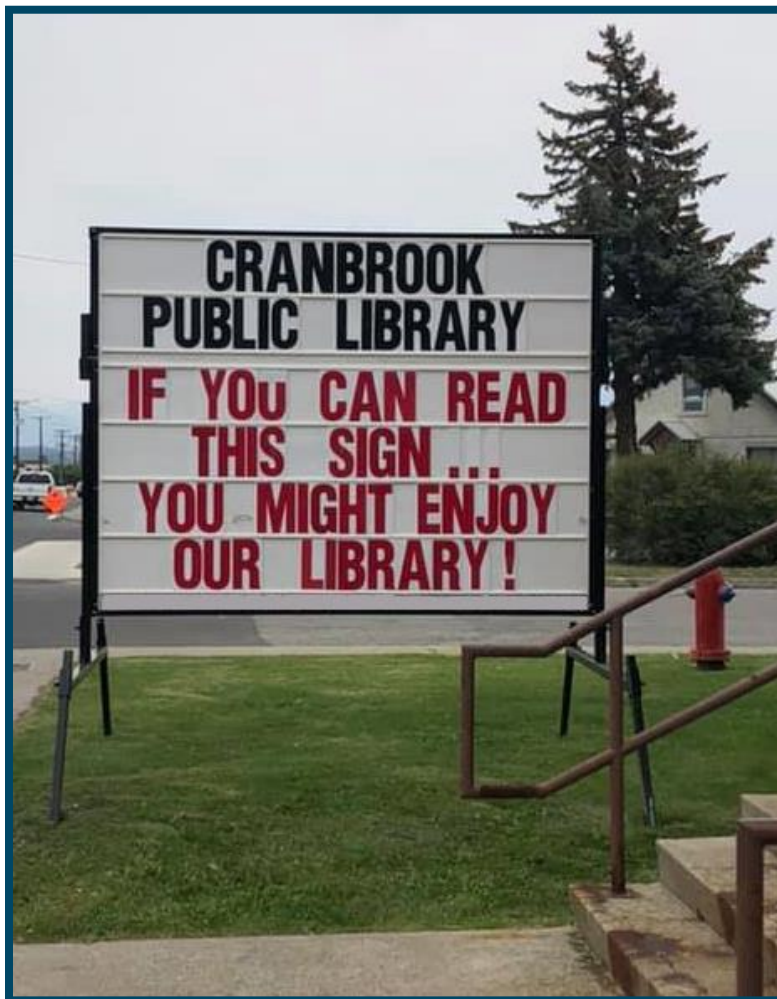


2019

## PROVINCIAL LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT

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CRANBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY  
*expand your universe*

### Overview

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Provincial funding, along with funding from local and regional governments, and special grants from other organizations, enabled the Cranbrook Public Library to continue to adapt and enhance its collections, programs and services to meet the changing needs of those we serve in 2019. This report highlights activities that supported the provincial government's strategic priorities for public libraries in British Columbia:

- ◆ Improving Access – Reducing Fines for Children
- ◆ Developing Skills – Thermal Imaging Cameras
- ◆ Collaborating on Shared Goals – Summer Reading Club
- ◆ Enhancing Governance – Board Development Activities

### Community Profile

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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. It serves as the commercial, educational, health care, service and transportation hub in the southeast corner of BC.

There is little ethnic, cultural or linguistic diversity in the region.<sup>1</sup> Most residents are of European or Canadian ancestry and speak English. Immigrants, approximately 1.8% of the population, come mostly from the US, Europe and Australia. The Ktunaxa Nation's ʔaq'am community, is located just north of Cranbrook, and about 9.4% of the population identify as First Nations or Métis.

High school completion rates are below the provincial average; 10% of residents do not possess a secondary school diploma. Affordable housing is less of a challenge for homeowners because the median value of a house is \$278,900. Affordable rental housing is a challenge as 42% of renters spend over 30% of their income on housing.

The City of Cranbrook and RDEK's Area C face a number of challenges, including:

- ◆ An aging municipal infrastructure that requires significant capital investment;
- ◆ The lack of a significant industrial tax-base;
- ◆ Unemployment rates that remain above the provincial average;
- ◆ An aging, stable population; projected growth over the next 20 years is only 3%.

