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 located in the southeastern corner of the Province of BC. Within one hundred kilometres of Fernie, are located five metallurgical coal mines, mines which paid over 800 million dollars in taxes to the British Columbia government in 2016! This means that the population of Fernie is wealthier than the average population in BC. Our population is also more educated and younger than the average population of BC. We have a world class trail network and a large successful ski hill, factors which bring in over 400,000 visitors annually.

“Fernie is the fastest growing community of its kind in Canada.” (Fernie Free Press, Feb 26, 2017)

Between 2011 and 2016, the population of Fernie grew by over 18%. In 2018, the population expanded even more with the annexation of West Fernie. 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. As the cost of living continues to increase and staff shortages become the norm, enhancing programs and services is sometimes challenging.

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, increases ranging from 3% to over 22%!

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 a large independent school. Outside our back door, we have our Library Garden. All of these factors combine to give us an ideal location.
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”

Fernie Heritage Library

- 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

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<th>LIBRARY PRIORITY 1</th>
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<td>Fostering equitable access to information and services</td>
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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.

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**LIBRARY PRIORITY 2**

Developing skills and knowledge

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.
LIBRARY PRIORITY 3

Working together

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 2018, we partnered with over 45 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 2018, we worked with the City and hosted the AKBLG Social as the opening ceremony for a conference for elected officials from the Kootenay Boundary region. This allowed us to showcase our library and show how libraries can be a valuable partner in municipal service delivery. Over 100 delegates attended the event.

A new partnership for the Fernie Heritage Library in 2018 was the Fernie Pride Society. We hosted several events in the Fernie Pride Festival including two programs at the library, a Drag Queen Storytime, and a Drag Queen Bingo for teens. Both were extremely well subscribed and brought new people into the library. In addition, we have worked with the Pride Society to revitalize our collection of library materials that are LGBTQ related.
LIBRARY PRIORITY 4

Enhancing governance

Our guiding principle of being “professional” relates to governance. Our strategic objectives one through three are about enhancing 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.

OPTIONAL SECTION: LIBRARIES IN ACTION – SUCCESS STORIES FROM BC’S PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Not for Kids Social

Who? A program for 19+ participants, in particular newcomers to the community.

What? A registration fair aimed at adults. A social night to highlight opportunities to get involved in the community. This was a partnership with the Fernie Chamber of Commerce’s Cultural Ambassador program.

Why? Because we recognized there was a need in the community.

When? We held it in the first week of November because we recognized by then most of the seasonal new residents would be in town. We held the event on a Wednesday night as it was a relatively free night in town.
By hosting the event on a Wednesday, we would assure that we would get a good turnout and that we could release our guests early! It was also the week after both job fairs in the community so we knew most young people would be in town. As well as newcomers to Fernie, we also had a large number of local residents attend, something we did not expect.

How? The library team put on the event in partnership with the Chamber. The Chamber covered the cost of catering. We were able to have our local brewery, the Fernie Brewing Company, attend a do a beer tasting. We had live music from the local Ukelele Society and we had library volunteers run a cash bar. Library staff hosted the event.

Outcomes:

We had 450 attendees
We had representation from 25 community groups
We had 28 new registrants for library cards
We accessed a huge number of new residents, many of which in the weeks following the event became library users.

Social media, over 2500 people liked our posts on the event and our posts were shared over 22 times!

SUMMARY

2018 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.

2019 brings new opportunities and we excited about all of our new plans. Next year’s report will showcase our new Maker Space, a tech-enabled space, a space that will offer a place of inspiration and innovation for the community. Our strategic vision is to be responsive and pioneering in the community, and this project, the creation of a collaborative technological learning and creative space, directly aligns with our mandate and strategic vision.