



"Encouraging a spirit of learning and discovery"

Provincial Library Grants Report 2020 Valemount Public Library

INTRODUCTION

The Valemount Public Library Association was established in 1964 and the current library is housed in a 1600 square foot log building that was built in 1988 with Expo '86 funds. The building and grounds are owned and maintained by the Village of Valemount. The library serves a population of approximately 1,600 people.

Valemount is a small, rural, mountain community with a population of approximately 1,000 people. It is tucked into the valley between the stunning Rocky, Cariboo and Monashee Mountain Ranges, and located on Highway 5, 350 km north of Kamloops, 300 km east of Prince George, and 120 km west of Jasper, AB. We have an elementary and secondary school.

The withdrawal of the Greyhound Bus service has limited the ability for locals without vehicles to travel outside our community. There are limited transport services being provided by BC BusNorth to Prince George, and a Northern Health Connections Bus available for medical appointments going once a week to either Kamloops or Prince George.

The local economy has been impacted by the downturn in the forestry industry. The closure of BC mills has reduced the number of good paying local jobs needed to support local families. It is common for local men to have to leave the valley to find higher paying, resource-based jobs and to be home on a part time basis.

The arrival of the pipeline has generated some employment opportunities and generated income for local businesses with a work camp being located just outside town for a planned 3-year duration.

Our community has been designated a tourist destination with snowmobiling, heli-skiing and snow cat skiing being popular activities in the winter and mountain biking in our newly developed and expanding bike park along with horseback riding, four wheeling, boating, and river rafting being popular in the summer months. A local craft brewery and two new pizza restaurants are popular among locals and tourists after their outdoor activities. We have an active Chamber of Commerce, vibrant local arts and culture community, and a newly expanded and evolving Robson Valley Community Services.

A proposed ski resort located about 10km west of town, Valemount Glacier Destinations, has received government approval but is still seeking funding. This prospective development has led to an increase of properties being sold and homes being built on speculation. It has also led to increased housing prices and resulting tax increases, which has created hardship for some owners and a challenge for first time home buyers. There is a lack of rental housing in the community which impacts residents and temporary workers and creates a shortage of staff for the local tourist related businesses. Local organizations have applied for funding and started building new accommodations for affordable housing.

New residents seeking a small-town lifestyle with ready access to outdoor recreation continue to relocate here, bringing new ideas and opening new businesses. People who grew up in Valemount and are starting their own families are returning to the community. This has created an atmosphere of growth and an influx of energy.

As in other rural communities there are limited resources available, so the library plays an important role in the community. We serve as a hub for educational and recreational materials, both physical and digital. The library offers computer workstations, Internet access, free Wi-Fi, computer training and assistance, exam invigilating, and copy/fax/scan services. Our meeting room and activity space is available, at no charge, to other non-profit organizations and groups. We provide space for the Valemount Historic Society archives and have a giant outdoor chess game for community use.

COVID-19

2020 was a very unusual and challenging year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which impacted library services and operations. The library closed its doors to the public on March 17 in response to Provincial Health Officer's directives regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. After Work Safe BC approval of our Covid-19 safety plan and with new operating procedures, we began to provide curbside and delivery service in late May. With the installation of barriers and a good supply of PPE, we expanded services to allow access by appointment only, to browse the collection and use computer stations in mid- July. We continued with that service model until the end of the year.

We ceased to offer space for groups to meet after the March closure and there were few opportunities to participate in events in the community as other organizations were also operating under restrictions due to Covid-19.

Due to the cozy nature of our small library and limited office space, staff took turns working shifts in the library and working remotely from home to maintain their respective library roles and responsibilities. We continued to maintain and develop physical collections while promoting online resources. We continued to weed our collections and add new items to keep collections relevant and current.

New patrons had the option to register for a library card via email or by telephone to enable access to online resources. Gale Courses and eBooks were popular resources while so many people were home with extra time on their hands along with our physical collection of jigsaw puzzle collection and snowshoes.

