



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Talking Book and Braille Library celebrates 50 years at the State Library of Oregon

Salem, Ore. – The Talking Book and Braille Library is celebrating 50 years at the State Library of Oregon in Salem. The library was relocated from the Library Association of Portland to the State Library’s Church Street Annex in July of 1969.

The 1969 Oregon Legislature appropriated \$80,000 for the library to begin providing Talking Book and Braille Services to Oregonians who are blind and print-disabled in partnership with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at the Library of Congress.

The Talking Book and Braille Library began operation with seven staff members. Circulation at the time was averaging 11,000 items per month to 1,700 users, including record discs, two-track cassette tapes, Braille, and large print books. Today Talking Books circulates on average 31,000 items per month to 5,200 users, but still has a staff of seven.

The types of materials available through Talking Books has changed as technology has advanced. The first four-track cassette book (“Roots” by Alex Haley) was recorded in 1977. Digital players and books first became available for patrons in 2009. All patrons can get a free audio book player to play specially formatted audio books.

The web-based Braille and Audio Reading Download system (BARD) from the National Library Service (NLS) was introduced in April 2009. BARD gave registered users unlimited and immediate access to the entire NLS digital audio and electronic Braille collection. The BARD app for iOS devices was added in 2013 and for Android in 2015.

The Talking Book and Braille Library is available free of charge to any Oregonian who is print-disabled, which includes visual, physical, and reading impairments. The collection is ever-growing and currently has more than 80,000 titles in audio, 19,000 titles in Braille, 95 audio and Braille magazines, and over 150 descriptive videos.

To learn more, visit www.ORTalkingbooks.org. The public can access the collections anytime online or in-person from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 4 p.m.

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The State Library provides leadership and resources to continue growing vibrant library services for Oregonians with print disabilities, the Legislature and state government, and all Oregonians through local libraries.