### Library Profile

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The Cranbrook Public Library has served Cranbrook and the surrounding area since 4 July 1925. Its facility, open 7 days a week, provides users with access to nearly 70,000 physical items, an array of digital resources accessible on public workstations and through free wireless access on mobile devices in the library, or anywhere in the world with internet access, and with places to study, read and meet with others. Hundreds of programs for different ages and interests draw thousands of participants each year.

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<sup>1</sup> Source of Statistics: *2018 Community Profile Report—Cranbrook*, prepared by the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute; <http://www.cbrdi.ca/sites/default/files/Documents/PDF/2018%20Community%20Profiles/Cranbrook%202018%20Community%20Profile%20Report.pdf>

### STRATEGIC PLAN

A new 5-year strategic plan came into effect in January 2019. The plan's four goals are to:

- ◆ Seek out innovative approaches for people to access information, learn and share their ideas with the world;
- ◆ Meet our community's diverse needs through collaboration to develop informative and relevant programs and services;
- ◆ Create a welcoming, comfortable and safe environment that will be the first place people think of coming to when they want to explore ideas, socialize or relax;
- ◆ Build strong relationships by telling the library's and the community's stories.

In addition, the library made a commitment to build a strong foundation by making investments in staff and trustee professional development activities, current technology and facility infrastructure, and active communication and meaningful engagement with our community.

### CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES



*Programs & Community Development Librarian Mike Selby launches his book, "Freedom Libraries: The Untold Story of Libraries for African Americans in the South"*

A perennial challenge faced by the Cranbrook Public Library is its relatively low per capita funding level, which hampers its ability to provide up-to-date collections in physical and digital formats, expand its range of programs to meet changing community needs, and engage in a meaningful dialogue with the ʔaq'am of the Ktunaxa First Nation in the spirit of reconciliation.

Yet this challenge creates opportunities for the library to forge strategic relationships with organizations within our region and beyond so that we can undertake initiatives to provide exceptional library services to our community.

This report provides a snapshot of activities the library undertook in support of each of the four provincial strategies for public libraries in British Columbia.

### Improving Access: Reducing Fines for Children's Material

*Library's Strategic Objective: Encourage children to use the library more by identifying and eliminating potential barriers.*

Adults joining the library often start their request with an embarrassed confession that they used to have a library card when they were young, but got a big fine and stopped coming. Charging fines for overdue items as an incentive for borrowers to return their material on time can be problematic for children because they depend on someone else to take them to the library. These fines can be a significant barrier that blocks them from using the library.

### VISION

*The Cranbrook Public Library is the dynamic centre of our community.*

*It welcomes everyone, inspires creativity, and enhances quality of life.*

Since reducing barriers to library use by children is one of its key objectives, the library looked into either eliminating or reducing fines for children. The library decided to decrease the fine rate for children’s material to 10 cents per day, with a 7-day grace period. This effectively eliminates fines for children’s material, while still enabling parents to use the existence of the fine as a learning tool for teaching responsibility.

In July, soon after the change came into effect, a shamefaced boy came to the Welcome Desk with a book, admitting it was late. He was at first amazed when staff told him there was no fine and then thrilled because now he could check out more books to read for the Summer Reading Club. He had been worried that he wouldn’t be able to pay the fine and thus not be able to borrow more books.

While it is impossible to establish a direct correlation, the 2019 Summer Reading Club had the highest number of children ever registered, and the most reading medals awarded. More children read more than ever before during July and August in Cranbrook.

Fines incurred on children’s material during the second half of 2019 were negligible, while the number of overdue items did not notably increase.

### OUTPUTS

*25% increase in items borrowed by children*

*21% decrease in fines levied*

*10 % decrease in fine revenue*

The reduction in fines for children’s material means that the three-year old who recently declared that she was getting her first library card “Ever!” may be able to use that card through her childhood and into adulthood without ever experiencing the shame that results from having outstanding fines.

The biggest challenge related to this initiative was that it reduced the library’s income. However, it was more than made up for by the joy on children’s faces as they borrowed more books.

