

Fernie Heritage Library Provincial Library Grant Report, 2020

Introduction:

The Fernie Heritage is located in the southeast corner of the Province of British Columbia. The Fernie Heritage Library is a public library association that is government by the board of the Fernie Public Library Association. The Library has provided library service to the community of Fernie for over one hundred years! We operate out of a beautiful heritage building that is centrally located, one block off Fernie's main street, across the street from the post office and City Hall. Our building has three floors, huge windows, and a large garden.

We offer programming to everyone in our community. We also serve visitors to the area. Library programming is offered free of charge and is accessible to everyone. Annually we partner with over forty organizations, collaborating to offer a wide range of diverse programming.

Fernie is a community that continues to experience rapid growth and change. In 2018, the census results showed we were the fastest growing small city in BC! The trend has continued and this rapid population growth brings new challenges and opportunities for the library.

The dominant industries in Fernie are mining and tourism. Within an hour's drive of Fernie can be found five metallurgical coal mines, mines which directly employ thousands of people in the area. Many more are employed in industries related to mining. The average starting wage for one of the mines is \$73,000/annum. In addition, Fernie is home to a world class ski hill, a ski hill that attracts thousands of visitors annually. In the past ten years, Fernie has shifted to become a four seasons tourist City with as many visitors coming to use the trail system in the summer as come to ski in the winter!

The combination of high wages and tourism-driven migration has led to increased demands on City amenities and infrastructure. In addition, every year, attainable housing needs surpass attainable housing stock. Another factor is the growing availability of options in employment with increasing numbers of professionals being able to work from home. Increasingly large numbers of amenity migrants are choosing to live in Fernie.

The libraries vision is to be *a welcoming place for discovery, inspiration, and recreation*. Our mission is *enriching lives and community*. Our foundation principles are to be accessible, professional, responsive and innovative, and collaborative.

In 2020, we have completed the renovation of our basement, creating two new maker spaces and a teen programming space.

Provincial Priority 1: Improving access for British Columbians

A goal of the Fernie Heritage Library is to be accessible.

We offer programming for ages toddlers to seniors and our programming is offering both in the library and out in the community. From January to March, programming was offered at the library and at

various preschools, schools, daycares, and seniors' centers. From April to December, the library offered 4 – 6 virtual programs per week for the community.

British Columbians have accessed services through the library in many ways. In 2020, we expanded our Wi-Fi to provide excellent 24 hour Wi-Fi throughout the building and throughout our adjacent garden. This meant that our patrons would have free access to the resources they needed when they needed access. Patrons were given the opportunity for remote printing and other services.

By providing curbside service, our patrons have continued to access the collection. An average of 40 curbside bags / day has been distributed since April 2020.

Through partnerships, patrons and community members were able to access programming and services to meet their needs. For example, our partnership with the Fernie Pride Society increased access to resources and services to a valuable underserved part of our community. Our partnership with the CRA Volunteer Income Tax program improved access to services for the community.

In 2020, the Fernie Heritage Library became the legal entity for the Fernie Youth Action Network. As part of our work with this project, we have now created a new space for teenagers in the community. In December 2020, the Fernie Teen Programming Space opened in our library basement.

Provincial Priority 2: Building capacity

The Fernie Heritage Library has built capacity for our community and our patrons by providing exceptional programming and services. Throughout curbside and virtual offerings, community members have improved their skills and increased their knowledge.

Through our increased technology offerings, we have been able to help British Columbians gain skills and knowledge. We have taught community members how to access online resources, therefore building capacity.

Library staff members have all taken multiple courses in 2020, which have led to increased capacity as library professionals.

Provincial Priority 3: Advancing citizen engagement

The Fernie Heritage Library has worked with other libraries to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration. The library director presented to other library directors on working with boards, a presentation that led to knowledge sharing.

By improving our virtual offerings, the library has advanced citizen engagement.

The library director is currently studying the Ktunaxa language and this is allowing for increased awareness. This year the library partnered with the community on the Awareness Initiative, a community wide project to build awareness of racism in the community.

Provincial Priority 4: Enhancing governance

The Fernie Heritage Library has worked to enhance governance. Library trustees have taken numerous courses offered by the British Columbia Library Trustees Association. The library board has also undertaken a board self-assessment and identified areas to work on. To increase our financial accountability and improve our financial reports, the library has hired a bookkeeper and instituted new financial processes. The board is committed to working with our funders and partners to access operations and relationships to ensure best practices are being followed.

Covid-19 and public libraries:

In March 2020, all operations at the Fernie Heritage Library changed. On the 17th of March, the library made the difficult decision to move to a curbside model of service. Since then, the library has provided curbside service and virtual programming to the community. I am very proud to say that we began curbside service on March 18th, 2020! Our community was given access to the collection throughout 2020. The public has been welcome into the building since August of 2020, but we have continued to offer curbside service and book delivery.

Our biggest challenge throughout the pandemic has been human resources. In March 2020, we have ten staff members, with most working 2/3 time. We are now down to 7 staff members, with two working only a few hours / week. Factors related to demographics have added to our challenges on this front. From March – September, school aged children were not in school fulltime and this meant our staff with school-aged children were affected. Older staff members, or immune-compromised staff, often were not able to come to work.

