

Director's Report September 2008

ADMINISTRATION

Community Connections

- Following up on a conversation with Executive Director Gordon Thibedeau of the United Way, Paula and I met with Nicholle Gregg who heads up United Way's program, Pathways Past Poverty, to explore how the Library might enhance that effort in with the context of library services. She mentioned that the District's Business Librarian, Anne Macdonald has spent significant time assisting the program as part of the community driven initiative to create economic stability for our community and how excellent her services are. We agreed to meet when she has more specifics on how we might fit into the project.
- On September 12th I attended the Larimer and Weld County "Education and Workforce Advisory Council" meeting facilitated by Maurie Dobbie of the Northern Colorado Economic Development Corporation. The focus was on the goals of the Northern Colorado Workforce Initiative. They are 1) Create an effective and innovative community action plan for our region's workforce that can be perfected regionally and shared nationally; 2) Build collaboration between Larimer and Weld Counties as it pertains to regional workforce.
- I attended the Workforce Training Advisory Board conference the same morning. As part of the Education and Workforce Advisory Council, my goal is to ensure the District's efforts are an effective part of the economic development plan. Business Librarian, Anne Macdonald, is providing assistance in a number of areas of economic development including workforce development. Geniphyr Ponce-Pore is coordinating the development of a "book" on community workforce initiatives and she commended Anne and the Library District for the high quality of assistance we have provided. I also learned that their free training was excellent and could be an appropriate resource for our staff in the future.
- I met with Denise Freestone of Open stage to discuss opportunities to collaborate on future projects. Beet Street has an interesting plan to work with Open Stage to address the issues around immigration. There are opportunities to explore as part of this creative approach to a topic of high public interest. It is one opportunity to leverage the Library's resources if we find the appropriate plan.

Efficiencies

The District is collaborating with the City of Fort Collins, Larimer County and the Fort Collins Housing Authority in a New Energy Communities Initiative grant application from DOLA (the Colorado Department of Local Affairs). Included in the grant application is lighting retrofitting and upgrading at the Main library. The total cost for the Main library improvements is budgeted at \$117,500. Grant funds and rebates would cover \$104,500 of these costs and the District would provide matching funds of \$13,000. Energy savings is estimated at 349,000 KWH and \$17,800 in annual cost savings. If approved, the District's improvements would begin next January and be completed by September 2010.

Branch Construction Update

At the most recent construction team meeting, it was reported that the interior finish is progressing nicely and ahead of schedule in some tasks. Heath plans to start hanging the drywall on October 15. I've asked to schedule a Board VIP tour of the area once the drywall is up, probably in mid-November. The construction meetings are held in the library children's storytime room on site. It seems quite spacious and has beautiful views of the area and distant countryside. The LEED

consultant also reviewed the documentation for LEED certification. The City Project Manager Steve Seefeld assured me that everyone involved know of the importance the District and City place on receiving this certification and believes that we will receive it.

The Lead Librarian and Children's Librarian positions have been posted. The plan is to hire and train them on our policies and procedures by working shoulder to shoulder with existing staff at our existing libraries so they will be ready to work there when the branch opens in March.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

The Communications Office has finalized the following projects:

- Created September programming calendar media and e-mail releases
- Sent out 10 press releases and made 4 media follow up calls
- Updated website weekly
- Coordinated library news column for the Fort Collins Forum
- Attended Crisis Communication Workshop
- Attended Web 2.0 – CLIC training
- Coordinated Branding RFP interview process
- Created Sponsorship policy guidelines for Board of Trustees
- Finalized promotion for RFID project
- Finalized Planning For Results document for Board approval
- Facilitating 20 hours of Service Learning for 2 CSU students
- Continuing to help coordinate outreach events to District outlying areas

The following projects are in process:

- Facilitating the process for the naming of the new branch
- Strategizing fundraising efforts with the Library Trust
- Revising Emergency procedures and Crisis communication guidelines
- Attending Crucial Conversations training through City
- Coordinating Employee Appreciation event with Programming Librarians
- Coordinating a facility crisis plan review
- Promotion for LSTA grant “Book Express”

