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Editor: Please do not edit out ALA credit in the last paragraph.

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ALPINE PUBLIC LIBRARY RECEIVES NATIONAL GRANT FOR SMALL AND RURAL LIBRARIES
\$3,000 Grant Will Help the Library Work with Residents to Explore Health Care in the Big Bend

Alpine — Alpine Public Library has been selected as one of 300 libraries to participate in Libraries Transforming Communities: Focus on Small and Rural Libraries, an American Library Association (ALA) initiative that helps library workers better serve their small and rural communities.

The competitive award comes with a \$3,000 grant that will help the library provide forums for area residents, including health care providers and recipients, to discuss their experiences with health care resources and to arrive at an understanding of the issues faced by disparate individuals and share these perceptions with state, county, and city governments.

“I am happy that our project was selected for funding,” said Library Director Don Wetterauer. “The purpose of the project is to learn what our residents need so we can help them navigate health care challenges in our remote community. Our goal is to build a healthier, happier community for our families.”

As part of the grant, Alpine Public Library staff and volunteers will take an online course in how to lead conversations, a skill vital to library work today. The library will then host conversations with residents about health care resources and use the grant funds to purchase books for a community-wide reading of Lawrence Wright’s *The End of October*. The book will provide a starting point for discussions of health care in general terms and in rural settings more specifically and more personally. Grant funds will also support a forum bringing together local health care providers and recipients to discuss their experiences with health care.

Health care resources in the Big Bend are limited and have been stretched during the COVID-19 pandemic. A fuller understanding of local medical resources, unmet health care needs, and inequities in access to resources will benefit area residents, health care providers, and government agencies as they make decisions related to health care. The library will also gain a clearer picture of its role in disseminating information and assisting patrons with accessing health care resources.

If you are interested in getting involved or taking part in the conversation, please contact Lee Smith at leesmith@yahoo.com or 432-386-3648 or visit alpinepubliclibrary.org for more information.

Since 2014, ALA’s Libraries Transforming Communities initiative has re-imagined the role libraries play in supporting communities. Libraries of all types have utilized free dialogue and deliberation training and resources to lead community and campus forums; take part in anti-violence activities; provide a space



for residents to come together and discuss challenging topics; and have productive conversations with civic leaders, library trustees, and staff.

“Libraries Transforming Communities: Focus on Small and Rural Libraries is an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA) in collaboration with the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL).”

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