

INTRODUCTION

The Chetwynd Public Library is a very busy place. We work with many community partners to enhance our regular library services to offer programs and events which inspire imaginations and create opportunities for community building. As such we have come to be considered one of the main hubs in our community and this is reflected in 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

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 2503 as of the 2016 census data. 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 over 5800. The primary Industries in Chetwynd are forestry, oil, gas, mining, ranching & tourism.

Community Challenges

“Rural British Columbia is a dynamic and evolving landscape. For generations it has been the economic heart of BC, and since 1980 rural BC has been experiencing the opportunities and challenges of a faster paced and more integrated global economy.” Chetwynd is located in the heart of a resource based economy and as such we feel effects from the booms and busts of the oil, gas & forest industries. We have an aging community infrastructure and smaller local services which sometimes struggle to meet expectations to enhance community attractiveness for the next generation of young workers as well as meeting the needs of an aging population. Digital access is still a struggle for many residents in the outlying areas with many options for access being very slow or cost prohibitive.

However difficult these challenges may seem, the local government has always strived to be proactive in their approach to promote and enhance the services which Canadian Citizens come to expect. Recreation facilities and the Library offer metropolitan services with a small town feel. We work together to turn challenges into opportunities. This collaborative approach between local government, non-profits, schools & the local business economy have created a unique partnership structure where people work across agency boundaries to offer exceptional programming and services which strive to meet the demands and expectations of the community.

Strategic Planning

The library has a strategic plan which is set to expire at the end of 2017. We ensure that all programming and services meet the goals set forth by our board. Some challenges came to light within 2016 which had certain goals lessen their priority. Combined with updates and changes to the Provincial Strategic Plan as well as the North East Library Federation Strategic Plan, we focused on objectives which delivered optimal services to the community. We looked to turn challenges into opportunities and used the strategic plan to guide us and have our mission statement inspire us as we navigated and balanced the things which we could control and the influences in which we simply had to learn to optimize for the betterment of the library.

Our goals in the current plan are:

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.

We have not met our goal of increasing membership by 25% by 2017 however we have been increasing the number of active patrons per year. At the end of 2014 we had 925 active card holders and we have increased that to 1201 active card holders at the end of 2016. We have been current with technological changes within our library. We are working on curating our digital collection and educating our community to the collection which is available to them and helping with any technology questions they may have.

Reflections

2016 was a very important year in the history of the Chetwynd Public Library Association. We celebrated 50 years of incorporation as a Public Library. We first opened our doors on February 19th, 1960 with a group of volunteers and 250 books. With the hard work and dedication of the Little Prairie Ladies Society we were able to grow to become incorporated under the Library Act in 1966. Over the years dedicated Library Board members have volunteered countless hours to create a framework for the library to operate within. This year we carried on the positive achievements of the past to a year which saw a mixture of tried and true programs with events built upon innovative ideas which sparked the imagination. We are proud of the achievements that the Library has made in the past and we continue to look forward to what the future has to bring our library and community.

1. A FOCUS ON EQUITABLE ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES FOR ALL BRITISH COLUMBIANS, INCLUDING EFFORTS TO EXTEND LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, TO UNDER-REPRESENTED POPULATIONS.

Library Goal that supports the priority:

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.

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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: *We have two tech support sessions per week for our patrons. Seniors Tech Tuesdays and Tech Thursdays are days in which we are able to offer a designated time for people to come in with their devices. We also have been working on curating and promoting our digital collection to better serve the community. We are working on developing a good selection of eBooks, audiobooks, music, movies and databases for the community to access. Learning how to access and use these subscriptions is very important and we offer one-on-one support for patrons as they discover the plethora of digital tools their library card can access.*

Partnerships that support the priority: *We simply could not offer the digital literacy services we have without the support of BC Libraries Cooperative and our IT firm, ESW IT North. Consortium pricing through the North East Library Federation enables us to subscribe to collections that may otherwise be cost prohibitive. With over 770,000 Wi-Fi connections in 2016, we need to be able to offer reliable connections to the internet. As we are still considered rural, speed and cost are always a concern. ESW IT North works with us to monitor the usage to ensure we stay within budget. Access to Wi-Fi and the internet are essential for our patrons and we are grateful for these two partners to help us ensure that our website, digital collection and access run smoothly and effectively.*

