

PROVINCIAL LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT 2015

CHETWYND PUBLIC LIBRARY



INTRODUCTION

Chetwynd Public Library: Inspiring and Engaging the Community

The library is one of the main hubs in our community and as such, our Mission and Vision reflects where we are and where we want to be in three years.

Mission: To Inspire our community in a spirit of learning and discovery

Vision: To be in the forefront of our community in learning and discovery

The Winds of Change: *a library in transition*

2015 was a year of transition and change for the Chetwynd Public Library. The announcement of retirement this spring by long tenured Library Director Fay Asleson put the staff and board in a scenario of succession planning which they did not have to undertake for nearly 30 years. Despite the changes in personnel, the library flourished and all staff stepped up to go above and beyond to ensure that library programs and services met or exceeded the high standards which our community has come to expect. Countless volunteer hours combined with staff enthusiasm and community support to create a busy library which strives to meet the needs of our community.

Community Demographics

Located in the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains at the entrance of the Peace Region, Chetwynd is among the younger communities in the province of British Columbia. In 1962 Chetwynd became incorporated as a Village. The population of the District of Chetwynd is estimated to be at 3300. This does not include the Regional District unincorporated areas of Saulteau First Nations, West Moberly First Nations, East Pine, Hasler Flats, Lone Prairie & Jackfish. The combined population is estimated to be 5800. The primary Industries in Chetwynd are forestry, oil, gas, mining, ranching & tourism.

Challenges into Opportunity

This year our Library Director announced her retirement after almost 30 years as the leader of the library. The staff and board took this change as an opportunity to learn more about their roles in the library and how it all fits together. Each person is working hard to be empowered to their very best and know how their role supports the library. Under the guidance of the new Library Director, we are learning to transform the strategic plan into an executable work plan. We are also looking at the Library with fresh eyes. We are making changes as needed and looking to see how we can better meet the needs of our community in all our services and programs.

Planning for the Future: Strategic Plan 2015-2017

The board of the Chetwynd Public Library solicits input from a variety of sources to develop its strategic plan. We have used the expertise of both our board and key staff to ensure that the plan's direction is consistent with the board's goals and needs. We will continue to involve our members and partners to ensure that our plan reflects their viewpoints and vision of the Chetwynd Library for both current and future needs. In 2014 the board has designated the following areas as priority issues that need to be addressed. Some are very short term while others will take more time to develop and implement.

1.0 Goal: Long Term Sustainability. A constant challenge for many organizations is ensuring long-term sustainability especially in a region that depends on the resource industries. This plan will assist the library to continue to serve the communities in the area.

Objective 1.1: To keep current with technological changes.

Objective 1.2: To increase membership by 25% by 2017

2.0 Goal: Financial Sustainability. Long-term financial sustainability is necessary for sustainability of the library.

Objective 2.1: To increase the long term number of partners of the library

Objective 2.2: To maintain and increase the fund raising program

Objective 2.3: To increase the contingency fund to address potential major economic impacts or unexpected major costs.

The Chetwynd Public Library has developed a three-year service plan that guides policy and development of day-to-day operations of the organization. The plan defines goals, expected outcomes and organizational strategies that cover both the geographic and topical areas of our mandate. It will be updated annually.

This new plan will focus on two new goals along with the objectives and work planning items that come from those goals. The Board feels that by doing this, they will strengthen our short and long term opportunities that will benefit both the library and the community that we serve.

In 2015 we made progress on many parts of our strategic plan. We were able to increase the membership with our library by 5% with an increase of 83 active users to a total of 1736. We were also able to create even more community partnerships with many in-kind as well as funding partners helping us reach our goals. We keep current with our current with technological changes having approximately 35,515 Wi-Fi connections per month. We also share our knowledge with our community via our outreach and in library training, both formal and informal.

Reflections on 2015

Anytime there is change, the fear of the unknown can be scary. The Board of Trustees worked with the library staff to ensure that the change in leadership would be positive and as simple as possible for all involved. The transition was one that never affected the service to the patrons and now that we have settled into new routines, the Library is moving forward with fresh ideas and enthusiasm which is grounded in a solid respect for the past.