Naming/Branding project update:

We were very excited to receive 11 formal RFP proposals. The 7 member review committee completed the initial review of the documents and turned in their scores to City of Fort Collins Purchasing. Purchasing tallied the scores and called the top 3 firms in for interviews on September 17. Each firm gave a 15 minute presentation and then was asked a series of questions by the committee. After the final interview, and without discussion, the committee scored the finalists. References were called on the finalist on the 25th, and firms were called with the news on the 26th. Negotiations on finalizing the scope of project and the contract are underway, so tentative approval has been given for *Toolbox Creative* to help us with the next steps of our process. *Toolbox Creative* is a local creative group who come highly recommended by other area non-profits as well as large for-profit companies. In their promise to “deliver a unique, effective and sustainable identity and website as well as creative marketing materials” we will work as a team in the development process. First step in the process of working with them is the “Discovery” process which will include deliverables of a comprehensive creative brief, community survey, and review and analysis of existing data.

CIRCULATION

September was a landmark month for Circ/Shelving/III-Prospector as many new and exciting changes took place. Circulation has been "rocked" by the introduction of the MilCirc/RFID self-checks. Our staff loves it and the patrons are "over the moon" for this new feature! We have even seen a slight increase in our self-check numbers and anticipate that those numbers will continue to increase as folks get more familiar with this new feature. The new security gates have been installed and all seem to be working well.

In response to the many requests over the years, Adult Biographies are being classified by the name of the subject. Shelving crews in both libraries have been finishing up with the big Biography collection move. There have been shelves of materials that needed to be "shifted" to make room for this new collection as well as reports to help find those biographies "hiding" in the non-fiction section. It looks as though this project is slowly winding down to a successful completion. In addition to finishing up the Biography project, participation in the various shifting needs, and the day-to-day shelving flow the shelving staff is once again in the midst of the ongoing inventory schedule as they look to starting with paperbacks this fall. They have successfully completed the inventory of the various children's collections in both libraries.

III-Prospector has gone a bit "greener" as Nancy is working on document delivery via email. She often gets requests for newspaper and journal articles, as well as genealogy materials that once received she has been making hard copies for patrons to come in and pick up. Last month she started asking patrons if they would like to receive these materials via email; this saves the paper needed for printing and saves the patron's gas and time to come in and collect the item. In one instance the patron requested a map from an academic library that was too large and too fragile for that library to loan by mail, and the library would have charged the patron \$10 per linear foot for them to provide a copy. The academic library sent Nancy a TIF file that she could forward to the patron who then saved it to a disc or flash drive. The patron took the file to Kinko's and was able to get an original sized copy at a fraction of the price...the patron was thrilled! Thus far all who have taken advantage of this opportunity have been thrilled.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

September means that weekly preschool storytimes and Mother Goose Times at Main and Harmony Libraries begin anew after the August break. The "Vote for Books" promotion also started up again, but this time with the ability for children to place their votes for their favorite book titles online through our OWL Webpacs. This allows kids to experience the voting process while the world around them is filled with election news.

Vicky Hays, Early Literacy librarian provided three more Every Child Ready to Read workshops for parents and caregivers of children ages birth to two. Parents expressed their gratitude that free childcare was provided at each program allowing them to more easily attend.

Recent weeding efforts allowed Cydney Clink, Graphics Coordinator for the Children's area and a team of Circulation shelvers to create convenient and attractive shelving space for the parade of holiday books that begins with the approach of Halloween. Cydney is also working on an overall display plan for the Children's area so that staff can work together to keep the area attractive and inviting without being too crowded with signs and displays.

Cydney Clink, Jean Gullikson, and Irene Romsa brought exciting new programming ideas from a day-long Storytelling Swap in Colorado Springs. Jean Gullikson and Jennifer Zachman also attended the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC) Institute in Salt Lake City. This Institute provides great networking opportunities with children's staff from across the country. Sessions on blogging,

author visits, graphics novels for kids, web 2.0 (making websites more interactive and useful for customers), gaming in the library, and a special tour of the City's Children's Museum giving great ideas for the interactive center were especially useful.

