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Provincial Library Grants Report 2016



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CRANBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Introduction

In 2016, the Cranbrook Public Library moved forward with diversifying programs, building relationships in the community and streamlining activities by using an operations model built on collaboration and a user-centric perspective. This report highlights some of the happenings at the Library, with a focus on activities that supported the library's strategic plan and provincial priorities.

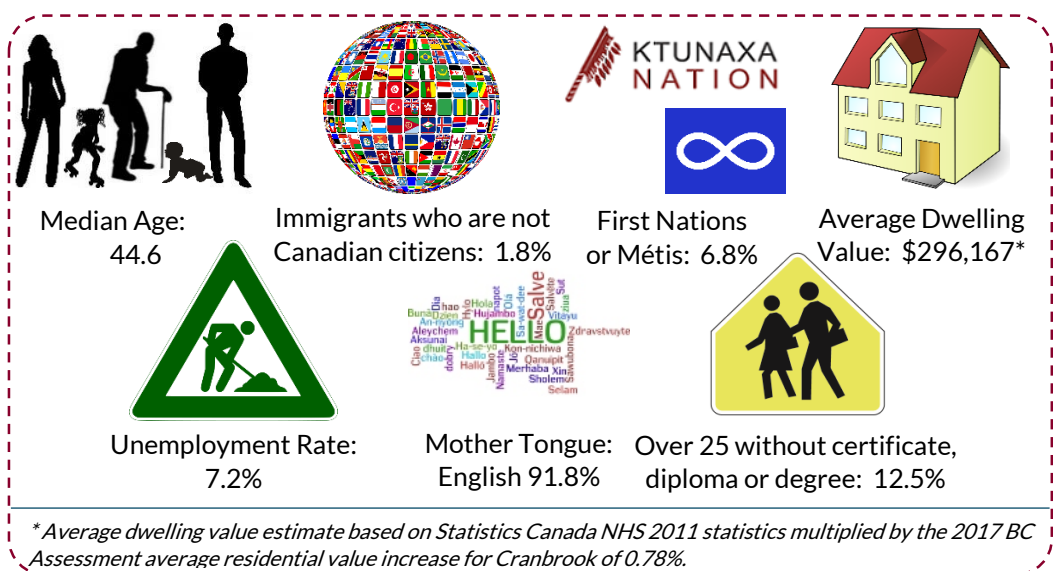
CRANBROOK & AREA PROFILE

Cranbrook is the largest community in the Kootenays, with a population of just over 20,000 in the city and approximately 6,000 in the surrounding Regional District of East Kootenay Area C. Populations in both areas grew between 2011 and 2016, Cranbrook by 3.8%, and RDEK Area C by 5.7%. It serves as the key commercial and service centre in the region, and home to the East Kootenay Regional Hospital and the main campus of the College of the Rockies. Cranbrook also serves as a transportation hub for the region with Highway 3 and 95 passing through the city, the Kootenay Rockies International Airport providing daily direct service to Vancouver and Calgary, and weekday service to Kelowna, and a nearby CP Rail operations centre and rail yard.

These elements contribute to Cranbrook having a diversified economy with retail, hospitality, health and education sectors being major employers. A significant number of people are also employed in the Elk Valley coal mines and the Alberta oil patch.

Cranbrook's position as a health service centre for the Kootenays means that people from the region move there as they age to have easier access to services. This is borne out by the 2016 census, which reveals that 35.5% of residents are 55 or older, 19.8% are over 65.¹ At the other end of the age spectrum, 20.9% of the population is less than 20 years old. Even with the national priority on settling refugees in Canada, most people moving to Cranbrook are coming from other parts of Canada; there are few newly arrived immigrants settling here. And of those, most are from other English speaking countries such as the United States, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Thus age and non-formal education are key factors staff consider when they develop programs.



¹ Data sourced from Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011, 2016 Census and BC Secure Stats Socio-Economic Profile, Rockies Region: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/Census/2016Census/PopulationHousing/MunicipalitiesByRegionalDistrict.aspx>; <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=5901022&Data=Count&SearchText=cranbrook&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=59&A1=All&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1> <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Files/b13d612e-9430-4310-a0ad-d19a452acc30/Socio-EconomicProfile-CollegeRegion5.pdf>

LIBRARY PROFILE

The Cranbrook Public Library serves approximately 26,000 residents living in the City of Cranbrook and Regional District of East Kootenay's Area 'C' seven days a week from its central location at the northern end of the downtown core. 2016 was the fourth year of its current five-year strategic plan.