Outcomes that were identified: *We are seeing an increase in our Wi-Fi connections in 2016. Part of this increase comes from simplifying the access to the Wi-Fi code for our patrons. The most surprising and pleasing outcome from this is the increase in the elusive teen segment of our population. We are seeing more teens using the library for access to the internet. We have reconfigured an area of the library to allow for the comfortable gathering of the teens. We are encouraged to see teens use the library for this new purpose and are grateful that we can give them a safe place to meet, collaborate and discover the world of digital literacy!*

2. CONTINUED SUPPORTS FOR EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION, AS OUTLINED IN THE BC EDUCATION PLAN. LIBRARIES, AS KEY PARTNERS IN PROVIDING SUPPORTS TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM, SHOULD CONTINUE ORGANIZING AND COLLABORATING ON COMMUNITY-BASED, PERSONALIZED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL LEARNERS WHICH ALLOWS THEM TO REALIZE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL IN REACHING PERSONAL LEARNING GOALS.

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Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority: *The library has ensured that we have subscriptions for the research materials that today's students need to succeed with their projects and assignments. The physical collection also supports much of the new curriculum. We strive to keep the non-fiction collections relevant and current for the needs of today. Our Library on Location program takes our Community Librarians out of the library and directly into the community. Materials exchanged on site and special events like science fairs and exhibits give our library a chance to build relationships and also give back to the community.*

Partnerships that support the priority: *The library works to support the learners in our community of all ages. Decoda Literacy Solutions supports the library financially to help us meet our literacy community goals through a wide variety of initiatives. We also partner with School District #59 and the five schools in our community. Ecole Windrem, Don Titus Montessori Elementary, Little Prairie Elementary, Moberly Lake Elementary and Chetwynd Secondary School are all institutions which we support in any way that we can. We also support Peace Christian School which is a private institution. The library has a large focus on Every Child Ready to Read and as such as we also support the preschools in the area. The Strong Start center in Don Titus Montessori Elementary, Little Lights Daycare & Preschool, and HeadStart on Saulteau Reserve all participate in our Library on Location program. We also support post-secondary education offered locally at Northern Lights Community College and distance education through a variety of private and public institutions. Exam invigilation is a consistent service which the community appreciates and depends on.*

Outcomes that were identified: *The library is transforming from a place of knowledge borrowing to knowledge creation and sharing. The community looks to the library to be a place which brings groups and people together. One of these moments was through our Seed Library program. To end the growing season we partnered with the Chetwynd Social Planning Art in the Garden Tour and the teaching green house that Little Prairie Elementary has at the Chetwynd Community Gardens. We were able to have an afternoon workshop which brought together community members from various segments of the population for a shared purpose of learning about seed saving. The school was able to showcase their learning and community gathered to learn a tangible skill which would enhance their lives. As an added bonus, the Arts class at Chetwynd Secondary School was able to share their fused glass art which they had available for sale. It was a truly wonderful afternoon of collaboration and sharing – all sparked from the seed collection which the library has.*

LIBRARY PRIORITY 3. SUPPORT FOR BC'S SKILLS FOR JOBS BLUEPRINT AND #BCTECH STRATEGY BY IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR JOB SEEKERS IN BC. SPECIFICALLY, LIBRARIES SHOULD FOCUS ON TOOLS, PROGRAMS AND ESSENTIAL LITERACY SUPPORTS THAT HELP YOUR COMMUNITY EXPLORE NEW SKILLS FOR HIGH DEMAND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, FOR LONG-TERM JOB SECURITY IN TODAY'S GROWING ECONOMY.

Library Goal that supports the priority:

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.

