

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Community Access Program

For the past 16 years, the federal government has supported public Internet access in communities across the country through the Community Access Program. Initially, the program covered only rural areas but was later expanded to include urban areas. The public Internet sites are many and varied but public libraries have been a common location in most communities across the country. Regina Public Library has three designated sites – Albert Branch, Regent Place Branch, and Central. The designation of a site in an urban area was determined federally by a formula that was linked to a number of factors including economic indicators for a given neighbourhood. Over the past few days, there have been conflicting reports of the demise of the program and, as of the writing of this report, it is still unclear exactly what may happen. The part that does seem clear is that the changes would not affect the Library's 2010 budget and the expected \$14,800 should still be forthcoming. [I received on Thursday morning, confirmation that the CAP program and current funding will be included in the 2010/2011 federal budget.]

Budget Submission

The 2010 budget and mill rate request was submitted to the City on 15 March, as required by the *Public Libraries Act, 1996*. Through the City's usual process, the library's document becomes public when it is posted on the City's website the Friday before the City Council meeting at which it will be tabled. This year, it will be posted on the City's website on Friday, 19 March. As of the writing of this report, the Library has not received a confirmed date for presentation to Council but it is tentatively set at 27 April. Assuming that date is confirmed, that is also the date of the regular meeting of the Library Board and the Board may wish to set an alternate date for their monthly meeting in April.

Paperless Meetings

At its January meeting, the Board asked administration to look into the possibility of paperless meetings and the Board was interested in the model used by the Regina Catholic School Division (RCSD). The RCSD went to paperless board meetings on January 10, 2010. Information for Board meetings is posted on an internal (Intranet) website that only the board members and certain other staff have access to. Board members are notified the Friday before the board meeting that the agenda is available on the Intranet. On the Intranet site, each section of the agenda has a link to a document that board members can click on to read the document online or print it, as needed. At the meeting, a laptop is brought in and all of the information is brought up on a Smartboard to review/discuss. Other than a few minor software issues, the transition has been most successful. The school division is currently working out the cost savings (ie. paper, photocopying use).

Technically speaking, this approach would be possible for RPL Board meetings with the exception that the Library does not have a Smartboard but could display the documents using the projector and screen in the Board room. The physical space in the Board Room would pose some challenges as the screen rolls down in the spot where chairs are set up for members of the staff and public to attend the meetings. If the screen were rolled down, it would leave a few spots for chairs but those in chairs would not be able to view the screen from where they sit – essentially, the room’s small size is the main challenge for this model.

@ the Library

At an earlier Board meeting, it was suggested that the Library Director’s Report might include highlights of library programs or events of the past month. For the next few months, I will include a few Library highlights in each report and Board members can let me know if the practice proves to be helpful.

- Germination Nation program. Over 80 people turned up at Sherwood Village Branch for the Germination Nation program on Saturday, March 6, some who had never been to this branch before. Parents and their children between the ages of three and seven came to listen to stories, watch puppet shows and make crafts that were inspired by artist Lyndal Osborne’s art installation of glass forms filled with enlarged seeds created from foam, wood, oranges, sponge cakes, grape skins, coconuts, fungus and crab shells. These magnified replicas of seed forms were inspired by electron microscopic images from the Millennium Seed Bank in London, England. The Saskatchewan Science Centre, which RPL partnered with for this event, had their staff there to show kids what seeds looked like under a microscope and learn how worms help the seeds grow. Participants were entered to win a one-year family membership at the Saskatchewan Science Centre.
- Mini-Exhibit: Broken Hearts Contest Winners. The Dunlop Art Gallery and Regina Public Library are presenting the artwork created by Regina-area students for the Broken Hearts contest. This display will be set up near the graphic novels section at Central Library until March 24. In February, teens were invited to submit original and visually striking Valentine’s Day cards that integrated creative writing with visual art. An amazing 100 entries were received, ranging from the dark and tragic to the whimsical and cheeky. Judges – Deborah Ochoa of Madame Yes, RPL Writer-in-Residence Terry Jordan and local artist and cartoonist Dakota McFadzean – had a difficult challenge picking the top three winners and two runners-up. Regina teachers were also competing against each other, as the school with the most entries won a special guest workshop with Dakota. The winning school was Martin Collegiate.