

# 2008 Fall Conference Report

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December 4, 2008

On Friday, November 14, 2008, the Oklahoma Chapter held its Fall Conference at the new Training and Education Center on the Rose State College campus. The conference title was **How Secure is Your Security? Library Security, Safety Planning and Policies.**

Tragic headlines about violence on campuses cause everyone to wonder – could it happen here? Security and disaster preparedness continues to be a major planning effort on college and university campuses. Libraries may need to develop their own specialized plans. To address this topic, we brought in two excellent speakers. Miriam Kahn founded [MBK Consulting](#) in 1991, which specializes in preservation and disaster response for libraries, archives, historical societies, museums and other cultural institutions. She has written a number of books on disaster response for libraries and archives. Her most recent, [The Library Security and Safety Guide to Prevention, Planning, and Response](#), was published by ALA in June. David Dagg is Head of Security & Facility Operations at the [Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History](#) in Norman. He has decades of experience in safety and security. He has managed security for institutions with high public usage since 1989.

The conference opened with Miriam Kahn outlining measures to secure your library and its collections. Some of her key points were to evaluate risks, develop a plan, put it in writing, and test the plan. She stressed that a security or disaster plan is not something to be done once and filed away. It must be reevaluated on a regular basis and stored in several locations for easy access.

When conference attendees returned from the lunch break, there were poster sessions to check out. The posters featured a report on the state of information literacy instruction in Oklahoma, disaster planning at the Tulsa Community College Learning Resource Center, and a unique resource sharing service developed between a university library and a public library in Claremore, Oklahoma.

The afternoon session was started by David Dagg. He discussed basic tenets of personal security and safety. His description of a safety pyramid was interesting: building on a foundation of understanding criminals and taking basic safety measures, a person builds their way up to knowledge of self-worth and boundaries. Dagg also provided us with tips for dealing with difficult people and handling threatening situations.

After a break, Miriam Kahn came back to discuss disaster planning. When developing a disaster plan, you must form a chain of command and give members the authority they need to act in the event of a disaster. Some of her interesting suggestions were to:

- designate one spokesperson for the library who will keep all media positive
- if you solicit donations after a disaster, always ask for money – never for books
- keep in mind your library's mission and services when developing your disaster plan

- crisis counseling for your staff should be built in to the plan.

Librarians shared stories about plans they had developed and incidents that had happened in their libraries. Attendants varied from library administrators to front line staff, academic and public institutions. It was a varied and interesting group.