

Director's Report

February 2008

ADMINISTRATION

Community Contacts:

- Council Member Poppaw about reappointment progress for Trustee Knezovich
- Front Range Community College Accreditation Board
- Chamber Orientation Meeting
- County Manager Frank Lancaster about policy governance training
- City of Fort Collins Communications Manager, Kelly DiMartino
- Colorado U.S. Attorney Troy Eid about library Internet policies

Operations Overview

- Over 90,000 ILL's reveal areas where our customers need more items. Turnover rates indicate that the selections we own are heavily used and the collection needs to be larger.
- Existing meeting rooms are too small for the more popular programs—our space is limited to 80 at the Main Library and 143 at the Harmony Library. If programs continue as a priority with our constituency, we need to address this situation.
- Schools are eager to partner with library staff in encouraging literacy – the teen librarians efforts were encouraged at the schools.
- Progress has been made in gathering more consistent and accessible information about library programs, their costs and their effectiveness. A programming committee is meeting to share information and set up tracking systems.
- FCRLD has excellent staff and are known beyond Fort Collins as experts – Carson and I were invited to meet with U.S. Attorney Troy Eid and the president of CAL to discuss libraries' commitment to access to information; Vicky presented at an educator's seminar in Denver; Carson was asked to help with interviews for head of technology at Rangeview Library District in Adams County.
- Progress is on track for implementation of RFID – staff have completed tagging about 16,000 items and have discarded 30,000 out-of-date or worn items to save \$15,000 in unneeded tags alone.

Reappointment Of Trustee Knezovich

I spoke with Council Member Poppaw about the need for the reappointment committee to act prior to the Library District Board meeting, as it is our annual meeting and we would like to have a full board for the election of officers. Council Member Poppaw was very responsive. The committee met and is recommending to the full council that Trustee Knezovich be reappointed. The County commissioners already approved his reappointment.

Southeast Branch

In order to facilitate a coordinated media message about the project and any delays we may be experiencing, Kelly DiMartino, who is overseeing publicity for the City on the entire development, has contacted Bayer and is working with Paula and I on a consistent message about our project. Construction has started on the branch and the Construction Manager for the entire project, Tommy Alfano, guided a tour for the library construction team to show the overall progress for the development.

Harmony Library and Front Range Community College (FRCC)

An accreditation committee was at FRCC on February 24. I attended a lunch to mingle with the committee members and to provide information about our mutually beneficial library. It was interesting to hear what others said about their partnerships with FRCC and how it benefits the community and to provide my kudos to FRCC for the successful partnership we enjoy with Harmony Library. Vice-president Jim Butzek announced on the 25th that they had passed with flying colors and wouldn't be reassessed until 2018...the best outcome possible.

Friends of the Library

The FOL Board has been reviewing and updating their by-laws to reflect their services to the District rather than the City. They also wanted to specify in their by-laws that their organization encourages literacy. How deeply the library delves into new literacy avenues will be one outcome to consider during the Planning for Results process and what role the Friends might play in achieving our goals.

CIRCULATION SERVICES

The big news in February - RFID retro conversion has started and is in full swing. The project started at Harmony Library on February 19 under the watchful eye of Circulation staff members Chris Cortez, Angela James and Holly Doyle with Systems staff Carol Gyger and Chris Bauman on hand for support and assistance the first couple of days. Things are going as expected as staff is trained and the "unknown" worked out. The first day of the project they were able to tag 1,000 items, the next they were up to 3,000 items and by the end of the first week they have finished approx 16,000 items.

In looking at ILL-Prospector statistics for 2008 it looks as though requests for items and actual items borrowed were up 33% over 2007. The biggest increase was in items borrowed through ILL and those numbers were up 125% in 2008 over 2007. The huge increase in ILL was due in large part to the removal of charges for out of state searches. While the ILL increase seems huge the actual number of items went from 55 to 124 items. However, overall in 2008 some 90,000 items moved in and out of the system through ILL-Prospector.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A new process for coordinating programming has been created by the Communications Manager and the two new Programming Librarians. It captures on a standard form the staff hours, direct costs, and numbers projected. This form will be used by the programming librarians to help them in making system-wide decisions about programs.

In response to an anonymous citizen's repeated complaints to the Poudre Fire Authority that the Library is denying her entrance to programs due to an inaccurate fire code capacity posted in the Ben Delatour Room, the Poudre Fire Authority came recently to re-measure the Ben Delatour Room. Based on these new calculations the room capacity is now set to 80, down from the previous limit of 91. Because the original capacity was set by the Planning and Zoning Department, we are asking for records to be checked to make sure there are no extenuating circumstances that legitimately allowed us to set the capacity at 91 ten years ago when the first floor was renovated. Meanwhile, Children's Services staff are trying to prepare for the worsened situation of inadequate space when the crowds come to the Spring Break Puppet Shows at Main.