Looking to the future, the library will seek out other ways to reduce barriers to library service access through increased use of social media and courtesy reminders to encourage people to return or renew their material on time, and by offering alternate ways for people to pay their fines.

### OUTCOMES

- ◆ The library reduced a substantial barrier to library access for children.
- ◆ Children now have a greater chance of becoming lifelong library users.

## Developing Skills: “Heat Vision” Thermal Imaging Camera Lending Program

*Library’s Strategic Objective: Increase the diversity of information resources to meet people’s learning needs.*

Over the years, the library launched a series of special collections to encourage people to develop different sets of skills, including a:

- ◆ Seed Library – To give people chance to grow their gardening skills by letting them ‘borrow’ seeds, grow them, and ‘return’ them in the fall.
- ◆ Cake Pan Collection – To encourage people to bake cakes for special occasions rather than buying them.

The newest collection, ‘Heat Vision’, features five thermal imaging cameras acquired with a BC Hydro Community Grassroots grant. The purpose of the project is to let people borrow a thermal imaging camera

for a week so they could identify areas of energy loss in their homes. The kit that comes with the camera includes some weather stripping and outlet insulators for borrowers to keep and install so they can immediately increase the energy efficiency of their home.

A workshop put on by a BC Hydro community education team held at the end of September launched the collection. The team showed participants how to use the camera and use their findings to draft-proof their house. In addition, participants learned of other techniques and tips to improve their home's overall energy efficiency, and about available incentive programs to offset related costs. The project was modeled on the *See the Heat* program recently launched in Kamloops by the Thompson-Nicola Regional District Library.

The outcome of the program is that people who would otherwise not have access to this specialized, costly type of camera can now use it to scan their home. Along the way, they learn more about energy efficiency not just as a concept, but as something they can address themselves in their own homes.

## OUTPUTS

*5 thermal imaging cameras*  
*12 loans after program launch*  
*1 Energy conservation workshop*



*Heat Vision project launch poster*

During the launch of the program the library used posters, social media and in-person networking opportunities such as the regular Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Business Associations meetings to raise awareness of 'Heat Vision'. This resulted in a number of people commenting that they had never even considered that a library offered anything other than books. In at least one instance, a woman came to the library right after hearing about the thermal imaging cameras at a meeting to borrow one.

A challenge for the program is the continued effort it takes to promote 'Heat Vision' so that the message gets out to as many people as possible, particularly those who have not visited the library in some time.

In the future, the library will use social and traditional media to remind the community of this collection. It will also seek out more opportunities to work with local and regional governments, and utility companies to spread the word.

## OUTCOMES

- ◆ The library expanded its range of innovative collections that people can use to practice existing skills and learn new ones.
- ◆ The library changed expectations and perceptions of what it has to offer to the community.

## Collaborating on Shared Goals: Summer Reading Club

*Library's Strategic Objective: Work with local, regional and provincial organizations to expand our capacity to deliver programs and services.*

The Summer Reading Club for children is a long-running, perennially popular province-wide program. The 2019 iteration proved to be the most successful ever at the Cranbrook Public Library, due in large part to the collaborations amongst, and support of, a large number of organizations. The Friends of the Cranbrook Public Library entirely funded the coordinator position using money they had raised through



book sales, plus grants they received from the Columbia Basin Trust's Community Initiative program and the federal Canada Summer Jobs grant. They also contributed towards the cost of supplies and prizes.

The British Columbia Library Association provided the framework and material so necessary for the success of the SRC. While the Kootenay Library Federation organized a tour of Pico's Puppet Palace, which filled the programming room to capacity with entranced children and adults. The Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy put on a storytelling program where children learned how storytelling works by writing a story collaboratively.

### OUTPUTS

*14% increase in children registered for the SRC*  
*27% increase in reading medals awarded*  
*8 % increase in participation of tours, programs & contests*

Existing relationships with teachers in local schools, including the ʔaq'amnik' school on the reservation, continued to strengthen. Teachers state that they can tell which students participated in the SRC when school resumes in September, so they book either a class visit or a library tour in May or June to encourage students to participate. In addition to the full slate of programming for children, the coordinator planned a Teen SRC built around the same theme. It featured its own programming, a social media component, and special prizes.