Barbara Crandall, Volunteers and Homebound Coordinator recruited a slew of Volunteer Trainers to help customers during the first few weeks of the new touch-screen RFID self-check out machines. Students, new volunteer applicants, current volunteers and board members were tapped for over 120 hours so far. Responses from these volunteers at the end of their shifts have included, "I had a blast doing this!" and "Customers love these new machines!" Faithful volunteer Amanda Bristol appeared on the Coloradoan's front page with the article about our new technology.

Expanding from a City library to a regional one has potential for significant impact to the Homebound Delivery Service Barbara coordinates. Recently she has been setting up deliveries for a homebound couple in the northern part of our district. We will be watching the new LSTA grant-supported books-by-mail pilot for ideas in serving homebound customers in the future. And, by the way, we are still excited that the LSTA grant for \$20,000 was approved this month!

On Tuesday, September 16, Library staff gave Behind the Scene tours at Main Library for 20 Friends of the Library and Library Trust Board members, showing them nooks and crannies and the problems of lack of staff work space and storage areas. Following the tours, the Friends treated the entire staff at Main to a special appreciation reception in the BD Meeting Room. Last month, the Friends treated staff of the Harmony Library to an appreciation reception there.

Lu Benke continues to visit outlying communities taking out information about library services and asking residents about their library needs. She attended the Founder's Day in Timnath on September 13 along with Board member Nina Bodenhamer. Quite a few Timnath community members were surprised to learn of the SE Branch being built less than 1.5 miles from Timnath. Others knew about the upcoming branch and expressed excitement and plans to visit it frequently. Lu also attended the Waverly Community Group Annual Meeting at the Waverly School on September 20 and gathered many ideas and contacts from residents. Residents in that area were heavy library users and were eager to have input about library services such as placement of a new bookdrop in the area. Again, a few assumed Lu was from the Wellington Library or did not realize they were part of our district. On October 2, Lu will attend the Potluck Lunch PTO meeting at Stove Prairie, and on the evening of Friday, October 3 she will have a table at the Livermore Pie Auction. The presentation at the September LaPorte Area Advisory Committee meeting (LAPAC) has been rescheduled for October 21 and thirty minutes of the meeting have been set aside for Lu to present information about existing and potential library services. If you wish to join Lu at any of these events, please contact her at lbenke@fcgov.com, or, just show up!

REFERENCE AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

To quote Mark Twain: "The rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated." We could say the same about the book. It is an ongoing lament in the news, national studies and even among people I know that Americans just don't read books anymore. Our community proves them wrong.

- We had record breaking Summer Reading Program participation.
- The new library book club series hosted by Sarah Scobey started out with a bang with 32 in attendance. This is a large group for a book club. There are 5 more books in the series. The series continues throughout the fall and spring. Because of requests from the community, we will be exploring the possibility of a noon time book club.
- At any one time, 80% of our book club kits are checked out. These kits contain 10 copies of a title and background information to lead a discussion. The kits are sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

- The Library District is partnering with the community ReadOn committee to promote a one book, community read series of programs built around the book, “When the Emperor was Divine” by Julie Otsuka. The first program in the ReadOn series held at the Harmony library and featuring authors Adam Schragger and Teresa Funke drew a crowd of 51. Julie Otsuka will be speaking at the Lincoln Center on October 26th. Because of the long hold lists on this title, we had to add more copies of the book and two more book club kits.
- The circulation of books in all their formats is increasing. Demand for audiobooks, both CD and downloadable, continues to grow beyond what we are able to purchase.