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Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority: *The shift in the way we think about the world has had a huge impact on learning. It is now easier than ever to access the information you need. The greater need is now on essential skills which enable you to interpret the information and apply it to life. The nine essential skills are reading, writing and numeracy; document use and computer use; oral communication and working with others; thinking and continuous learning. The library has a huge role to play in this with access to the internet and to Wi-Fi connectivity for all community members. We also started a networking program in the fall of 2016 called Ladies Who Lunch. This monthly program is geared towards women and focuses on the skills needed to succeed in today's modern world. It is a program of sharing and collaboration with ample time for connection building. Topics like goal setting, social media literacy, time management & mindfulness are all skills which help these women be the best they can.*

Partnerships that support the priority: *The IT services from ESW IT North are essential for access for our patrons. Simple things like having a printer available for cost recovery printing, scanning services and tech support from library staff sound so simple but they are such an important part of ensuring that we are doing all we can do to make the patrons comfortable and confident with this shift in thinking. A progressive-retro approach is applied to the interactions we have with the community. We utilize the newest and best technology we can afford and we do it with a smile and gentle support which community members may need. We also work with the Chetwynd Chamber of Commerce for the Ladies Who Lunch program. They help us identify and offer these luncheons which meet the skills that are essential for success.*

Outcomes that were identified: *We find that the more we are able to offer computer and Wi-Fi access with simplicity and ease, the more comfortable patrons are with using computers and the plethora of options the internet offers them. Success stories are simple to us but mean everything to those who are using our services. Whether we are connecting a patron with a volunteer tutor via the CALP program or helping someone write an exam online with ease, each time a patron can have worry free, simple access to the internet and modern digital literacy tools, we know that we are doing our best to have a meaningful impact on their daily lives.*

4. WORK ACROSS THE LIBRARY SECTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SHARED-SERVICES AND ON COLLABORATION WITH OTHER PARTNERS TO FIND EFFICIENCIES AND BUILD ON CURRENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPPORTUNITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHARED SERVICE MODELS AND RESOURCES WHICH EXTEND OR IMPROVE SEAMLESS ACCESS, INVOLVING PUBLIC, ACADEMIC AND/OR SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

Library Goal that supports the priority:

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Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority: *Our Library on Location program is built to offer library services at the schools which do not have access to the public library due to distance. Once per month our community librarian goes to Moberly Lake Elementary to exchange books as they do not have a formal library or teacher librarian. In 2016 she also participated in their Aboriginal Days and had the honour of reading stories to the students outdoors in a teepee. We would love to expand upon this program but we need to be very careful of the nuances of unfilled teacher librarian positions in our area. Instead we focus on what we can do to support our schools and students. Many teachers bring their classes to the library for an orientation tour and for the basics of the proper care and use of books, how the dewey decimal system works and how to access online digital resources from home. We extend a welcome letter to all schools each fall to let them know about all of our services available to teachers. A simple but much appreciated one is an extended loan period for teachers who are checking out books on their own card for classroom use. We help them source the materials which complement their curriculum and bring in books via ILL and ILC when necessary.*

Partnerships that support the priority: *We work with the literacy coordinator at Ecole Windrem Elementary to help us identify needs and gaps where we can help out with. We also work with the principals and the teachers at all the public and private schools to be able offer and support our literacy initiatives which include Library on Location.*

Outcomes that were identified: *An initiative that we have worked on with a community volunteer and schools for the past few years has been the Amazing Book Challenge. The children have a chance to enter a draw with each book they check out from Family Literacy Day in January to the start of Spring Break. The students also celebrate their love of reading within the schools during this period. The books read get tracked within the library per school and each week students are highlighted in the local paper with their favourite author and/or book. We are always pleased to see the motivation that this simple challenge can bring. Working with all the schools we see that each child has equal access to these opportunities and the important of family literacy in a support home environment shows how collaboration can enhance what is taught in schools.*

