of Things collections in Alpine and Eagle Pass. Because libraries aren't just for books, SRSU students, staff, and faculty will now be able to check out 'things,' such as charging cords, cables, and calculators. We anticipate growing the collection to include more course-supporting multimedia items, and would love your recommendations to do so.

We continuously audit our catalogs and review our website to make sure we provide the most current, accessible, and accurate Library and Archives information to you, our users. Hopefully in the early new year you'll notice only smooth upgrades to our online world and an increased social media presence thanks to **Taylor Moore**.

Finally, we outfitted all study rooms in the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library with updated technology. This upgrade, made possible through grant funding, is in response to student calls for modernization in last year's satisfaction survey.

As we look ahead, we are excited to spend 2026 celebrating fifty years of the Archives of the Big Bend. Keep an eye out (and subscribe) for news about how you can celebrate all that the Archives has accomplished in its first five decades—and also for news about how you can support the Archives' next fifty years. Read on for all the Library and Archives news that's fit to print, and have a safe and happy new year. Be sure to check out our interim hours and we'll see you in 2026!

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Dispatch from Eagle Pass
-via Mike Fernandez, Head of Eagle Pass Library Services-

This semester, we brought the popular SRSU Library Clothing Swap to the Eagle Pass campus. The swap has become a favorite event in Alpine each fall and spring, and we appreciate everyone who stopped by throughout the week. We'll be back with another one in the spring around Earth Day and we'll look forward to making it bigger and better.

You might have visited us at D-129 early in the semester to pick up your textbooks through the Sully Shelf program. We continue to work with the Lobo Outfitters bookstore to serve as the pickup location for Sully Shelf each semester. I'll offer a big shout-out to Library Assistant **Gabriela Casarez**, who works hard to get your materials ready for pickup.

Our collection in Eagle Pass continues to grow, and we have added new materials across several areas, including items from our new Library of Things collection. We encourage you to stop by to see what is available and to explore the newer additions to the shelves. And as always, you can rely on Interlibrary Loan and Direct Mail for access to physical materials from Alpine and beyond.

We are also continuing to pilot extended hours each semester. We will keep reviewing how this service is being used and will adjust based on student needs and feedback. Your recommendations and ideas continue to help shape the future of library services in Eagle Pass.

Reminder: 250 for the 250th Project

The Archives of the Big Bend would love to learn more about the history that is important to you! Next year, our country will celebrate its 250th anniversary. As such, archives, museums, and countless other heritage institutions are finding ways to celebrate and display our fascinating and diverse national histories. One of these projects includes "250 for the 250th," where archives across the country are displaying one item each to represent their institution.

[250 for the 250th feedback]

Please fill out the brief form linked above (only 4 questions!) with your interests and ideas, and we will use the results to decide which item from our archives will represent Sul Ross State University and the Archives of the Big Bend next year. Direct questions about the project to SRSUarchives@sulross.edu.

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Professional Development and Presentations

- Head of Archives **Victoria Contreras** attended the Society of American Archivists Archives*Records Conference and Annual Meeting, including a Community Archiving Workshop in late August. Then in October she participated at the Western History Association's 65th Annual Conference in conjunction with her trip to represent the Archives of the Big Bend at the Border Regional Archives Group (BRAG) Border Archives Bazaar.
- Director **Betsy Helesic** presented her work in progress on the Alpine Restaurant Mapping Project at the 31st Annual Conference of the Center for Big Bend Studies in November. Follow along with the project, funded by an SRSU Research Enhancement Grant, at alpinerestaurantmappingproject.org.
- Title V Project Director for the DHSI Digital Transformation and Modernization grant **Michelle Lacey** attended the 30th Annual HACU Conference and *Enlace* Mid-Level Leadership Program in October. Lacey is currently part of the 2025-26 *Enlace* Mid-Level Leadership Program cohort.

Clippings

graphic via Marfa Public Radio

Head of Archives **Victoria Contreras** was featured in the third episode of a new podcast from Marfa Public Radio, _A Whole Other Country_, launched at the end of September.

The podcast is described by Marfa Public Radio as a six-part series reported by Zoe Kurland, who "drives the bumpy roads of the Davis Mountains Resort to talk to neighbors, historians, eyewitnesses, and hostages about the real story of the Republic of Texas—and what happens when the myths of the frontier crash violently into reality."

In an October 15, 2025 interview with the Big Bend Sentinel, Sam Karas asked writer, producer, and reporter Kurland about how she thought about sourcing the podcast. Kurland shared that she "went deep into local newspaper archives on microfilm at Sul Ross" to contextualize the story further. Well, that's what we're here for! All episodes are available now.

Plan Your Spring 2026 with the Library and Archives:

- The Archives of the Big Bend's 50th Anniversary all year long
- More workshops covering Information Literacy, Research Basics, Creative Commons, and ILL and serials all semester long
- Options for tours of our spaces in January
- International Love Data Week in February
- 10th Annual Earth Day Clothing Swap in Alpine (and Inaugural Earth Day Clothing Swap in Eagle Pass!) in April
- DeStress Fest in May