The coordinator reached out to reading centres in Wardner and Moyie, communities at the edge of the library's service area with a large summer population, to hold an SRC Storytime. Due to the difficulty in finding contact information, only one program was held in Wardner. However, the experience was so positive that SRC supplies will be provided to each reading centre to use, and regular programs will be offered there throughout the summer in 2020.

The collaboration and partnerships between the library and various organizations had a material impact on the success of the Summer Reading Program. 2019 had the largest number of registrations ever, both for children and youth. More importantly, the number of active participants remained constant for the entire summer, resulting in the most children ever receiving reading medals. Some even came to the closing ceremonies wearing medals they won in previous years.

The longevity of the Summer Reading Club means it is one of the most well known library programs in the community. The main challenges are to maintain the focus on this program, and to identify new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships, particularly with the ʔaq'am community.

### Outcomes

- ◆ The Summer Reading Program is well known in the community, with hundreds of children looking forward to participating each year.
- ◆ Relationships were forged with reading centres in outlying communities that will be strengthened in the future.



*Summer Reading Club packages ready for registration day*

### Enhancing Governance: Board Development Activities

*Library's Strategic Foundation: Strong Governance by a knowledgeable and accountable board of trustees.*

The library Board undertook several activities to increase its internal capacity to deal in a considered, professional manner with issues facing the Cranbrook Public Library. It also committed to actively engaging in matters facing the broader provincial public library sector.

- ◆ Two trustees attended the BC Library Trustees' Association's Forum in Surrey.
- ◆ The Board chair became a member of the BCLTA Board.
- ◆ One of the RDEK Area C representatives arranged a meeting with the Area C director and RDEK CAO to discuss library issues and projects.
- ◆ Trustees held a Board development retreat so they could discuss specific issues in greater depth.

#### OUTPUTS

*50% increase BCLTA  
Forum attendance  
1 Board Development  
Retreat held  
9 Board Meetings*

As a result of these activities, trustees now place their discussions and decisions within the context of the library's strategic plan, particularly with its long-term vision. The Board also considers issues from a broader perspective due to its active engagement with local governments, and professional organizations such as the Kootenay Library Federation, the BC Library Trustees' Association, the BC Library Association, the BC Library Cooperative, and the Association of BC Public Library Directors.

The Board plans to continue building its capacity in the future by ensuring all trustees have the opportunity to take the BCLTA's Governance Workshop, holding another development retreat, and actively working with municipal and regional governments to convey the value of the library to their residents.

#### Outcomes

- ◆ Trustees have a greater understanding of issues facing all public libraries, as well as matters that apply specifically to the Cranbrook Public Library.
- ◆ Trustees are asking more questions, looking at issues from different perspectives, and considering the broader implications of their decisions.

### Summary

2019 was a year of transition for the Cranbrook Public Library. Key staff members retired, leaving gaps that proved hard to fill. This made it more difficult to maintain existing levels of service, while at the same time moving forward with initiatives to fulfill strategic objectives. Stagnant funding levels exacerbated the situation as the library strove to be innovative while relying mainly on existing internal resources, supplemented by grants for specific projects.

Despite these challenges, the Cranbrook Public Library managed to launch a new collection, reduce barriers to library access for children, increase the value of the Summer Reading Club, and strengthen the capacity of the Board.

It also sent almost 100 little libraries out into our community, helping to spread the word and encourage everyone to pick up a book and read.

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Work in 2019 set the stage for significant changes in the upcoming years. 2020 will see:

- ◆ The launch of a self-checkout system that will give patrons more choices when borrowing material, and let staff spend more time helping patrons use the library's resources;
- ◆ The creation of an Idea Lab that will give users access to technological equipment so they can develop their digital literacy and technical skills, so that they can create and share their ideas with others;
- ◆ A strong commitment to strengthening relationships with the ʔaq'am and other RDEK Area C communities.



*98 Little Libraries Released into Cranbrook in 2019*

Approved: 19 February 2020 Cranbrook Public Library Board Regular Meeting

Original signed by \_\_\_\_\_  
David Clark, Chair