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BiblioTech attains accreditation from state commission
Top library staff begins work this month

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission notified Bexar County today that BiblioTech will be accredited for the upcoming state fiscal year. Accreditation from the Commission allows BiblioTech to participate in the TexShare program and the federal E-Rate program. It also validates BiblioTech, due to open this fall, as a fully functioning public library.

“It is exciting to see all the pieces of this incredible project coming together; and accreditation is a huge accomplishment for something that is a relatively new idea,” Precinct 1 Commissioner Sergio “Chico” Rodriguez said. “This shows that BiblioTech is truly a library and not just a technology center.”

The state’s TexShare program will allow BiblioTech to offer more services to its patrons by sharing resources with a consortium of nearly 700 public and academic libraries throughout the state; that includes access to 51 electronic full-text databases. Without this program, it would cost more than \$49 million for each library to individually purchase the database subscriptions.

The federal E-Rate program is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company under the direction of the Federal Communications Commission. The program gives discounts to help schools and public libraries obtain affordable telecommunications and Internet access. The level of discount depends on the poverty level of the population served.

The accreditation news follows the official start dates this month of BiblioTech's two key staff — the head librarian and the branch manager.

Ashley J. Eklof, who will serve as the head librarian, has a master of library and information science degree from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. She brings to BiblioTech six years of experience in academic, public and school libraries. Eklof's experience includes collection management, cataloging, filing, reference services, budgeting and finances, customer service and technology troubleshooting.

BiblioTech Branch Manager Catarina Velasquez is a native of San Antonio with a bachelor's degree in government with a minor in Mexican American studies from the University of Texas at Austin. Velasquez brings a history of community service through Any Baby Can, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and National Latino Children's Institute. Most recently Velasquez was the program director of Baptist Child and Family Service's Guadalupe Street Coffee, where she developed and implemented health and wellness initiatives, employment programs for area youth and job training assistance for adults.

"I think Ashley and Catarina are going to combine their respective areas of expertise to take BiblioTech farther than I ever imagined," said County Judge Nelson Wolff. "We were looking for our top staff to possess a strong sense of community service and programming, as well as library and technology expertise. We've got that in these two women."