While our 2020 membership and collections statistics fluctuated only slightly, the number of circulations fell drastically (half of our typical yearly total) due to the library closure and reduced hours.

VALEMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN (2017-2020):

- **STRENGTHEN LIBRARY SERVICES; to improve service to patrons, ensure the collection is current and meets the needs of our patrons, to enhance technology-based services**
- **IMPROVE PARTNERSHIPS; to strengthen and develop partnerships to enhance literacy in the community**
- **INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE LIBRARY AND ITS VALUE; to promote library use and increase awareness of its resources, to celebrate the library's milestones.**

STRENGTHEN LIBRARY SERVICES: to improve services to patrons, ensure the collection is current and meets the needs of our patrons, to enhance technology-based services.

The library undertook several activities to support this goal before restrictions were in place and during the year, when possible.

Legal Skype sessions were offered, in partnership with Robson Valley Community Services (RVCS) several times during the year, enabling residents to have a free 15-minute consultation with a lawyer.

We offered one-to-one computer training sessions for adults and seniors needing assistance with their devices or using one of our public computers. Computer sessions helped develop basic computer skills for patrons, increasing their skill level and allowing them to be connected in today's computerized world.

Test invigilating service was available for patrons taking post-secondary, adult education, and food safe courses.

Book Club meetings, Avalanche Awareness presentation, Dementia workshop and "VED Talks" (local presenters who share their knowledge or skills in a one-hour format) were held in the activity room in the lower level of the library.

"Books for Babies" materials were purchased, and 24 filled bags were provided by the library to be distributed to new parents by the Valemount Health Centre. This program

is one we participate in every year, with support from the North Central Library Federation (NCLF) and is a great way to encourage family literacy and raise awareness of the local resources.

While the library was closed to the public, we took the opportunity to paint the lower level of the library, adding special features to create a warm and inviting space. The activity space and meeting rooms now have a fresh new look.



We continued to subscribe to online resources (Gale, Zinio, Ancestry, etc.) and offered new patrons the opportunity to register for a membership remotely for access to electronic resources and collections. An Overdrive Advantage Collection was purchased through a collaboration with the NCLF to address high demand for electronic material and reduce wait times for holds. Online resources offer unlimited access to patrons for educational and recreational activities. This access results in patrons improving their job skills, accessing information for their personal needs, upgrading their education, and barrier free access to literacy materials.

A new musical instrument collection was initiated with literacy funding from the North Central Library Federation. The starter collection consists of two ukuleles, an acoustic guitar, and a steel tongue drum. Our goal is to encourage patrons to develop their musical literacy skills by creating the opportunity to borrow equipment and providing relevant instructional material to accompany the items. We plan to expand this collection, adding items that are requested by our patrons.

The Free Little Library, located in the center of town, is a tool to promote literacy with no strings attached. We keep the Little Library stocked with a variety of books which anyone can borrow without the need of a library card. Residents contribute to the contents. Next to the Little Library, a painting by a local artist depicting a group of people and animals sitting on a bench reading various humorously titled books was installed this year. The painting, and others around town, are part of an Art Walk project commissioned by the Valemount Arts and Cultural Society.



Staff had access to online workshops on a variety of topics to enhance library skills, address issues with patrons, and for personal growth.

Inter-library loans and Inter-library Connect participation continued to be a very important activity for our library, with the opportunity to enhance our patron's access to a wider range of resources and to share our collection with patrons from other libraries.

With the Provincial Library Technology Grant, we replaced the public and staff computers with new models and updated programs, upgraded the Wi-Fi router for better access and the ability to collect usage data, had additional data ports installed in the lower level for better access, purchased a new barcode scanner for the circulation desk, and developed a collection of lendable technology. We asked for input from members of the community to see what lendable tech items they would like access to at the library. The results are a lendable collection that includes a smart telescope, digital metal detector, HD eReader, GPS, thermal imaging camera, birding backpacks, and a drone with HD camera. These new collections will provide patrons with access to new technologies and our plan is to offer workshops to provide instructions on use and encourage new skill development. Some of these items are in the processing stage, being catalogued and prepared for circulation.