Junior Leaguers and their "Done in a Day Project" have again volunteered at the Main Library. This group of eight women helped with weeding for the RFID project one Saturday, contributing almost 31 volunteer hours. In homebound customer news, Barbara received an invitation to a May graduation from a homebound customer of several years who will graduate from the state's home-school program. This young woman has overcome severe illness, learning, and economic obstacles to achieve this goal. She and her mother expressed their heart-felt appreciation to Barbara and delivery volunteers for always getting this student the books she needed to complete her schoolwork. Her mother shared that her daughter has come from barely being able to write two sentences to completing a 20-page paper on Ronald Reagan and hiding in the bathroom nights so that she could read with a flashlight in the blanket-padded bathtub--thanks to our library's homebound program support.

February was a busy month for Vicky. She presented a session to 20 educators on Every Child Ready to Read at the Colorado Council of the International Reading Association conference in Denver, then presented three Every Child Ready to Read (ECRTR) workshops for parents, grandparents and caregivers of children ages birth to two at the Main and Harmony Libraries.

The Northern Colorado Homeschool Association met at Main Library recently to answer questions from interested parents about homeschooling. Lu Benke and Marian Sawyer bopped into the meeting long enough to welcome the group of over 30 and invite their feedback on how we could work together to support them. It was also interesting to see how many of the people there were folks we recognized as frequent users of our resources although we did not realize they were homeschooling families.

HARMONY LIBRARY

Harmony's 10th Birthday celebration:

Our 10 days of public events to celebrate Harmony's 10th anniversary were very well received, with over 1,000 folks of all ages participating in the in the variety of events we offered.

Harmony in the Round:

- February 1 – Harmony in the Round featuring the Simply Brass Quintet had an attendance of 200 people. This was a partnered program with Front Range Community College (FRCC).
- February 21 – Poudre River Irregulars Concert Preview. There were 29 people in attendance for this preview of their upcoming concert to be held in the Community Room on February 29th. This is a partnered program with FRCC.

Teen Outreach:

- Sue-Ellen presented book talks at Kinard Junior High on Classics, 61 attended
- Diane presented at Kinard - 82 attended
- Diane and Sue-Ellen attended the Media Specialist meeting to hear about the grade reconfiguration to see how it might affect Teen library services.
- From contacts made, Sue-Ellen and Diane are scheduling Spring book talks. They plan to talk about SRP, Teen programs and then do some book talking. Sue-Ellen has 7 scheduled so far - Linton, Dunn and Leshner.
- Diane has book talks scheduled for 7, 8, and 9th graders on February 28 at Webber Junior High.
- Teen Book Discussion on The Princess Bride scheduled for February 27.

Upcoming Public Forum:

FRCC was impressed with the quality of the dialogue at our first public forum on the proposed uranium mining in Northern Colorado. So much so in fact that they decided they'd like to partner with us on similar future programs.

The next Fort Collins Regional Library System Panel Discussion will be "The Glade Reservoir/ Save the Poudre Controversy" It will be held Monday April 7 from 6:30 to 9:00 pm on the Front Range Campus.

Here is a list of panelists so far:

Northern Colorado Water

Brian Werner - Public Information Officer, Northern Colorado Water

Mike DiTullio - manager of the Ft. Collins-Loveland Water District and a participant in NISP

Bill Brown - Member of the Board of Directors of Northern Colorado Water, a water lawyer

John Clarke - former Larimer County Commissioner, former Fort Collins Councilman, KCOL talk show host

Save the Poudre

Gary Wockner - Save the Poudre

Philip Cafaro - Associate Professor Philosophy Dept. CSU, member of Fort Collins

Audubon, member of the Sustainable Water Interest Group

Mark Ester - Save the Poudre member/expert on water policy and a biologist

David Roy - Fort Collins City Council District 6

Laura Pritchett - editor of "Pulse of the River"

Neil Grigg - Former Director of the State Water Research Institute, former member of the Fort Collins Water Board for 12 years, Instructor at CSU in water resources

Martin Carcasson - moderator

Director of The Center for Public Deliberation, CSU

REFERENCE AND ADULT SERVICES

The District has joined AskColorado. AskColorado is a 24/7 online information service provided by Colorado libraries using chat technology over the web. School, public, university, private and government libraries participate. The service is available in both English and Spanish. This service will help us meet the 24/7 and remote reference needs of our service area. To be a member, libraries pay an annual fee and provide staff time based on a sliding scale. For a library of our size, we will provide 8-10 hours a week of support time and pay \$4,000, paid by The Friends of the Library. Select staff from all departments has been trained. They will be practicing the chat technology and by mid-March the link for patrons will be available on our webpage.

