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YAKIMA VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY
- BRANCHES

Toppenish to Vote on Library

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By MIKE BARENTI

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TOPPENISH — Voters will decide Feb. 29 if they're willing to pay a new tax to keep their public library open.

The Toppenish City Council stopped funding the library after passage last November of Initiative 695, which reduced license fee tabs to \$30 and cost the city about \$486,000 in state funding.

Now the city could let the Yakima Valley Regional Library annex the Toppenish library.

But for that to happen, voters must approve a tax of 50 cents on every \$1,000 of assessed property, or \$25 on a \$50,000 house.

"If it doesn't pass by 50 percent plus one of the people who vote, our library will close March first," said Toppenish librarian Alice Fleming.

The library is a place where children study, read or use computers, and homebound patrons can get books delivered.

Last year, Toppenish put up \$45,000 for its library, while the regional library paid \$91,800 to cover salaries, buy books and other supplies, said Anne Haley, director of the Yakima Valley Regional Library.

Under annexation, the regional library, which is funded by local taxpayer approved levies, would pay all costs, she said.

If the voters approve the new tax, the regional library will cover the expenses of the Toppenish library for the rest of this year, since annexation doesn't take effect until the beginning of 2001.

"We're doing that out of support for our cities," Haley said.

If the annexation measure passes, the Toppenish library board will stay in place.

"We encourage a local library board to remain in existence," Haley said. "Nothing will change." The local board will continue providing advice to the regional library board on service needs.