

INTRODUCTION



The Fernie Heritage Library is committed to increasing access to information and services to community members, while at the same time, being responsive to the unique needs of our community.

The City of Fernie is a thriving resort community, surrounded by the Rocky Mountains, located in the southeastern corner of the Province of BC. Within one hundred kilometres of Fernie, are located four metallurgical coal mines, mines which contributed almost 4 billion dollars to the Canadian government in 2019! They also pay almost \$3 million dollars annually to the City of Fernie. Most of the funds the municipal government grants to the Fernie Heritage Library come from this funding stream. Over 800 people in the community work for Teck, and even more work for companies that work with Teck. These factors contribute greatly to the fact that the population of Fernie is wealthier, younger, and more educated than the average population in BC. We also have a world class trail network and a large successful ski hill, tourism drivers which bring in over 500 000 visitors annually to our community.

The population of Fernie is growing extremely rapidly, with the last census showing our community to be the fastest growing small town in British Columbia. This substantial growth in population has meant new opportunities for the Fernie Heritage Library. At the same time, the rapidly growing population can create challenges as the cost of living continues to increase and staff shortages become the norm, enhancing programs and services is sometimes challenging. One of the largest challenges facing Fernie is a housing shortage.

The Fernie Heritage Library's vision is to be a welcoming place for discovery, inspiration, and recreation based on a mission to enrich lives and community. We are an open, neutral place that provides a welcoming atmosphere for all in the community. Sometimes we joke that we are victims of our own success... In every single service and program that we offer, we saw increases.

The library is located in the physical centre of the community, one block off of Fernie's main street, across the street from City Hall, the Post Office, and an independent school with over 300 students. Outside our back door, we have our Library Garden. All of these factors combine to give us an ideal location.

- Our mission: Enriching lives and community
- Our vision: A welcoming place for discovery, inspiration, and recreation
- Our guiding principles: Accessible, professional, responsive, innovative, and collaborative



Our main objectives remain as follows:

1. Achieve the long term financial capacity to meet our goals

Strategies

- Better assure our revenue from existing sources
- Pursue new revenue sources
- Continue effective cost management

2. Maintain a collective agreement that benefits all stakeholders

Strategies

- Administer the collective agreement fairly and consistently
- Ensure that any changes in the collective agreement benefit all stakeholders

3. Maintain or enhance stakeholder satisfaction

Strategies

- Communicate openly and honestly
- Address stakeholder needs and expectations

4. Enhance awareness and appreciation of FHL

Strategies

- Advocate for FHL in the community
- Promote FHL as the “living room of the community”

LIBRARY PRIORITY 1

Improving access

Our vision, to be a “welcoming place” and our guiding principle of being “accessible” means that we strive to serve all aspects of the community in what we do. As part of providing equitable access to information and services, we use our book bike, the Fernie Book Bike, to deliver programs and services to the greater community. This allows us to meet the public where they gather, rather than just in the library.

We also provide outreach to all of the local seniors centres bringing programming to all of the centres on a weekly basis.

We remain committed to providing barrier-free service and programs, and as part of this, we have ended all collection of library fines. We also provide free printing for children when the printing is part of homework.

Our partnership with the Early Childhood Team has allowed for greater access and improved services to mothers who are at risk. Children are introduced to the library by the ECD team member, someone who the family already trusts. This year we expanded our programming with the ECD team offering monthly Pyjama Story times and Stuffy Sleepover nights.



LIBRARY PRIORITY 2

Developing skills

We teach coding programs to students helping them gain valuable skills. We offer a tech skills program for seniors helping them gain improved access to information and services. We offer music classes to early years workers. We teach library skills to students to improve their research skills. We also help seniors with accessing databases such as Ancestry.com or Libby. As part of this, we offered a weekly program that brought high school students and seniors together to build relationships and share knowledge.



LIBRARY PRIORITY 3

Collaborating on shared goals

Partnerships are very important to all us at the Fernie Heritage Library. We believe and know that we could not do what we do without our partners. By building strong relationships with our partners, we are able to leverage our resources and do more.

Being “collaborative” is one of our guiding principles. In 2019, we partnered with over 52 community organizations.

Our partnership with our municipal government, the City of Fernie is a key partnership for the library. We believe that having a positive relationship with our municipal government is key to our success. In 2019, we worked with the City on various initiatives including promoting new municipal government programs and providing space for community consultation.

We are part of the Kootenay Library Federation and as part of that; we share resources and work together to leverage those resources. In 2019, as part of a KLF initiative, we partnered with Science World to deliver two different coding principles in June and September. We also offered some special children’s programming that taught science concepts using puppets and music.



We continued our partnership with the Fernie Pride Society hosting two events during Fernie Pride Week. Our Drag Queen Story time brought out over 100 children, and over 20 teens participated in the Drag Queen Bingo. We have now revitalized the LGBTQ collection and circulation of the collection has increased substantially.



We are working on our relationship with our local First Nations people. Our National Indigenous Day celebrations are creating new bonds which are now leading into new opportunities to partner.



LIBRARY PRIORITY 4

Enhancing governance

Our guiding principle of being “professional” relates to governance. Our third strategic objective is to enhance governance: achieving long term financial capacity to meet our goals; maintaining a collective agreement that benefits all stakeholders; and maintaining or enhancing stakeholder satisfaction. Our overriding goal is to follow a model of continuous improvement.

As part of this, we are working on our board strength, incorporating board training into all board meetings. We are working to have our trustees be strong advocates for the library. Our board members are attending more library events and are feeling more engaged with the library.

In addition, as part of enhancing governance, the library is reviewing all of its policies and procedures. We have also now hired a bookkeeper to ensure financial best practises are assured.

SUMMARY

2019 was a great year at the Fernie Heritage Library. All of our programming and service numbers increased and we were able to build and enhance partnerships in the community. By working together with our community organizations, we were able to achieve our goal of building community.

2020 brings new opportunities and we excited about all of our new plans. In 2020 we have started two new initiatives. We are now the legal entity for the Fernie Youth Action Network Coordinator and we are currently renovating our building and will open a maker space later this spring.

Our strategic vision is to be responsive and pioneering in the community, and both of these projects, supporting youth programs in the community, and the creation of a collaborative technological learning and creative space, directly align with our mandate and strategic vision.