IMPROVE PARTNERSHIPS: to strengthen and develop partnerships to enhance literacy in our community.

In partnership with the local food bank, we hosted an "Angel Tree" and collected unwrapped toys for kids to be included in the Christmas hampers that were distributed. This annual event is well received in the community and patrons look forward to contributing each year.

The online version of the Provincial BC Summer Reading Club was offered at our library this year instead of in-person programming. We are hopeful that we can get back to offering the program and related special events soon. This program encourages reading skills and structured social interaction for kids during the summer months. The province-wide themed program is a great resource for the library, offering materials and activity guides.

Early in the year we partnered with the Valemount Learning Centre to offer a “VED Talk” and with Robson Valley Community Services for “Legal Skype Sessions” which gave patrons the opportunity to learn new skills and to consult with a lawyer at no cost. We plan to embrace new opportunities for future in-person and online projects with both organizations.

Books for Babies is a partnership with the Valemount Health Centre and North Central Library Federation to provide books and other literacy materials in bags for new parents of babies born in our community. The materials are distributed by the health nurse. This is an ongoing partnership that can include other literacy organizations who contribute materials and information resources in the bags.

The North Central Library Federation partnership provided opportunities for group purchases, shared collections, educational workshops and conferences, staff training, and a Library Advisory Group. This collaboration of ten libraries under the guidance of the NCLF manager provides access to resources for our patrons that would not be possible for us to provide on our own and offers opportunities for professional development and support for library staff and board members.

The partnership with the Association of BC Public Library Directors was the most valuable and strongest collaboration during the past year with regular meetings to share experiences, clarify restrictions and requirements, offer support, and provide a sense of direction and community among BC library directors. This was so important during this time of uncertainty and change. Meetings via Zoom were held every 2 weeks and we greatly appreciate all the support these meetings offered with regular updates from Libraries Branch.

The BCLTA offered workshops during the year for board members, board chairs and library directors. Their resources are a great benefit and offer direction and support for library boards.

Collaborations with all these organizations enabled us to offer a wider variety of programs and services. We will continue reaching out to make new connections and to enhance existing partnerships. We will also be seeking new ways to raise awareness of our events and services in order to avoid duplication in the community.

INCREASE AWARENESS OF THE LIBRARY AND ITS VALUE: to promote library use and increase awareness of its resources, to celebrate the library’s milestones.

We used social media, posters, and the local newspaper to promote our collections, programs, and new arrivals. During the pandemic we kept community members and patrons informed about changes to library services and hours through our website and the above platforms.

We expanded our home delivery service and offered curbside service to meet the needs of our patrons and to allow access to material from the collection while we were closed for browsing.

Gale courses and other online resources were promoted during the library closure and patron registrations were offered by email and telephone in order to allow members of the community to access the online resources.

We obtained Charitable status this year and will now be able to provide tax deductible receipts for donations to the library. This will be a great asset when we are ready to fundraise for an expansion of the library and for any donor requesting a receipt for tax purposes.

Activity and meeting space for non-profit organizations to host events and meetings continued to be available before the pandemic. These events can raise awareness of the library, introducing non-library users to the library's resources.

We received input from patrons and community members to assist with our selections for the new lendable technology collection, developed this year. We strive to respond to suggestions and requests for materials to better represent and serve the community.

SUMMARY

The support from the Provincial Technology Grant to upgrade our computers and equipment and to develop a lendable technology collection has been invaluable and will be of great benefit to our patrons. It allows us to keep the library relevant and vibrant, and to encourage a spirit of learning and discovery.

We plan to offer online programs and workshops via Zoom in 2021 and look forward to offering in-person workshops when possible to showcase our new equipment and technology collections.