2016 STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

The library continued to work towards realizing its goals through the launch of new programs, expanded services and a revitalization of its public areas.

In addition to the initiatives detailed in this report, particular activities included:

- ◆ Revising policies to reflect a collaborative and community-centered approach to program and service development and delivery;
- ◆ replacing all chairs in the Atrium and Fireplace Reading Lounge;
- ◆ setting up a collaborative puzzle in the Atrium where all library visitors are encouraged to spend some time to complete a puzzle;
- ◆ installing a custom-designed stained glass panel at the welcome desk to create a more welcoming environment;
- ◆ updated all public access computers and the wireless network to improve accessibility to online resources, and created a scanning station so people can digitize documents and photographs;
- ◆ partnered with a local seniors' centre to deliver programs that engage older people with physical and cognitive disabilities;
- ◆ redesigned the performance management system to integrate collaborative competencies and a community-centered perspective on library operations.

Government Priorities, Goals, Programs and Services, Partnerships



This section describes projects or initiatives the Cranbrook Public Library undertook in 2016 to support the four governmental priorities:

- ◆ A focus on equitable access
- ◆ Increased support for education transformation
- ◆ Support for BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint
- ◆ Working across the library sector

INSPIRING LIBRARIES, CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

The new strategic plan for public library service in British Columbia outlines four strategies to ensure that libraries remain responsive to the communities they serve as things continually change. Meant

primarily to guide the Libraries Branch as it strives to help public libraries, the strategies are just as relevant to the future development of the Cranbrook Public Library. Therefore each of the following project descriptions specifies the relevant provincial strategies.

PROVINCIAL PRIORITY 1: FOCUS ON EQUITABLE ACCESS



The library recognizes that there is a significant population of senior citizens in our community and that for some health or mobility issues can make social engagement, particularly with younger people, difficult. In spring 2016, staff at a local long-term care facility for seniors approached the Library asking if it could offer a program for its group of seniors once a month. It proved so successful that by the fall it had become a regular program open to all seniors living in our community.

Provincial Library Strategic Plan Alignment

Working Together: 'to work together with <community groups> to identify and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes...'

Fostering Connected Communities: 'identifying under-served communities and develop strategies to address service gaps'.

Library Strategic Goal & Objective

The Library strives to meet our community's diverse needs through collaboration to develop informative and relevant programs and services. Staff address this goal by developing specific outreach programs for currently underserved groups including seniors, the business community and marginalized members of our society. These are identified by analyzing statistics and being in contact with social service groups.

Program

Each Daybreak Program for Seniors session has several activities designed so that seniors with physical and cognitive problems can participate to the best of their abilities. Special guests often visit, from members of the local WHL hockey team, the Kootenay Ice, to local musicians. Together with the seniors they do crafts or other activities. Storytelling is a regular feature as well and a tea social, with biscuits gives participants some unstructured time for socializing. In the fall the program expanded so that seniors living in the community or other care facilities could also participate.

Partnerships

The program began in February 2016 when staff from the Dr. F. W. Green Memorial Home asked if they could bring a group of seniors in for a library tour. The participants gave such overwhelmingly positive feedback that two more visits were arranged before summer. Based on the success of these visits, library and care home staff decided to make this a regular monthly program starting in the fall. Care home provided guidance on how to design activities that were appropriate to seniors with health issues, particularly those suffering from dementia.

Outcomes

Staff took the opportunity presented by the care home staff to develop a recurring program for seniors because it supported the library's strategic goals and vision. The desired outcome for this program was that more people would perceive that the Library was a welcoming place for seniors as demonstrated by

seeing seniors participate who were not part of the core group from the home. There are several indicators that demonstrate this outcome was achieved:

- ◆ 9 seniors attended the first program in February. By the final program of the year in November, 21 seniors attended. This demonstrates that more than half of the seniors who were coming at the end of the year were not part of the group from the Green Home.
- ◆ Adult children of seniors have contacted the library to find out if they can bring their parents.
- ◆ Facebook postings of activities at the program garner a large number of views, as well as likes and positive comments.

PROVINCIAL PRIORITY 2: SUPPORTING EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

Just as with other forms of literacy, the library understands that the earlier children begin to develop digital literacy skills, the more likely they are to succeed later in life because they have a strong foundation on which to build. With this in mind, the library decided to invest in modern mobile devices to encourage children, particularly those who may not otherwise be able to access such devices elsewhere, to access technology and develop their digital literacy skills. Specifically, it acquired a set of iPads and loaded them with educational applications linked to the curriculum.