Young @ Heart 55+ Seniors Community Christmas Dinner

We celebrated the 4th Annual Young @ Heart 55+ Seniors Community Christmas Dinner in December of 2016. This event was created in 2013 as a special event in addition to the monthly Young @ Heart 55+ social program the library offers. In speaking with our participants we discovered that many had families that did not reside in our community and they had little opportunity to celebrate the holiday season. There was no community dinner which was inclusive of all of our seniors residents at the time. There was smaller membership driven celebrations but nothing in which all seniors could attend. With this in mind we met as a staff and decided why not the library. We are known in the community for bringing people together and for being inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Since that first dinner we have grown and expanded to have a full Christmas Dinner with all the trimmings for 125 seniors! For many, this is their only holiday celebration. It is a time of gathering where seniors can see each other and share their news and ideas. In 2016 we had over six different agencies work with us to be able to offer the dinner at a low cost to the seniors. Tansi Friendship Centre, Surerus Place, Little Prairie Haven, Chetwynd Rec Centre, Royal Canadian Legion, Pine Valley Seniors Association & Healthy Communities all work together to plan and host the event. This year financial contributions from the District of Chetwynd and Spectra Energy helped to offset the costs. We had two local groups, the Chetwynd Air Cadets and the Chetwynd Secondary School Me to We club both helped out with setup, cleanup and serving the meal. The library board supports this annual event by volunteering to work at the circulation desk so all staff members may attend the dinner to be part of this festive event.

There are many health benefits of social capital. Social capital are the ties that build trust, connection, and participation. This is particularly important for seniors, because both our health and our social capital tend to decline as we age. We retire from jobs, lose friends and spouses to death and illness, and see family members move out of the area. All of which can sharply reduce daily social contacts and stimulation, which in turn has a direct impact on mental and physical health. Special library events such as the Young @ Heart 55+ Seniors Community Christmas Dinner are designed to maximize sharing, friendship, health, and happiness in our later years.

Collaborating with other service providers to host events like this has added benefits to staff and organizations. The library staff views this dinner as one of our signature events which helps us kick off the holiday season. We enjoy this event and we find it meaningful and interesting. It is a lot of planning and preparation however it is a relaxing, energizing escape from our day-to-day routine of work. This event provides us with renewed creativity, motivation, and vision that carries over into the rest of our jobs. We are proud of the positive impacts that the Young @ Heart 55+ Seniors Community Christmas Dinner has on our community and our library. We look forward to continuing this tradition to ensure that the momentum which has been built upon is not forgotten!



SUMMARY

Through strong partnerships, guidance from provincial goals and commitment to our strategies, we hope that all community members will benefit from equitable access to information that inspires them. Our library is a social equalizer which creates a community gathering place for ideas to be created as well as giving equal access to all regardless of socioeconomic factors. As stated by the Ministry of Education, in our rapidly changing world, we need different skills, tools, information, programs and services to succeed. Libraries bridge the physical and digital worlds, connecting people not only with a world of information but with each other. They support and contribute to life-long learning by providing safe, open spaces for people of all ages and backgrounds. We join this call to action and strive to meet the needs of people at all stages of their life. The Province of British Columbia has given us a solid framework to help guide us in continuing to be a dynamic, multipurpose and flexible library which supports a broad range of community needs.

The framework, laid out in the 2016 document *Inspiring Libraries, Connecting Communities*, sets out strategies for our library to use to help us achieve positive results within our community.

- fostering connected communities: advancing access to information and resources 10
- building capacity: enabling inspiration and innovation
- working together: creating lasting and sustainable partnerships
- sustaining our success: enhancing governance and demonstrating impact

We will be using the new provincial strategic plan in addition to our current plan to update our strategic plan which expires at the end of 2017. Community led librarianship brings library staff together with community members to identify and meet community needs. We have lots of ideas but if we are the only ones who like them, they really serve no purpose. We are looking forward to speaking to our community about what they want to see in their library. What is important? How do we make sure that we are meeting the needs of right now while staying on a solid path for the future. We must balance community with our partners in the District of Chetwynd, the Peace River Regional District and the Ministry of Education. Are we making sure that what we do daily helps them meet their strategic goals? Are we being the “glue” which gives our community a place to meet, create, share and inspire? Do we meet the mission of the library with what we are doing? With each question comes opportunity.

This upcoming year the Peace River Regional District with support from the District of Chetwynd and our library are undergoing a feasibility study to look at the future of this building. This process will give us many answers to the questions which we face. Renovate the existing or build new? The community will let us know what they feel is important. We will be here to guide them in what the future of libraries can be. It is critical to look at the needs of the present without being mindful of the future. Strategic and capital planning for our library will be essential to ensure a strong roadmap for the future. This roadmap and an updated library policy will be the tools that we will use to ensure that our library continues to inspire the community in a spirit of learning and discovery for generations to come.