

Library Advisory Board Annual Report 2017

2016 was good year for the Mendocino County Library District. The system continues to thrive with stable revenue from Measure A. The 2016 revenue generated by Measure A was approximately \$1,740,000 compared with \$1,760,000 for 2015, and combined with our pro rata share of property tax we continue to fund the five branches and Bookmobile in a very adequate manner. We are making materials acquisitions to replace many of our outdated items. Our two million dollar reserve is adequate for contingences and a planned expansion of services into the north county. Coast Community Library and the Round Valley Library, previously known as library stations are now “branches” and all branch managers have had their status upgraded to “librarians.” The District is launching a new website. Four new hires were added to replace staff. In addition a few extra help staff were added. All branches and the Bookmobile have or will have garden seed libraries.

Media outlets commonly announce public events throughout the County and many of these events take place at our libraries. Library staff, community groups and motivated individuals provide and host activities such as children’s and teen events, arts and crafts, film nights, poetry and literary events, bridge groups, technology classes and knitting groups. Friends of the Library groups are a major source of programming, e.g. an ancestor identification class at the Willits Library.

Library Director Karen Horner has done an excellent job of coordinating library services and maintaining staff levels. She has a very committed and hardworking administrative staff. Liz Popowski, her Administrative Services Manager, Yoshiko Stephens, Administrative Assistant, and Barbara Chapman, Senior Library Technician, help ensure that library services are delivered in an efficient manner.

Despite some personnel turnover, the Library District continues to offer consistency in service and collection. We have many talented & committed staff throughout the system who keep the branches operating professionally & passionately. The LAB’s bylaws were approved. This seemingly mundane event took two years to accomplish.

BRANCH REPORTS SUMMARY

The Library in aggregate maintained its historic record of providing excellent children’s programming, with increased circulation, consistent Internet service and excellent patron service. All branches had displays commemorating the fifth anniversary of the passage of Measure A.

The following are branch highlights:

	2015	2016	Percentage change
New Patrons	3352	3314	-.1%
Program Attendance	17,470	25,557	+46%
Door Count	412,409	483,092	+17%
Checkouts	516,144	560,382	+9%

Ukiah: The branch received a donation of \$10,000 for hands-on projects that the Branch Manager is using to fund science, technology, engineering, art and math events (STEAM) for youngsters. Staff started the “1000 Books before Kindergarten” program. Twenty-four families accepted the challenge and a writing workshop for teens was held. Ukiah staff hosted Things That Fly workshop, a drop-in chat about books, art and writing, monthly poetry reading, and a drumming group. The library continues to host a First Friday Event which drew over 180 people in December. Locally made art quilts are often displayed on the upper walls of the library. The Ukiah branch has had issues concerning inappropriate use of the public bathroom necessitating a locked door policy. The key is obtainable at the counter which has helped remedy this problem. Currently, dedicated public parking is limited to the Main Street curb in front of the library making it difficult for elders, disabled people and families with young children to find convenient parking. A dialogue with the City of Ukiah is in process and our new Ukiah rep, Maureen Mulheren, a sitting City Councilmember, will be of assistance when the City finalizes its revamped downtown parking plan.

Fort Bragg: A new branch manager/librarian was hired in June 2016 and a new children's librarian will begin work in mid-February 2017. The young writer's program is ongoing featuring more publications in the spring 2017. Some additional activity highlights include: adult coloring, family crafts, open mic poetry and workshop, adult Zen Coloring, toddler and preschool bilingual story times, LEGO block party, computer assistance, tech help with Kindle, Hoopla and Overdrive, adult Trivia Challenge, and Club de la Lengua. Attendance is remarkable for all activities. Friends of the library purchased property adjacent to the existing library in November 2016 with the ultimate goal of expanding the existing library as well as providing off-street parking. The Friends fund-raising committee has developed a plan to begin the initial phase of expansion which consists of clearing the lot, locating an architect, pursuing grants and other means of raising funds. The Board of Supervisors could best assist this endeavor by maintaining continuous involvement with the LAB, being available for consultation and collaboration as the library expansion project moves forward.