Provincial Library Strategic Plan Alignment

Fostering Connected Communities: ‘provide open and wider access to a core suite of digital resources’.

Building Capacity: ‘improve the digital literacy skills of users and staff so that they can participate in an increasingly digital world.’

Library Strategic Goal & Objective

Seek out innovative approaches to provide up-to-date access to information in the formats people desire.

One of the objectives that support this goal is the creation of a gadget bar that features new technology, online library services and literacy-focused applications that people can use.

Service

Library staff noticed that the computers in the children’s library were under-utilized. Through observation, staff found that children found it difficult to manipulate the mouse and keyboard interfaces. Also, an increasing number of educational applications were being designed to work optimally with a touch screen. Therefore, the library decided to replace four of its children’s computers with iPads loaded with a range of educational applications. To extend their usefulness, a number of skill building applications for adults were also installed so that the tablets could also be used for digital literacy workshops.

Partnerships

The Kootenay Library Federation is looking into creating STEM-based kits containing interactive and fun pieces of equipment with which its member libraries can create engaging programs that will enable local children to develop coding, science, engineering and math skills. The newly acquired tablets will let the library diversify the range of programs it can offer with these kits.

Outcomes

The initial intended outcome was that children from all walks of life would build their digital literacy skills using a commonplace mobile device by playing with apps that also encourage them to develop their cognitive, spatial, numeracy and literacy skills. It would manifest itself by the increased use of the tablets over that of the previous desktop computers.

The tablets quickly became very popular with the children. It has become a common sight to see groups of children gather around the tablet station patiently waiting for a turn to play on them. Some parents have downloaded the apps on the tablets onto their own devices so that their children can play with them at home.

PROVINCIAL PRIORITY 3: SUPPORT BC'S SKILLS FOR JOBS BLUEPRINT

With an increasing number of government services and businesses being made accessible primarily online, it is vital that people build their digital literacy skills so they can make use of these resources. A key example of this is that more and more companies require that individuals submit their job applications online. The library offers an important bridge so people can cross the digital divide by providing the required technological infrastructure, training and assistance on using devices and applications, assessing online information sources, and providing resources that let people build their digital literacy skills.

Provincial Library Strategic Plan Alignment

Fostering Connected Communities: 'Exploring opportunities to bring affordable high-speed broadband to every public library.'

Building Capacity: 'Facilitating strategic opportunities for professional development, collaboration and knowledge exchange...'

Library Strategic Goal & Objective

Seek out innovative approaches to provide up-to-date access to information in the formats people desire.

The objective for this goal that supports the provincial priority was to give staff the technological tools they need to provide one-on-one service for the users.

Programs/Services

With a major upgrade of public technological systems, the library is now able to fully support individuals seeking to upgrade their skills and searching for jobs.

In what was a multi-year process, the library focused on developing each component required to support job seekers:

Information Resources – up to date books and online resources on career development, the job seeking process, resumé writing

Staff Support – offer invigilation services, one-on-one customized training on topics such as formatting resúmes and applying for jobs online, and assistance in using print and online government, business and information resources

Telecommunications & Technology – offer individuals with multiple options for connecting with jobs and skills development, by phone, fax and online

In 2016, the focus was on the final component identified: technology. Feedback gathered from users of the library's public technological resources clearly demonstrated that a major upgrade of these systems were needed. Based on this input, the following three things were addressed:

- ◆ **Public Access Workstations:** The twelve public computers were upgraded to the most current versions of the operating system, office productivity software, and time and print management software. Three common web browsers were installed, as were an open source graphic editing program and PDF viewer. Finally, selected online resources available through the Library's subscription databases were put on the desktop to enhance their accessibility.
- ◆ **Wireless Access:** The wireless routers were upgraded to a business-grade system. This makes it possible to allocate available bandwidth to specific uses and enables the library to collect usage statistics that it can use to anticipate future bandwidth requirements.
- ◆ **Digitization Service:** One of the public workstations got upgraded so it could serve as a scanning workstation so people can now digitize documents and photographs.

Partnerships

For a number of years, the library has partnered with the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy to offer a computer basics course for seniors. The scope of the course recently expanded to include all adults who are interested in developing their computer skills. Thus job seekers can now participate in these free six-week courses. A grant from the Columbia Basin Trust's Community Initiatives Program made it possible to acquire the software licenses and scanner required for the public access computer upgrades.

