

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Introduction

Fiscal Year 2018-2019 was good year for the Mendocino County Library District. The system continues to thrive with stable revenue from Measure A. The previous twelve months of revenue generated by Measure A was approximately \$1.89 million which represents 56.57% of total library revenue. We continue to fund the five branches and bookmobile in a very adequate manner. However, expenses exceeded revenue, which is cause for concern. Please see the attached chart of revenue and expense.

To ensure the continued fiscal health of the Library, the LAB created a Strategic Plan which you will find attached. The strategy is to 1) Renew Measure A in perpetuity and 2) Add an additional 1/8 of one cent percent tax in perpetuity. Please see the attached Strategic Plan.

Our \$1.5 million dollar reserve is adequate for contingencies. Some highlight from this reporting period: With financial and strategic planning by the Long Valley Friends of Library groups we plan to open our Laytonville Satellite Library in January 2020. The Coast Community FOL completed the seismic upgrade of the Coast Community Library. The Fort Bragg FOL purchased adjacent library property in Fort Bragg and is preparing to expand that branch.

The County Library System serves the entire county and for many residents this is the only direct service they receive from county government. Libraries are many things to many people. All services are free. It is a safe place for children and youth to enjoy after school and summer activities. Free Internet at the Library is a resource for employment, education, and housing opportunities. Unfortunately, the library is a default daycare center for those experiencing homelessness as noted in the reports from the Ukiah and Fort Bragg branches. The security guard at the Ukiah branch has had a positive effect, although some public health issues continue to exist. A guard may be needed at the Fort Bragg branch.

Library Director Karen Horner has done an excellent job of coordinating library services and maintaining staff morale. She has a very committed and hardworking administrative staff. Yoshiko Stephens, Barbara Chapman, and Nayo Sicard help ensure that library services and the County interface in an efficient manner. The administration has a much improved work environment at their new offices at 880 North Bush Street. Despite some personnel turnover, the Library District continues to offer consistency in service and collection. We have many talented and committed staff throughout the system who keep the branches operating in a professional, energetic and creative manner.

The five branches and the bookmobile remain very busy. During the fiscal 2018-19 period the combined branches had 574,245 checkouts, added 4431 new patrons, loaned 126,329 items, sent 189,412 items to Sonoma and Lake Counties, handled 150,000 requests for out of county items, added almost 30,000 new items to our collections and provided nearly a million on-line resource materials . For example, the Ukiah branch has held many activities during the reporting period.

Type of Program	Number of Programs	Number of Attendees
Children's program	260	6000
Adult program	152	4500
Teen program	103	804
Totals	525	11,304

Our library's community rooms provide free venues. They are popular and are often booked months in advance for a wide range of meetings

The transition to the Cultural Services Agency in early 2019 was smooth and the LAB is satisfied that library staff time and resources remain independent of the time spent on County Museum and Parks duties. The LAB asks for regular updates about the accounting and Ms. Horner has been forthcoming.

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Role of the Friends of the Library

All library branches have dedicated Friends of the Library groups. Many of these groups have raised large sums of money for the purpose of funding library services, programs, professional development opportunities for librarians, capital improvements, property for expansion, and the creation of new branches. Their unique contribution to the life and purpose of the libraries cannot be understated. Without them we would not have the Coast Community Library seismic retrofit, the planned expansion of the Fort Bragg branch, the considerable improvements to the Ukiah branch or the vision and implementation of a forthcoming Laytonville satellite. Please see the attached page for a summary of the monetary contributions of the Friends of the Library.

Emergency Center

The Library has not been asked nor directed to be an emergency center in the event of power outages. The LAB acknowledges the vital role libraries play in public safety and communication as demonstrated by their role in the 2017 Mendocino Complex Fires. The County may require the library to install a backup generator at one or more branches to enable service to continue if power is cut. As long as electrical power is functioning, Mendocino County libraries will function as an important venue for citizens in emergency situations. Without electrical power, the libraries will need to close as they will not have communication systems, light, air conditioning or in some cases plumbing. If the County wishes to use libraries as community gathering centers during power shutdowns, the County and/or utility company must be 100% responsible for the costs of purchasing and installation of generators.

Branch Reports

All branches in the County provided free and well-attended programs for all ages, including children's programs, teen activities, literacy classes, digital materials, on-line education, Internet access, seed libraries, film nights, book sales and in Ukiah, monthly First Fridays with live music, book sales and art exhibits.. Library cards now give free admission to the County Museum. Highlights of the branches are as follows:

Ukiah: The cosmetic upgrade of the facility was completed in March. New carpets, interior and exterior painting, a new state of the art circulation desk provide a clean and pleasant library environment enjoyed by patrons, employees and volunteers. Ukiah Valley Friends of the Library

hosted a Harry Potter *Dinner at Hogwarts* fundraiser in September 2018 at Barra Winery to fund the Adult Literacy Program. Over 200 people attended the dinner and an additional 200 arrived after dinner when the doors were opened for families with children. The event grossed over \$23,000, thanks in part to many local sponsorships. Mark your calendars for September 28th when the Ukiah Valley Friends of the Library will host the second Harry Potter *Dinner at Hogwarts* at Barra Winery. Funds from this event are designated for a STEM program for youth in the community (Science Technology Engineering & Math).

The Working Group to Improve the Ukiah Library was formed in 2018 to develop long-term planning for the Ukiah Library which was built in 1970. The goal is to raise funds for a needs assessment to determine how effectively the facility meets the needs of the current regional population it serves in the digital age. To date, \$10,000 has been committed for this purpose from: City of Ukiah (\$2500), Mendocino County Library (\$2500) and the Ukiah Valley Friends of the Library (\$5,000). Members of this committee include Supervisor John McCowen, Ukiah Mayor Maureen Mulheren, Michele Bisson Savoy, President, Ukiah Valley Friends of the Library and Lynn Zimmermann, 2nd District LAB representative.

