

Arizona State Braille and Talking Book Library Digital Studio

Thanks to funding provided by Arizona Friends of Talking Books the recording studios at the Arizona Braille and Talking Book Library have gone digital. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is changing from audio books on cassettes to digital flash cards in 2008. The Arizona Talking Book Library is part of the national network of NLS libraries providing free audio books to individuals who find it difficult to read print. In preparation for the national change to digital our local recordings also needed to change in order to be compatible.

Phase one of the conversion from analog to digital recording was completed in July 2006. The first phase included one LCM recording system, one Sound Forge review and editing station and an EDAT/Zing system for transferring the digital files to cassettes. The transition of all our patrons to the new digital format will take several years so we still need to be able to also supply the audio books on cassettes for several years. The cost for this first phase was approximately \$20,000.

Phase two was completed in July 2007 with the installation of two more LCM recording stations at the Talking Book Library and one at Mesa Public Library. Phase two also included two additional review and editing stations and a storage server for the digital book files. The cost for phase two was approximately \$60,000 and both phases were totally funded by AZ Friends of Talking Books. All of the recording in our local studios is done by volunteers and they are very pleased with the new digital equipment. They all agree it's much easier and quicker to make corrections than with the old reel-to-reel tapes.

Phase three will be to replace the very old sound booths in the library's studio. Ventilation, lighting and seals in the current booths are in poor condition. Each booth, installed, is approximately \$20,000 so for phase three of the studio conversion we will need \$60,000 if we are to replace all three.

The final phase will be to purchase flash cards and mailing containers for distribution of our local recorded books to blind and visually impaired patrons. Patrons will begin receiving their new digital players from the National Library Service in 2008. We will also need to purchase duplicating equipment for making multiple digital copies of the books. NLS doesn't have information yet on what the cost for these items will be but we hope to know before the end of this year.

We sincerely thank the Arizona Friends of Talking Books and every person, company and organization who donated toward this project. We could not have done the conversion to digital without them. Plaques recognizing those who contributed \$250 or more now hang just outside the recording studio. Thank you one and all for making our leap to the digital age possible.