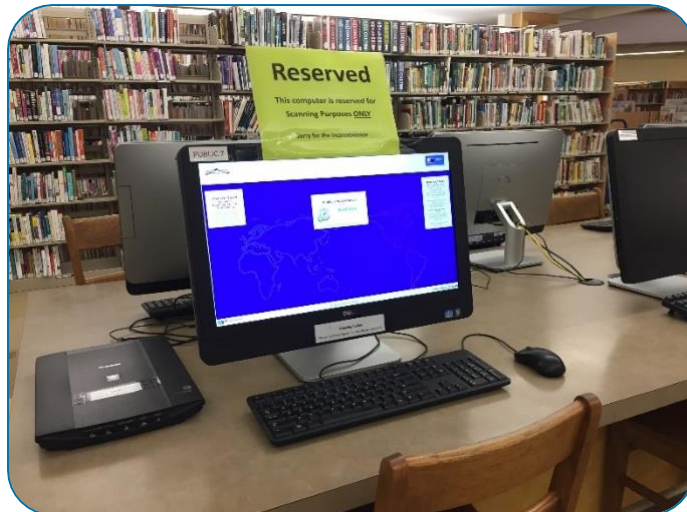
Organizations, such as the EK Employment (WorkBC) and the local Service Canada centre, see the library as an important resource for job seekers, referring individuals to the library to get employment related support. Outside of the community, post-secondary education institutions now contact the library directly to set up exam invigilation for their distance education students.

Outcomes

The anticipated outcome of providing an integrated suite of services that helped job seekers navigate the entire course of their search was that individuals who had previously not visited the Library would now do so. Several indicators point to this happening:

- ◆ In-house use of the management/business materials collection increased by 15% in 2016, indicating that more people were referring to these materials within the facility.
- ◆ The number of invigilated exams also increased from 30 in 2015 to 43 in 2016 even though this service was not actively promoted due to the limited facilities available.
- ◆ The number of wireless connections per month is almost equal to the number of public access computer uses.

Also, staff regularly share anecdotes of people pleased with the level of service they received during their job searches.



PROVINCIAL PRIORITY 4: WORKING ACROSS THE LIBRARY SECTOR

The library understands that it must use its limited resources strategically to provide exceptional services that make the benefit to the user and our community a prime consideration, while still adhering to its core mandate, mission, vision and values. In 2016, the Board and staff undertook a number of initiatives that will make it easier to assess activities from both a big picture and an immediate impact perspective.



Provincial Library Strategic Plan Alignment

Building capacity: 'Supporting libraries as learning organizations which encourage innovation and develop leading practices.'

Sustaining our success: 'Working with partners to enhance the capacity both of library and Boards...'

Sustaining our success: 'Continuing to encourage the use of strategic planning and reporting...'

Library Strategic Goal

Build strong relationships by telling the library's and community's stories.

Since 2014, staff have been building a collaborative workplace framework to encourage staff to envision new approaches for doing their work to focus on building relationships with the library's users to better meet their information needs.

This work has been supported by the Board, which in 2016 focused putting into place mechanisms that support the library's core values of excellence in staff and services, and accountability.

Programs/Services

Collaborative Performance Management System

As its first major collaborative undertaking, the chief librarian and staff chose to redesign the existing performance review system. The concept is to make it an ongoing process that enables staff to critically assess all library activities. The new system has three components:

- ◆ **Individual Performance Review**

Occurring annually, these reviews are one-on-one conversations between the chief librarian and staff that examine how what they do supports the library's mission and vision, potential professional development opportunities; how they currently use collaborative competencies in their work and which competencies they would like to strengthen.

- ◆ **Library Performance Review**

This annual review is held in conjunction with the annual individual reviews. The entire staff comes together to develop a fuller understanding of the wide range of activities that constitute library operations. This includes linking activities to each other, identifying service gaps, recognizing lines of communication, and identifying areas to enhance in the coming year.

- ◆ **Critical Assessment Opportunities**

Staff will use issues that arise during the normal course of operations as an opportunity to critically assess the activity. This enables them to collaboratively and constructively deal with problems as they arise to improve workflow and staff interactions.

Board Activity Calendar

As part of its continuing development strategies, the Library Board chair developed a calendar of regular Board activities so the Board can more effectively fulfill its role as the governance body of the Library. The calendar helps the Board deal proactively with recurring matters so that it can focus more of its energies on putting in place the resources needed to move towards the library's strategic vision.

Partnerships

The Kootenay Library Federation is a vital partner that helps the library build its internal capacity by offering in-person professional development workshops and sending out monthly listings of webinars and online courses of interest to staff.