click to view the full Library and Archives calendar

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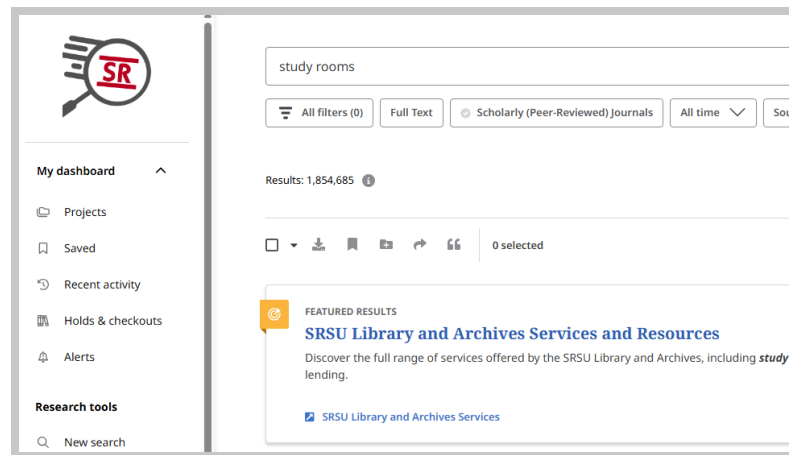ALPINE • EAGLE PASS • DEL RIO • UVALDE

Title V DHSI DTM projects come to an end

In September we learned that the Title V DHSI Digital Transformation and Modernization grant would no longer be funded. Project Director **Michelle Lacey** has been diligently working on spending down remaining funds and will close down the grant by March 2026. We want to thank Michelle Lacey for her hard work and dedication to the entire suite of Digital Transformation and Modernization projects started by this grant, especially for all of the great work advanced in the Library and Archives. Overall her work has impacted thirteen different departments offering needed improvements and solutions across the university.

New QuickSearch features

In his role as Systems and Access Librarian, **Mike Fernandez** continues his never-ending quest to iteratively improve access to Library and Archives content and resources.

Most recently, Fernandez has integrated useful information into QuickSearch, our discovery tool powered by EBSCO that aggregates search results across a majority of our paid and Open Access databases. QuickSearch is the place that most people begin their research, so it makes sense to integrate additional information about services and resources there where possible. Now users searching for information about our building hours, study spaces, and our varied special collections—such as the Library of Things or our Digital Collections—will be alerted to those results within QuickSearch as **Featured Results** (screenshot above).

Coming soon: Increased scanning capabilities

This fall we acquired upgraded hardware and software to support high-resolution and multi-format scanning to be utilized by Interlibrary Services and the Archives Digitization Lab. As of this writing, our BookEye 5v2 Scanner is being installed, and soon our staff will be trained in the use of upgraded Opus software to manage large-scale digitization and preservation projects in addition to the Interlibrary Loan management software we have used and loved for years. In addition to helping us maintain our high output of Interlibrary Loan and ScanIt requests, this equipment is a big win for the Archives as well.
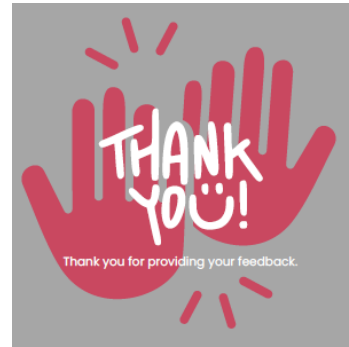
stock image from BookEye

According to Head of Archives **Victoria Contreras**, access to an oversize overhead scanner capable of high-resolution scans and multi-format interchangeability will greatly improve both preservation and access to our archival collections by giving us the ability to more easily and efficiently scan high-risk primary documents.

The scanner is housed on the first floor of the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine. We look forward to publicizing future projects.

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Did you 'Take 5 for Your Library'?

From November 5 to December 5, Head of Eagle Pass Library Services and principal investigator **Mike Fernandez** collected data from our second annual Library and Archives Satisfaction Survey. While Fernandez tabulates this year's data, we wanted to take the opportunity to look back at how we've responded to comments and recommendations from the 2024 survey respondents. Be on the lookout for more, and provide feedback anytime by emailing SRSUlibrary@sulross.edu.

You recommended:
- "More live training/monthly tips videos on best practices using journal databases and accessible resources. Sometimes it is difficult to know which resource is best for what project." (International)
- "periodic live webinars (allowing live Q&A) on basic research and library literacy would be helpful—you would need to find out when students would be most able to attend." (International)
- "I primarily use the reference and research support (which needs to improve) and electronic resources (which are excellent)." (Alpine)
- "Easier website." (International)

As of Fall 2025, the SRSU Library and Archives is offering regularly scheduled virtual workshops related to researching, information literacy, and the use of local library and archives services and resources.

You recommended:
- "[...] the hours are terrible. They need to be open every day of the week and open later than 9 p.m. and earlier than 8 a.m. Perhaps until midnight or 1 a.m. on weekends, and open at 6 a.m. or 7 a.m. on weekdays." (Alpine)
- "Having hours on Saturday would be extremely helpful." (Alpine)
- "weekend hours" (International)

We continue to take requests for increased hours into consideration, but must balance these requests with space usage statistics and availability of resources and staff time. Mike Fernandez **and** Gaby Casarez **have successfully piloted evening hours in Eagle Pass and will consider weekend hours in the future.**

You recommended:
- "Better printers and updated study rooms." (Alpine)
- "The study rooms located in the library can fill up quickly on a busy day. Although the staff sends us to the third floor as an alternative, not everyone honors the floor's designation as a silent space." (Alpine)

During Summer 2025, the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library's 2nd floor lab and all study rooms received refreshed technology provided by the NTIA grant (Directed by Dominick Percoco**) and Title V DHSI DTM grant (Directed by** Michelle Lacey**), a project headed by** Cindy Slocumb **and** Al Gomez**. We are committed to expanding options for a variety of types of study.**

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