The physical layout of the library has changed in the past year. We have eliminated our public seating and changed how we use our space. These changes have been done to reduce the risk of Covid-19 spread to our staff and the community. Plexiglas has been installed and signage has been changed. WE have expanded our Wi-Fi and used technology to improve access to our patrons. We have also lent out laptops to our patrons.

Programming has changed and most is now delivered online. We have created a YouTube channel and worked to deliver online content on a variety of platforms, content that would best meet the changing needs of our community.

We have used curbside craft packs to add dimension to our virtual programs. We have provided 90 packs / week since April.

We have created curated library bags for local classrooms and homeschooling families.

We have delivered books, and other collection materials, to seniors and others who are not comfortable visiting public spaces due to the pandemic.

We have used our book bike to fill local 'little free libraries' and offer pop up programming in the community.

Conclusion / Summary:

2020 was a year like no other for the Fernie Heritage Library. All areas of operation were reviewed and changed. All programming was reviewed and changed. We experienced transition in staffing and volunteers. We also built stronger relationships with patrons and grew as an organization. New partnerships were forged and our building was improved. 2020 was a year of tremendous change and challenges. It was also a year of growth. In 2021 we look forward to more challenges and growth as we continue to work to meet the needs of our community.

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: FERNIE HERITAGE LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount:

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Connectivity (internet speed, connection capacity, etc.) Expansion of wifi to the garden	Enhanced wifi reduces barriers to digital inclusion. Provides access to online resources for our patrons.	Increase public access to wifi	A welcoming place for discovery, inspiration, and recreation. Accessible, responsive, Exceptional programs	Added wifi hotspot to the library garden		April – May 2020	995.00	City of Fernie inkind support	
Digital programming Online storytime programs	Improved literacy for young patrons	Tracking number of views for programs	A welcoming place for discovery, inspiration, and recreation. Accessible, responsive, Exceptional programs	Purchase of new Ipad, camera, and filming tripod		May – June 2020	1850.00		
Electronic collections (licensing) Increased online collection	Increased access for patrons	Tracking circulation	Accessible, responsive,	New ebooks and online resources		May 2020 – May 2021	1815.00		
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.) New laptops to use in the garden	New laptops to use in the garden		Accessible, responsive,	Purchased 4 new laptops for use in the library garden		June – July 2020	869.00		
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.) Remote printing	4 new computers for in public area		Accessible, responsive,	Purchased 4 new computers for public area		June – July 2020	1120.95		
Connectivity (internet speed,	Enhanced wifi reduces barriers to digital inclusion.		A welcoming place for discovery,	Reworking network in the library, includes new port		July – September 2021	7258.05		



A welcoming place for discovery,
inspiration and recreation.

October 15, 2020

Re: Interim report for 2020 Library Technology Grant

The Fernie Heritage Library thanks the Government of British Columbia for its support of BC public libraries. The 2020 Library Technology Grant has assisted the Fernie Heritage Library in its work of enriching lives and community. Core values of the library include accessibility and collaboration, and we have used this grant to further our work to promote those values.

We operate in the southeastern corner of the Province, an area that is fairly remote with a huge transient population. Fernie is a community that has experienced tremendous growth, but is also facing challenges with capacity. The library is an important organization in the community that works to improve access, build capacity, and to advance citizen engagement.

So far in 2020, the Fernie Heritage Library has spent or committed to spend, half of the funds. We plan to spend the remaining portion in early 2021. We have purchased laptops for use in our library garden, have added the capacity to print from our garden, have increased the wifi capacity in our outdoor space, have purchased new equipment for use in virtual programming, and have enhanced our ebook and online collection.

In late 2020, early 2021, we will have completed our audit of our technological needs and will implement the findings of the audit. We plan to enhance and improve our connectivity, and invest more in our technology, so we can better serve our patrons.

Please feel free to contact me if you require further information.

Emma Dressler, Library Director

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Enriching lives and community

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: FERNIE HERITAGE LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: 12,093.00

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Connectivity (internet speed, connection capacity, etc.) Enhanced wifi	Enhanced wifi reduces barriers to digital inclusion. Provides access to online resources for our patrons.	Increase public access to wifi considerably	A welcoming place for discovery, inspiration, and recreation Accessible, responsive	Added wifi hotspot to the library garden		April 2020	850.00	City of Fernie inkind support	
Digital programming Online programning			Exceptional programs	Purchase of new iPad and filming tripod		April 2020	900.00		
Electronic collections (licensing) Increased ebook collection	Increased access for patrons		Accessible, responsive	New ebooks		May 2020	600.00		
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.) Laptops for use in the garden	New laptops to use in the garden		A welcoming place for discovery, inspiration, and recreation Accessible, responsive	Purchase of 4 new laptops		May 2020			
Staff hardware upgrades Remote printing	New laptop to assist with digital content		Exceptional service	Purchase of new laptop		April 2020	1600.00		
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.) New desktops	4 new desktop computers for public area		Exceptional service	Purchase of new desktops		May 2020	1200.00		
Connectivity (internet speed, connection capacity, etc.)	Better speed		Exceptional service	Upgrades to phone, internet		May 2020	400.00		