Business librarian Anne Macdonald has been appointed to the City’s Cultural Resources Board. She will serve as the Cultural Resources Board liaison to the Downtown Business Association. Anne has been working with local organizations to promote library resources. She is arranging for a representative from RefUSA to teach the Chamber’s sales force how to better use the RefUSA database. The Small Business Development Center has been signing up their clients for Anne’s business programs. Anne refers first-time business people to the Center. They also send her nonprofit referrals; and place our flyers in their offices. Working with Larimer County Economic Gardening groups, Anne was able to arrange a partnership to pay for the IBIS World database. IBIS World provides high-quality industry market research analysis, reports and publications. Access to this specialty database will be available through Anne and representatives from the Loveland Economic Advisory office and Loveland Economic Gardening Program. The group felt that the library was the best host for access for the Fort Collins area. This puts the library at the center of northern Colorado economic development efforts. Anne’s efforts in the Economic Gardening arena caught the attention of Christine Hamilton-Pennell from “Growing Local Economies” in Denver. She is a nationally known speaker on economic gardening. Ms. Hamilton-Pennell was impressed with the research and projects Anne has completed and asked to interview her. She is considering using our library’s efforts as a model during her training sessions.

The “History Comes Alive @ the Library” program has outgrown the Harmony Community room. The program held on Friday, September 26th had 178 people attend. We were fortunate in being able to arrange with FRCC to host it in the Student Center. The FRCC staff was extremely helpful. We will continue to work with FRCC to hold as many “History Comes Alive @ the Library” programs in the Student Center as their schedule allows.

When the new self-checks came up, reference staff volunteered to demonstrate them to the public. It was fun and exciting to see the reactions of the public. They couldn’t believe how fast and easy it was to check out.

SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION

RFID

September marked a mighty successful launch of self-checks to the public! The project was delivered on time and well under budget. Patron response has been enthusiastically positive, and we even had a nice article in the Coloradoan. Carson will present more details to Trustees at the October meeting.

Branding and Web

Peggy and Carson contributed to the District’s RFP for branding and marketing. Since the outcomes of that process are impacted by technological infrastructure, the two burned the midnight oil to provide appropriate input to the process and participate with vendor interviews. For next steps, the two are working out details with City MIS, and are creating contract language (covering the technical bits) for the vendor who is awarded the contract.

Along the objectives of branding and identity, Carson met with City MIS to negotiate possible solutions to how our Internet domain displays (for both the web sites and email) – and the good news is that MIS has agreed to provide the District a basic and acceptable level of domain hosting in 2009. In English, that means instead of "user@fcgov.com" our email addresses will soon read something like "user@librarydistrict.com." And instead of our website address being "http://fcgov.com/library" it will soon be something like "http://librarydistrict.com" Although acceptable for our 2009 needs, this solution is only temporary. Look for a project proposal for the permanent solution as part of 2010 budget discussions. If anyone would like further explanation of the 2009 solution, just ask Carson!

Public Technology Classes

Pamm Clements reports another popular "fall semester" of public computer classes. So far we have over 720 registrations for 51 classes.

As of September 9, seven classes had been given to the public (five at Main and two at Harmony) with an attendance of 71 patrons.

Currently public classes are offered at Main (with a max class size of nine) and Harmony (with a max class size of 20).

The classes we offer are:

- Computer Comfort
- Basic Internet Searching
- Basic & Advanced Email
- Exploring the Library's website
- Internet for Travel & Tourism
- Windows Basics & File Management
- MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher & Access
- Silver Surfers (seniors) customized classes in: Computer Comfort, Internet Searching & Basic email - these are proving very popular with seniors both in the location (small lab at Main and good teacher patron interaction), time (10 am) and content. The classes are usually at full capacity (9 patrons)

Staff helping Pamm teach are:

Elaine Burritt (Internet(1) - Travel & Explore library website(1))

Peggy Shaughnessy (Internet (1) & MS Access (4))

Molly Thompson (Computer Comfort (2), Internet (3), Basic & Advanced Email (1 ea) & Word (3))

PC Replacements

Ling Zhao has been leading the charge to freshen our public PCs – starting this year (and into next) most of our public PCs will be replaced with newer models.

The new machines are faster and more robust, and feature a new (yet instantly familiar) and easier-to-use interface for patrons. They are also much faster, and feature an update to a more current version of Microsoft Office for patrons to perform Word Processing, spreadsheets and other functions.

Thanks to computer replacement funding from FRCC, Harmony Internet computers (18 computers, 16 adults and 2 Children's) have been upgraded to much faster hardware and software platforms. As well, 10 computers that are dedicated to searching the library catalog and accessing subscription databases were replaced.