Outcomes

The intended outcome of these projects is to create an adaptive and resilient environment where actively engaged Board and staff work together to ensure the library delivers exceptional services that meet the needs of users. A palpable change has wrought by building a collaborative environment built around a mutual set of competencies. Staff members are willing to try new things, suggest alternative ways of doing well-established tasks. Staff quickly figure out how to deal with out of the ordinary situations in keeping with the library's mandate, mission, vision, values and policies, all while striving to give the user a positive experience. All this enabled the library to expand the number of programs and range of services in 2016 using only existing resources.

The activity calendar has resulted in building a greater understanding amongst trustees of their role within the library. They receive the information they need to make considered decisions that align with the library's strategic plan.

Collaborative Competencies

- ◆ Clear Communication
- ◆ See the Big Picture
- ◆ Have a Shared Commitment
- ◆ Build a Respectful Workplace
- ◆ Listen with Respect
- ◆ Define Our Roles
- ◆ Develop Excellence within Each Other
- ◆ Possess a Sense of Humour
- ◆ Create Partnerships
- ◆ Offer Community-Centred Services
- ◆ Understand Our Community
- ◆ Freedom to Take Risks
- ◆ Everyone is a Leader
- ◆ Keep up with Technology

Library in Action: Seed Library

One of the library's strategic objectives is to diversify and expand its collections ... to meet changing needs. Wanting to build on the success of the cake pan collection, the library looked for another way to engage with the community to create a new non-traditional lending collection.

THE OPPORTUNITY

There has been a growing interest in food security and quality. More and more, people are seeking local producers that offer organic produce and heirloom or unusual varieties of common foods. They are also more interested in growing their own food, perhaps starting a garden for the very first time.

The library saw an opportunity to support the lifelong learning objectives of those wanting to give gardening a try by connecting neophyte gardeners with experienced ones, and to make available a variety seeds they could try to grow.

THE PROGRAM

The library partnered with the Cranbrook & District Garden Club to develop a seed library. Garden club members contributed the initial stock of seeds that anyone can 'borrow' and grow in their garden. At the end of the year, the borrowers return the seeds, either from the plants they successfully grew with those borrowed in the spring or from other plants in their garden.

In order to borrow the seeds, the person had to get both a library and garden club membership because this way they were immediately connected to a network of gardeners in the community that could provide advice well beyond the library's capacity. It also gave them discounts at local businesses on the supplies they needed to grow their gardens.



THE OUTCOME

Most of the seeds in the seed library got borrowed over the course of the summer. A number of garden club members got library memberships as a result of the partnership. Conversely, they gained some new members as a result of the project. Borrowers appreciated getting the opportunity to try seeds proven to grow in Cranbrook's climatic conditions, and being able to try out growing a variety of seeds without needing to invest a great deal of money.

Based on a joint evaluation of the project, the Cranbrook & District Garden Club and Cranbrook Public Library plan to partner again in 2017 with a new collection of seeds.

Summary

Coming off its 90th anniversary celebrations in the previous year, 2016 marked the point when the Cranbrook Public Library moved towards a collaborative, user-centred service model. Board and staff came up with innovative ways to offer a greater range of interesting and relevant services and programs to our community.

It was able to strategically deploy limited technological and staffing resources to better meet the high expectations of our users. The visibility of the library in the community continues to grow, due in large part to staff making regular use of social media to promote programs and interact with our users online.

LOOKING TO 2017

2017 marks the final year of the current strategic plan. It also promises to be a year of changes as several long-time staff members either retire or temporarily step into new roles. These factors represent a great opportunity for the Cranbrook Public Library to continue moving towards a fully collaborative work system that puts patrons at the centre and offers interesting and innovative programs to our community.

Some specific strategic goals the Board and staff will strive towards include:

- ◆ Launch a café service for the convenience of people who plan to be at the Library for longer periods of time
- ◆ Move towards implements a self-checkout system to make it possible for staff to spend more time helping patrons, do more outreach and expand the range of programs
- ◆ Create a quiet study space for people who need to do homework, write exams or just need a quiet space to focus on a task.

In addition to these specific objectives, the Board will refresh the strategic plan to bring its vision of the Cranbrook Public Library being the dynamic centre of the community, welcoming everyone, inspiring creativity and enhancing quality of life.



Approved at the Cranbrook Public Library Board's regular meeting held on Wednesday, 15 March 2017.

David Clark, Chair