Due to dedicated funding through Building Community Choices and Building on Basics, and our partnership with FRCC, the library is able to provide a well-rounded suite of databases to meet the needs of the public and students. We offer general academic journal databases, homework support, car and engine repair, genealogy, health, art and music databases. Just to name a few. In early Fall, staff participate in trials of available databases. We compare databases for ease of use, remote access, cost and coverage of the topic. Representatives from Adult, Teen, and Children's Services as well as the Front Range librarian, narrow down which databases will be renewed and purchased. Once purchased, they become available to the public in January. The budgeted amount for 2008 is \$120,000 or 13.4% of total Materials Budget. FRCC contributes \$20,000 to bring us to \$140,000 or 15.6%. Our peers spend an average 15.5% of their Materials budget on databases.

After examining the use and cost, the Children's downloadable audio database has been canceled. We are also reviewing the adult version that expires in July. The adult titles have been popular but demand is for more titles and variety. Committee members will be exploring other options for providing a variety of downloadable audios for all ages at a reasonable cost. One option is to join the Front Range consortium hosted by Boulder Public Library. <http://overdrive.boulderlibrary.org>

The *History Comes Alive @ the Library* series started off on Friday the 22nd with a presentation by an actor playing Doc Susie. The series is partially funded by the Colorado Endowment for the Humanities. The 126 attendees at Harmony were very pleased with the presentation and are looking forward to seeing Madame Curie and Augusta Tabor in the coming months.

Another great program held at Harmony on a Friday evening was the *African Drum and Dance Collective of Colorado* with 250 in attendance. The following is an email we received from an attendee.

"It's not many libraries that will literally open their doors to an African Drum and Dance troupe! Fale was energizing, fun and provided all of us a window into new possibilities for "what to do" in Fort Collins. Thank you, library district!"

One 'green' improvement was made this last month. The newspaper carriers for both libraries were contacted. The majority of the newspapers will now be delivered in a bundle instead of plastic bags.

SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION

RFID Update

The project to add RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tags to library materials is on time and on budget.

Since late last year, weeding crews have done a spectacular job of weeding – removing an estimated 30,000 outdated volumes. Not only does weeding make for a better, more relevant collection for patrons, but it also saves money in the RFID project. At about 50-cents per RFID tag, the weeding alone saved \$15,000! Many thanks to hard work from a number of staff and volunteers on the weeding project, but I want to especially thank Becky Sheller and Marian Sawyer who provided project leadership, as well as many hours getting their hands dirty, so to speak.

Starting mid-month, crews from circulation, led by Chris Cortez (flanked by Angela James and Holly Doyle) began the process of retrospective conversion at the Harmony library. Technical Services staff (led by Linda Williams) will begin changing their methods in processing new materials to include the new tags. Carol Gyger, Ling Zhao and Chris Bauman did an excellent job preparing the technical tools necessary for the retro conversion, and will next turn their collective attention to building staff RFID stations and self-checkout machines.

As part of staff preparation, Paula created a memo of staff "talking points" for RFID.

Wireless Stats

As the numbers bear out, wireless is a popular – and mostly silent – customer self-service option at the libraries. Between both branches, we averaged about 1200 wireless sessions per month in 2007. "Sessions" are offered to patrons in four-hour blocks.

2007 represented our first full year of wireless service. We launched the service in late July of 2006.

- Wireless Sessions at Main: 7,386
- Wireless Sessions at Harmony: 6,857

Total..... 14,243

PC Upgrades

At long last, the creakiest of staff PCs have been replaced with new ones! Ling Zhao and Chris Bauman were quite busy throughout January and February with the replacements.

We'll be doing quite a few PC upgrades this year, including a refresh of public computing resources in the fall.

Miscellaneous

Carson served on the interview panel for a new IT Director for the Denver-area Rangeview Library District.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Office has finalized the following projects:

- Met with the BOT Communications Committee (Com Com) and identified the following interim goals for public relations messaging:
 - We are *responsive* to our community
 - We are *inclusive* of the entire District
 - We are *informative* of our service promotions
- Created February programming calendar media and e-mail release
- Organized Community Planning Committee Meeting on February 7
- Facilitated Planning for Results all staff meeting for input on committee selected Service Responses
- Met with 2 local publishers to about our marketing efforts
- Created Communications Plan for RFID project – sent out first release to 65 media contacts
- Sent out 10 press releases and made 8 media follow up calls (from 2/1-2/25)
- Updates website weekly

- Drafted Orientation PowerPoint for staff & board for Strategic Planning process
- Coordinated library news column for the Fort Collins Forum
- Attended Northern Colorado Public Information meeting
- Facilitated a Work Planning Guide Form for library programmers to use for internal workflow
- Hosted booth at Single Parents Resource Fair on February 23 to give out Library information, met with 64 library users and 10 non-users
- Arranged a proclamation at the April 8 County Commissioners meeting for National Library Week

The following projects have been started:

- Internal procedures to display promotional materials and information out to all employees
- Summer Reading program promotions
- Implementation of new name on Library Brochure & Drop Box book marks
- Gathering statistical data for annual report
- Annie Walk planning
- Implemented internal Communications Team meetings
- Working with CSU to get a marketing/public relations intern