Willits: A family-tree tutorial for researching ancestry, after-hours gaming for teens, an adult book club and Christmas programs were some highlights. Willits has been without a branch librarian since August and this has had some negative effects on staff. Ms. Horner and Ms. Popowski have filled in to ensure adequate coordination and oversight. In November, Ms. Horner interviewed five of the nine branch manager applicants and offered the job to three of them. All turned down the offer. A second round of interviews is in process with twelve applicants, five of whom were selected for interview. We expect to hire a Willits librarian by spring.

Coast Community: The County has an MOU with Coast Community Library FOL that requires them to pay for improvements and repairs. It was discovered that the building requires a seismic retrofit. An engineering firm prepared a retrofit plan and estimated the cost to be approximated \$400,000. The FOL raised the necessary funds in six months and one week. A bid is expected this week. It is hoped the work will be done in stages allowing for the library to remain open, perhaps with partial services for a few weeks beginning in the spring. Coast Community Library has the popular Great Courses lecture series which includes "Great Masters: Liszt - Life and

Music, Unexpected Economics, Native Peoples of North America, Art Across Ages. A local facilitator leads lively discussions after each lecture. Some recent events in their Sunday at the Library events have included a presentation by Redwood Coast Medical Services' Oscar Carbajal's presentation about behavioral health, another on the kelp die-off and its implications on sea life including abalone. Laura Cort spoke about marine mammal rescue. Volunteer librarian Marilyn Alderson has regular preschool readings and librarian Julia Larke conducts teen events. Ukulele classes and a knitters' group meet every Monday.

Round Valley: Native American Month was celebrated with a read-aloud for elementary school students. Their ongoing film series is a community favorite event in Covelo. A stargazing night was held in December. The library hosts an extensive DVD collection and has brought in many new patrons. Round Valley Public Library and Commons was the originator of our seed library catalog and now does a seed saving program. The library hosts a Breakfast Club for Teens, helping young people become more involved in the library. Their Commons area is the community venue for regular events.

Bookmobile: Library patrons in the remoter parts of the County report that they love the Bookmobile. The Bookmobile hosts summer reading programs and participates in the Blind Date with a Book Program in addition to having cultural displays like the other branches. Our mobile branch stops at 32 locations throughout the month and now has Internet connectivity in some locations including Anderson Valley, Country Manor, Laytonville, Percy, Mendocino, Three Rivers School and Albion which enables real-time connection with our Horizon service and uploading of information. However the Bookmobile staff has to use two completely different checkout systems and has other tech-related issues that have not been resolved. The bookmobile has an updated cookbook collection and a selection of jazz CDs.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LAB'S STRATEGIC PLAN

1. **BOS/LAB workshop.** We are tentatively scheduled to hold our joint workshop in July. The LAB respectfully requests a firm date.
2. **Resolution of issues raised by the Grand Jury Report.** The Board of Supervisors agreed to ask the State Attorney General for an opinion as to whether the Library Director's salary should be paid from the General Fund. A public records request indicates that no action has been taken. The LAB respectfully requests a copy of the Board of Supervisor's correspondence with the AG, internal Points and Authorities and other work relating to this issue so that we may resolve this matter in a timely matter.
3. **Expansion of library services to Laytonville.** The District is working with the Friends of the Long Valley Library to purchase a modular unit and situate it at the old Laytonville High School. The old Bookmobile, which was not usable as a library, was sold and the proceeds benefited the FOLVL. Ongoing book sales and community fundraising events will help further this project. By working closely with the County and the FOLVL we hope to open our newest library satellite this year.

4. **Development of a vision/mission for the 21st century.** In concert with library staff, the LAB is working to incorporate new media and technology into our current system.
5. **Library improvement fund.** The LAB recommends a specific line item to the Library's budget for future improvements to the branches, expansion of services and other needs.

Summary: The BOS is always welcome at LAB meetings. The next one will take place in Conference Room B on March 15th at 1:00. The LAB looks forward to our joint workshop to discuss our Strategic Plan. The LAB encourages your suggestions to help create a vision for our 21st century library system. We have great staff, dedicated FOL groups and public support. For many people in Mendocino County their community library is the single most important interface with county government.

Submitted by Marc Komer, Chair of the Mendocino County Library Advisory Board