In an effort to squeeze the most life out of our computers, the old ones from Harmony were put into service at Main as catalog/database computers -- including 14 in the Reference area and 8 in the Children's area.

The replacements at Harmony are just the beginning -- in October SA will apply Gates grant funding to begin freshening the public computing experience at Main.

Wireless Stats

Patron use of wireless continues to grow. FRCC Campus Librarian Annie Fox compiled the stats and sent a nice note:

“Take a look at these numbers and the exciting picture they convey! You have a service with an increasing use rate and I have never heard a complaint! Wow.”

	2007			2008	
	Main	Harmony		Main	Harmony
January	372	410	January	724	767
February	479	542	February	883	1043
March	623	578	March	812	990
April	478	730	April	821	1054
May	510	537	May	734	824
June	545	353	June	744	755
July	790	520	July		
August	696	610	August		
September	584	660	September		
October	698	986	October		
November	555	859	November		
December	527	601	December		
TOTAL	6857	7386	TOTAL		

SE Branch

The Southeast Branch construction project has ramped up again on its way to a March 2009 opening date. Carson has reconvened and is leading the tech team for the branch with representatives from MIS (connectivity and telephones), City of Fort Collins Utilities (for the PRPA fiber), Library SA (library systems and end-user equipment), and contractors (mainly data wiring).

SRP Registration Program

SA was very pleased to see registrations for our Summer Reading Programs to top 10,000 people. The program we use to register folks was created over several years by Peggy Shaughnessy, and won the CAL Technology Project of the Year award in 2006. All staff are happy to see that the program continues to meet our needs as we grow!

HARMONY, TEEN SERVICES AND NEW BRANCH LIBRARY

Teen Services – Main Library

- Sue-Ellen Jones attended a Poudre School District Media Specialist Meeting on Tuesday, September 16th, 2008 and presented an Ebsco 2.0 database tutorial for 11 media specialists.
- Sue-Ellen recruited 10 teen volunteers to work in the Friends of the Library annual book sale in October.

Teen Services – Harmony Library

- 21 teens attended the September 20th IRS meeting at the Harmony Library.
- 14 teens attended the September 20th Science Fiction/Fantasy writing workshop at the Harmony Library.

Teen Services – Outreach

- Teen Services Librarians visited Boltz Junior High School recently to introduce themselves to the students, distribute library cards, and talk about upcoming teen programs. Sue-Ellen spoke to 125 teens when she visited and Diane spoke to 120 teens the next afternoon.
- On Monday, September 29th Sue-Ellen will present booktalks to six classes at Leshar Junior High.

Summer Tour 2008 – Teen Summer Reading Program (SRP) Statistics

- 1,175 teens signed up for the teen SRP. 626 teens (53%) of registered teens signed up at the Harmony Library. 469 teens (40%) of registered teens signed up at the Main Library. 80 teens (7%) of registered teens signed up online.
- Here is the number and percentages of teen registrants by grade level. (Percentages have been rounded up).
 1. 279 6th graders – 24%
 2. 335 7th graders – 29%
 3. 207 8th graders – 18%
 4. 139 9th graders – 12%
 5. 101 10th graders – 9%
 6. 86 11th graders – 7%
 7. 28 12th graders – 2%
- Most teen SRP participants came from the following zip codes:
 1. 80521 – 95 teens – 8%
 2. 80524 – 158 teens – 13%
 3. 80525 – 335 teens – 29%
 4. 80526 – 318 teens – 27%
 5. 80528 – 122 teens – 10%
- Staff changed the prize structure this summer so that teens could get monthly prizes.
 1. 633 teens earned their first prizes, giving us an overall “completion” rate of 54%. 544 teens chose a paperback book as a prize and 89 teens chose a Gryphon Comic discount pass as a prize for June.
 2. 487 teens earned prizes in July—representing a completion rate of 42%. 290 teens chose the free ice cream coupon while 197 teens preferred the discount bookstore coupon.
 3. 237 teens earned prizes in August—representing a completion rate of 20%. 128 teens chose mini-golf coupons and 109 teens earned Dazbog coffee coupons.