“RESPECT THE PAST IN THE FULL MEASURE OF ITS DESERTS, BUT DO NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF CONFUSING IT WITH THE PRESENT NOR SEEK IN IT THE IDEALS OF THE FUTURE.” - JOSÉ INGENIEROS

LIBRARY PRIORITY 1. A FOCUS ON EQUITABLE ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES FOR ALL BRITISH COLUMBIANS

Library Goal that supports the priority:

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Objective 1.1: To keep current with technological changes.

Objective 1.2: To increase membership by 25% by 2017

We consistently are working on keeping up with technological changes and increasing membership which both meet this priority. We have enhanced our digital collection as well as increased our social media information sharing to allow under-represented community members access to our information 24/7. We also have new outreach programs which allow us to meet those needs in a better way.

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority: This fall we implemented a program called Library on Location. The idea is simple, a monthly book exchange service which has our books brought to the location for patrons who can't make it into our library space. We are reaching out to public schools, day cares & seniors facilities. In one of our locations we have had feedback that an elderly lady who had become reclusive is brightening up at the thought of having books brought in. We are excited to be developing these relationships. We also had a little girl from the school on the local reservation come in to get her first library card as she needed to see where to books came from! We are excited that something as simple as taking the books and exchanging them on location is creating such a positive impact in our community.

Partnerships that support the priority:

- BC Libraries Cooperative – databases, subscriptions & website support
- IT North – provides the technical support and framework for our digital needs
- School District #59 – we work with Moberly Lake Elementary & Strong Start as locations for Library on Location
- Saulteau First Nations – We take materials monthly to their Head Start program
- Local Day Care facilities- We take materials monthly to Kici Awasimsak & Little Lights Daycare
- Surerus Place & Little Prairie Haven – Seniors facilities which are receiving the materials exchange service
- Local small businesses – We drop off at local salons, dentists and waiting areas.

Outcomes that were identified:

We are seeing an increase in the number of patrons coming into our library from under-represented populations in our community. We see an increase in our digital collection usage as we have made better use of our website and our social media channels. We are finding that many community members are looking to our library and our services as an option for them which they can access for free. They are learning to ask “why not the library” when deciding when to access a community service. We have also been told that there is an increase in customers reading in the wait rooms as there are now fresh materials to read.

LIBRARY PRIORITY 2. INCREASED SUPPORTS FOR EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION.

Library Goal that supports the priority:

Goal: Long Term Sustainability. A constant challenge for many organizations is ensuring long-term sustainability especially in a region that depends on the resource industries. This plan will assist the library to continue to serve the communities in the area.

Objective 1.1: To keep current with technological changes.

Objective 1.2: To increase membership by 25% by 2017

We have seen an increase in our membership as well as many students accessing the library for our digital content and Wi-Fi. We also have seen many more students in our library before and after school as well as during lunch breaks and spare blocks.

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority:

We have 6 tablets and 1 tower computer for students and families to access. We also offer high speed Wi-Fi connections. This past school year we started working with the high school to support their IBL English program and we host their weekly book clubs with the support of our staff. We have also had a Community Connections program which gives the students a monthly showcase of a program or service at their school. The Art class at the high school showcases their art in our children's area. We arranged for authors come in and work with some of the elementary classes on location. A new program called Librarian on Location has a staff member go to the schools to work directly with the students. In addition we have been judges at the local science fair.

Partnerships that support the priority:

- School District #59 – we work closely with all schools to support their learning as requested and needed
- Peace Christian School (Independent) – we work with students and teachers to support their learning as requested and needed
- BC Libraries Cooperative - databases, subscriptions & website support
- North East Library Federation – helps us bring in author tours and special events
- Chetwynd Community Arts Council – works with us on our Exploring Art: an afternoon once per month for children to learn beginner fine arts from a local artist. They also support our annual Children's Art Gala: an evening gala to celebrate children's art. This evening is a fundraiser for the Exploring Art program and is held in conjunction with BC Arts and Culture Week.

Outcomes that were identified:

We see an increase in the Wi-Fi data and digital content usage which shows that more people are accessing our subscriptions. We are building relationships with the tween/teens by providing a safe space that they feel comfortable in and enjoy working and relaxing in. We had one teen tell us that this was the only place they felt accepted and welcomed which makes us feel that we are on the right track. Interpersonal relationships are developing and the teens are coming into our space and accessing our services more than in previous years.

