Introduction

LNG Canada announced a positive final investment decision in October of this year for its project in Kitimat which represents the largest energy investment ($40 billion) in Canadian history. Significant changes seemed to happen overnight. Apartment and home renters received renoviction notices and people looking for work travelled into town only to realize most hiring would not begin for another year - nor were there any affordable places to live. Housing prices shot through the roof as did rental rates. Amidst the flurry of activity (and some complaints) it appeared that the majority of Kitimat and First Nations Kitamaat Village residents were very happy and excited with the news.

With or without large projects happening in Kitimat, our local government continues to provide ample funding thus allowing us to meet the informational, educational and cultural needs of the residents of the community. Our strategic plan is consistently being met and includes collaborating with other libraries, developing partnerships and networks, and supporting life-long learning. We do all of this in a facility which we consider an architectural marvel complete with an eclectic collection, lovely furniture and furnishings, and a staff who prides itself on exceptional customer service.
Library Priority 1
Fostering equitable access to information and services

Public libraries are one of the world’s greatest common denominators. Our goal is to welcome everyone and to deliver programs and services that level the intellectual playing field for all.

- The Library provides free high-speed access as well as state-of-the-art computers for all users to reduce the risk of a digital divide. When doors are closed to the public, free Wifi is available within eight feet around the exterior perimeter of the Library. Free one-on-one as well as group computer instruction are available throughout the week. Just under 50 private tutorials and more than a dozen group tutorials were delivered in 2018 and included Ozobot training, 3D printing, and electronic devices instruction. The buzz around town is to come to the Library for any computer related issues because our techie can be counted on to fix or explain anything asked of him! We are constantly thanked for his free services.

- The Library is handicap accessible. Ample space for wheelchairs throughout the building, monitors for sight impaired, a collection for hearing impaired are all provided in a comfortable and welcoming setting. The Library is a single level building with no need for an elevator. All doors open electronically including the washroom. We have been told from wheelchair-bound guests that the Library is an easy place to maneuver.

- The Library provides services and information in both official languages

The Library collaborates with AFFNO each year to bring French language activities to the community. The Library also provides a generous collection of French material as well as bilingual reference services (English & French). Each year we collaborate on a special program or workshop at the Library and as well participate in the Franco Festival Sugar Shack festivities where approximately 150 turn out for brunch and music. The outcome is that the Library acts as one of the few go-to places when French language information is needed.
• We provide work experience for special needs students (one student at a time)

The Library provides work experience for those with special needs. Currently on staff is a high school student who files with a Community Development Center support worker. After two years of filing practice this individual passed the rigid filing requirements in 2018 and was hired to work a few hours per week at current Page rates. The Library is one of the few organizations in Kitimat where special needs’ volunteer experience is offered in a welcoming and patient surrounding.

**Library Priority 2**
**Developing skills and knowledge**

To meet our strategic plan goals of supporting life-long learning *our goal* is to offer a range of services and resources.

• The Summer Reading Club offers school-aged children a means of maintaining and building on reading skills throughout summer months.

The “Incredible” Summer Reading Club Students for 2018. (Home-made costume fun!)

It is also an excellent means for socializing with others their own age as well as a great opportunity to learn and play with young adults who become important mentors to them while school is out. In 2018 we hired three Club leaders using the Ministry’s literacy grant combined with Federal agency monies.

The Club is one of our favourite library programs, every year it proves to provide exceptional fun in a safe and cheerful environment. Delivered daily in 2018 to 70 registered children; 29 children was the highest daily attendance, with a median of 22 per
session. Additionally, 20 reading tutorials were conducted for nine children and two ESL adults over 20 days. Parents and children alike praise the program and its leaders.

- **We ensure on-going Board & staff training**

  It is imperative that staff and Board receive training each year to ensure that they remain current with the latest developments, skills, and new technologies. Off-sight training is also a wonderful way to network and share information, ideas and opinions. This year each staff member attended a conference and all Board members were invited to a TOPs training.

- **We provide literacy clubs for community members**

  Each month a dozen meet for lively Book Club discourse or Writers’ Group to share and polish their writing skills. These Clubs are very much appreciated, not only do people learn new skills, share wisdom and experiences but they are wonderful vehicles for socialization especially important in a small town setting. We are working towards delivering our first Writer-in-Residence program in 2019 which will provide an added means of enhancing creative writing.

**Library Priority 3**  
**Working together** - *Our goal* is to partner with the community, region and across the province

- LNG Canada donated $1,000 to the Kitimat Public Library to support its Books-for-Babies Program. Books are delivered through our MotherGoose Storytime Mondays as
well as through Northern Health Hospital (NHH). We are delighted that NHH continues to monitor its inventory and distribute material to babies coming in for vaccinations. This program has run for more than two decades. Parents have stated how much they appreciate receiving these books. The success of this year’s program is due to the strong and on-going alliance with Northern Health and LNG Canada.

- Regionally, the Library works alongside the North West Library Federation to offer joint programming and consortium purchasing. Our Library routinely shares technical computer expertise with member libraries.

- Our Library furnishes residents of Kitimat and Kitamaat Village and those with public library cards across the province with free library cards. To supplement reading and viewing materials provincial ILL and ILC programs provide the means, while at the same time saving coveted shelf space. There is an enormous financial savings from not having to duplicate titles owned by other libraries. We provide a part-time staff member to meet the interlibrary loans demands which we feel is a very fair and worthwhile trade-off.

**Library Priority 4**  
**Enhancing Governance**

*Our goal* is to align our energies with the Library’s mission statement

In order to assess Library priorities in Kitimat, the Library Board prepared a Strategic Plan (2018 – 2021). A public survey was conducted and results were studied and rolled into the overall list of wants and needs where justified. This plan will be reviewed in March/April 2019 in order to evaluate its progress but also because we have many new Board members who may not be familiar with it.

Monthly statistics are prepared each month and distributed to the Board to review and discuss at regular meetings.

*Our goal* is to ensure transparency of Board of Trustee governance

The public is encouraged to attend regular meetings of the Board which are advertised in print and through social media. Board meetings and policy documents are accessible online.

*Our goal* is to collaborate, communicate and problem solve with the community

The Library attends Interagency Meetings with representatives of many Kitimat organizations (upwards of 25 groups include the schoolboard, police, businesses, recreation, cultural, health, housing, council members, senior center, First Nations, etc.).
This is an excellent communications’ vehicle and is used to learn, to teach and to understand what is going on within Kitimat and the First Nations Kitamaat Village. This is also a wonderful way of promoting Library activity and becoming aware of how we can further assist members of the community.

CONCLUSION

With an influx of new people to Kitimat and Kitamaat Village due to the onset of the LNG project we may very likely see an increase in both membership and attendance rates. This may require us to expand our programming sessions and lengthen opening hours to the public. As we are a small staff of 4.5 full time adult employees and (the equivalent of) one full time high school student, this may find us struggling to balance regular workloads. The Board may feel the need to approach municipal funders for a budget increase to cover the cost of further employee hours. The municipality has been made aware of our concern and has let us know that they will meet our needs.

The Kitimat Public Library enjoys strong staff relations, loyal patrons, a great facility and strong and generous support from Mayor, Councilors and the District of Kitimat.

The Kitimat Public Library from the mezzanine