Our strategic plan will be reviewed and updated in the coming year, to reflect new priorities and goals.

Partnerships with other libraries in the NCLF and province-wide through the ABCPLD are very important, enabling us to offer programs and events, share ideas, collaborate on projects, and increase our purchasing power through consortia purchasing agreements. The support we receive from the ABCPLD, NCLF, BCLTA and from Libraries Branch is vital to our success and the quality of services our patrons can access.





INTERIM 2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORT – VALEMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Encouraging a spirit of learning and discovery"

The Valemount Public Library is very pleased to receive \$7,797 in technology grant funding from the Provincial Government.

Our library has recently received grants from Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) Community Initiatives Program, for new computers and from the CBT Community Technology Program for new technology in the library. Both funding streams allowed us to purchase new equipment for the library to provide the best service possible to patrons in our community who otherwise would not have access or the opportunity to experience new technologies.

The Library Technology Grant will allow us to leverage the CBT funds for the purchase of new public and staff computers. These new computers replace our old ones, and provide a better experience with upgraded software and computers for staff serving patrons and for patrons accessing the Internet and using the computers for research, job searches, banking, etc. Patrons without computers at home or Internet access benefit from these upgrades.

We also needed to upgrade our network by adding new data ports in the lower level of the library where the video editing computer and robotics will be located. And we upgraded the library's Wi-Fi router for a stronger signal and the ability for staff to track usage. Wi-Fi access is very popular with locals and visitors.

Some of the Library Technology grant funds will be earmarked for workshops, to compliment the new equipment we have purchased. Workshops will be held in the fall/winter of 2020 or Spring of 2021 depending on the Covid-19 developments and restrictions.

The rest of the grant funding will be used for lendable technology; smart telescope, e-Reader, birding kits, metal detector, an infrared camera, drone, and a digital projector. We received input from patrons regarding the types of lendable tech they would like and made our choices based on their feedback.

This grant will allow us to offer better service with updated equipment, patron access to new technologies, and to provide workshops to encourage the exploration of new skills.

Thank you for this very timely grant and the opportunities it will bring to our community,

Wendy Cinnamon, Library Director

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: VALEMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: \$7,797

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.) New public computers	New patron computers with updated software to replace our old units	Increase patron satisfaction with access to high performing computers	Supports the provincial strategy to improve access for British Columbians	Purchase and install 4 new public access computers to replace our old ones.	Columbia Basin Trust Community Initiatives Program for the purchase of the new computers	May 2020: Items are purchased June 2020: Items installed	\$500	\$5,168 CBT grant	
Staff hardware upgrades New staff computers	New office and circulation desk computers to replace our old units	Increase staff satisfaction with high functioning computers resulting in better patron service	Supports the provincial strategy to improve access for British Columbians and building capacity	Purchase 3 new staff computers to replace our old ones.	Columbia Basin Trust Community Initiatives Program for the purchase of the new computers	May 2020: Items are purchased June 2020: installation	\$420	\$3,831 CBT grant	
Connectivity (internet speed, connection capacity, etc.)	New Wi-Fi router to replace our old one	More reliable Wi-Fi connection with the ability to track usage	Good quality Wi-Fi signal supports the provincial strategy to improve	Purchase and install a new Wi-Fi router		August 2020: New router purchased and installed.	\$765		

Other, please specify Lendable technology	Collection of lendable technology (Smart telescope, Digital projector, e-Reader, Metal detector, Birding backpacks with binoculars, GPS, Thermal camera, and Drone camera)	Increase patron access to lendable technology	Improving access for British Columbians	Get input from patrons, order items, catalogue, make available for loan		October 2020 order items, catalogue, create loan policy, advertise, circulate	3,923	\$227 Library funds	(Telescope \$1,000, Projector \$700, E-Reader \$200 Birding packs \$950, GPS \$500, Thermal cam \$400, Drone cam \$200 Cases \$200)
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