LIBRARY PRIORITY 3. SUPPORT FOR THE BC JOBS PLAN BY IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR JOB SEEKERS IN BC.

Library Goal that supports the priority:

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Objective 1.1: To keep current with technological changes.

Objective 1.2: To increase membership by 25% by 2017

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority:

We have a service which we rebranded to rename it the Chetwynd Resource Corner in 2015. This is a one stop information hub for all ages and stages of life. With proactive solutions in combination with patron specified queries, we are able to help the community look for information including job search skills. We also help pair up community members with volunteers for one on one tutoring. We provide an exam invigilation service for free to our community members. Many take courses via distance education and this free service is appreciated.

Partnerships that support the priority:

- BC Libraries Cooperative – provides the website hosting for our job search tools
- Job Search Services – we refer people for extensive help to this service provider
- United Way of Northern BC – provides financial support for our Resource Corner

Outcomes that were identified:

Our public access computers and tablets are consistently booked as well as we have an extensive reproductive services which allows for patrons to copy and distribute their resumes. We offer an affordable cost recovery option which we find allows many people to look for work in our library. We have a solid collection of print and digital materials which empowers the community to seek the knowledge to look for jobs. We find that these services are ones that are not glamorous but they help to build a foundation of trust and reliability which the community depends on. Free access to the information and the tools needed for job searching has also contributed to an increase in our membership.

We had one success story where a temporary foreign worker was struggling with her immigration forms. Through a series of meetings with the coordinator of the Resource Corner, she was able to submit all the papers needed for her application to be processed. She informed us at the end of the year that her application was successful and she is now a landed immigrant. We are proud that our basic services are leading to community empowerment!

LIBRARY PRIORITY 4. A FOCUS ON COLLABORATION BETWEEN LIBRARIES AND OTHER PARTNERS.

Library Goal that supports the priority:

2.0 Goal: Financial Sustainability. Long-term financial sustainability is necessary for sustainability of the library.

Objective 2.1: To increase the long term number of partners of the library

Objective 2.2: To maintain and increase the fund raising program

Objective 2.3: To increase the contingency fund to address potential major economic impacts or unexpected major costs.

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority:

The Community Adult Learners Program was a new one we tested in 2015. It is still in progress until mid-2016. Working with the local college we offered two programs focused on adult literacy. One was called Cree Language and Culture where we had Cree language classes in conjunction with traditional Cree crafts. It was located at the college campus. We also had the second component called Food for Thought community kitchen. It used a cooking class to focus on numeracy & food literacy. This program changes location though out the community. We have nothing but positive feedback from participants in both programs.

Partnerships that support the priority:

- Ministry of Advanced Education - CALP Funding
- Three Nations Venture – Cree Crafts funding
- School District #59 – location for cooking classes
- Tansi Friendship Centre - location for cooking classes

Outcomes that were identified:

We are having participants in the Food for Thought program become more involved in the other library programs and services. In the Cree program, we have an elder who participated who loved it so much that she wants to learn to read more. She has limited middle school education but now feels that it is time to learn as she has the confidence from the program that she is not too old to learn. Our partnership with Northern Lights College has been fantastic. We are looking at ways we can further support each other in the future, beyond the current program.

SUMMARY

This past year has been one of many changes. Our largest challenge was the change in leadership. We have learned the importance of succession planning in combination with a sharing of the information. We are learning to become a truly community-led library; we need to become a collaborative library team. We need to take all ideas and be open to the possibilities. As a library we need to look to the past with honour and respect, but not let it hold us back. We need to be optimistic and energized by all the possibility in front of us.

Our success depends on our community. We need them and they need us. We need to continue to create partnerships which support our goals and ensure we have a relationship with our community that allows for authentic communication that will generate the direction of our library. A focus on staff, board and patron empowerment will help us build a foundation to prepare us for the process of updating our strategic plan for 2017.

We need to do our best at all times as we are counting on the community to counting on us. It is an exciting time to be part of the Chetwynd Public Library.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ana Peasgood
Chetwynd Public Library
Library Director