Fort Bragg: This branch had over 8600 people attend nearly 560 programs ranging from reptile shows for kids to conservation talks for adults. The latter programs were part of a special intergenerational series called *Wild About*, featuring a different animal every month: Owls, Whales, Salmon, Raptors, Sea Turtles and efforts to protect these species. Adult crafts and book groups attracted new adults. The library continues to serve as a hub for adult literacy and our local Latinx Coalition with English and Spanish homework help, citizenship class and conversation practice. While the community supports the library financially, attendance is adversely affected by behavioral problems. Fort Bragg police logs show a high number of calls to the Fort Bragg Library with issues ranging from loitering, harassment and disorder. The County Standards of Behavior help to resolve issues, but the experience and safety of our patrons and staff suffer as a result of these disruptions.

Willits: During the past fiscal year, the Willits Library has had several changes in the number and configuration of staff. The former employee assigned as Children's Librarian became the archivist at the County Museum. A teen advisory committee has been formed and more teens are using the library. There is still an open position that could be assigned to Willits as needs are

identified. The library has also renewed its look and has changed the arrangement of furniture and materials. The Friends of the Willits Library provided funding for new furniture and rugs that helps to freshen and update the look of the library. A dedicated Young Adult area was created and plans are in place to increase outreach to youths and schools. The Willits Library is in-line for a refreshing similar to Ukiah's with new paint, carpet and repairs. A new roof is scheduled for this year. The Willits Library has started collaborative programs with the County Museum and hopes to do more.

Coast Community: Classes like ukulele, tai chi, and quilting labs take place throughout the year in our Community Room. Coast Community Library received a Book to Action grant for the bee-friendly garden. Sunday at the Library programs included: greywater- laundry to landscape, Mushrooms of the Redwood Coast, About Bees, Intertidal Marine Life, Status of Kelp Forests. Some of the Adult Ed Great Courses were: *Ancient Civilizations of North America*, *The Celtic World*, *How the Stock Market Works*. The branch had tables at the All Schools Health Fair and at an Earth Day event on climate change. For the NEA Big Read, author Jody Gehrman gave a teen writing program. The Library gave away books as treats! At the Universe of Stories Summer Reading kickoff, CCL had a library scavenger hunt with Scholastic books as prizes

Round Valley: Programs for young people at the branch ranged from reading programs for very young children (story time, and 1000 Books Before Kindergarten), events for school children e.g., Summer Reading Program, grade level library tours, International Game Day, music performances, and seasonal crafts. Adult programs offered this year include a Wildfire Preparedness Workshop Series, poetry readings, author talks, live music, quarterly free legal help, a new book festival, and a monthly film series from October through May. The biggest challenge at the Round Valley Public Library has been our public Wi-Fi. Starting in the fall of 2018, the branch experienced frequent internet disruptions that affected all aspects of the branch, including circulation, use of the database and catalog, and public computers and Wi-Fi. In March 2019, changes were made that substantially improved connectivity for all wired stations. Since then, the Round Valley Branch has experienced very few disruptions to the Internet connection to the public, catalog, and staff computers. However, the library Wi-Fi available to the public continues to be very slow, and often unusable. Reliable public Wi-Fi is an important part of the mission of the Friends of the Round Valley Public Library and we urge that this problem be remedied as soon as possible. Despite this lapse of service, the Round Valley Branch continues

to be a hub for the residents of Round Valley, providing quality programming for kids and adults while maintaining up-to-date collections of books and movies.

Bookmobile: The Bookmobile is the most visible part of the Mendocino Library. From Piercy to Gualala and almost everywhere in between, the Bookmobile is on the road bringing books, movies and periodicals to the farthest reaches of the county. This year brand new graphics - featuring views of our iconic trees, coast and vineyards - decorate the vehicle. There are now 34 venues serviced every two weeks, including three homes for seniors. The Bookmobile is also used to showcase the Library at several annual parades during the year. It is interesting to note that Bookmobile patrons are way above average users of materials borrowed from our partners in Sonoma and Lake Counties, totaling over 34% of all items checked out. The Bookmobile is also efficient, with the lowest ratio of staff hours divided by checkouts.

Laytonville: The Long Valley Friends of the Library was formed in 2015 for the purpose of bringing a County Public Library to Laytonville. Since that time, the Friends have raised \$50,000 toward a library building, opened a used bookstore, known as “The Book Room,” and provided many literacy and community services. The Friends are currently in negotiations with the Mendocino County Library to open a Satellite Branch in the downtown area. Ongoing activities include: providing free books to children; hosting field trips from the local schools; providing activities for the After-School Center; participating in Healthy Start’s Summer Program. The Book Room now includes: used bookstore with over 3,000 items, the Community Room, a cozy classroom sized venue for small meetings and community gatherings.

Summary

To date the Library has fulfilled its Measure A mandate to provide enhanced services to the people of Mendocino County. The LAB is committed to the continued fiscal health of the Library. The LAB is planning now for the renewal of Measure A although it does not expire until 2027. The LAB recognizes that future sustainability requires capital improvements at all branches and an expansion of services to underserved communities. To achieve this, the LAB is in the early planning phase of a second one-eighth cent sale tax voter-approved funding initiative. If passed, both initiatives will fund the Library in perpetuity. Our Strategic Plan is based upon passing both initiatives. We ask you, the Library Board of Directors, to adopt our plan.

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