

**Mesa County Libraries  
Mid-Year Report  
July 2013**



**Mesa County  
LIBRARIES**

**Dream it. Discover it. Do it.**

*The first half of 2013 has brought important transformations to Mesa County Libraries. Notably, the completion of the long-awaited Central Library Renovation and Expansion Project has opened a new chapter for the Library District and the people of Mesa County. Also, I announced my retirement in the spring, and the Library Board of Trustees embarked on a search for a new Director for the District, and have engaged Joseph Sanchez to lead Mesa County Libraries into the future. As a final highlight of the first half of 2013, the Library Board ratified a new three-year Strategic Plan prepared by the staff for Mesa County Libraries. In this report, readers will find details about the Central Library Project, an introduction to the new leadership of Joseph Sanchez, an overview of the Library's new Strategic Plan, and departmental and committee reports from every division of Mesa County Libraries.*

*It has been an honor to serve the people of Mesa County as Library Director for the past six years. Working with the Board of Trustees and the staff to improve the infrastructure and services of the Libraries, increasing usage and customer satisfaction, and working hard to make the organization a great place to work and to serve the public, has been gratifying and profound. I am grateful for the confidence of the Board and the opportunity to serve.*

*Eve Tallman  
Library Director*

## **The Central Library Project**

Mesa County Libraries held a well-attended Grand Reopening ceremony June 20, 2013, for the newly expanded and renovated Central Library in Grand Junction. The 45,000-square-foot building at Fifth and Grand contains 9,000 square feet of new indoor space, including an expansive new fiction room, a shaded outdoor patio, and a community room capable of holding as many as 230 people.

The project succeeded in bringing a significant amount of natural light into the building, and it also accomplished a 60 percent increase in the size of the Teen Area, the addition of six small-group study rooms, and a historically flavored reconstruction of the Regional History Room. A new “Creation Studio” accommodates library patrons who are involved in recording audio and video productions. The library’s new look includes a variety of artwork produced by local and regional artists.

The project was made possible in part due to the participation of the Downtown Development Authority, Mesa County, and the City of Grand Junction. The site plan creates a new urban front on Grand Avenue, and includes a pedestrian-oriented plaza and parking fields adjacent to the East and West entrances.

Colorado-based Barker Rinker Seacat Architecture designed the project, which cost \$7.1 million and was paid for with existing tax revenues and a \$1.25 million fundraising drive by the Mesa County Public Library Foundation. Shaw Construction of Grand Junction served as the General Contractor. Eighty-nine percent of the subcontractors and suppliers were based on the Western Slope. The building received a “three Green Globes” rating for energy efficiency and sustainability, which, according to the Colorado State Architect, is comparable to LEED Gold.

The relocation of the Central Library from its temporary home on First Street was a major undertaking of the staff. After months of planning the complex process, the Central Library closed May 31. June 1 was the first day to start moving. Team leader Shana Wade mapped out where each shelving unit was to be placed and where each of the collections were to be moved. Staff members were recruited to assist and others were assigned to assist at the branch libraries during the closure or to work on special projects. Tim Davis, Matt Alleman, Nancy MacDonald, Eve Tallman, Bob Kretschman, Shawna Bird, and Diana LaCount served as move team leaders and worked with Mesa Movers and Marmot to coordinate and plan the move. Everything was out of the temporary space in one week and the library opened on June 18.

## **Changing Leadership of Mesa County Libraries**

Library Director Eve Tallman announced her retirement, and the Library’s Board of Trustees hired Joseph Sanchez to take on the leadership of the District. Mr. Sanchez comes to Mesa County from the Denver area, where he directed the Red Rocks Community College Library and Learning Center for five years. He is a nationally-recognized leader in providing access to electronic content such as eBooks in public libraries, and enabling libraries to foster local “content creation” via recording studios and creative workshops for library users.

Tallman takes her leave after six years of service to the District. During her tenure, she facilitated the improvement of five of the District's eight libraries, including locations in Orchard Mesa, Fruita, Clifton, Palisade, and the Central Library in Grand Junction. Library visits and checkouts increased by forty percent during her years of service. The staff grew from 65 to 80 members, wireless computer access was initiated at all locations, and hours increased at most branches. The library district completed all of these accomplishments without raising taxes or incurring any public debt.

### **The Library's new Strategic Plan**

The strategic planning team formed in late 2012. In January, a community survey was conducted and included nine focus group meetings. The staff team met regularly to manage the planning process, gather and collate information, and distill feedback into functional goals and activities. During the annual district-wide staff development day employees participated in group discussions to give input and share their ideas. A final strategic plan was approved by the Library Board in June.

The Library's Mission Statement endures: "Mesa County Libraries provide information and enrichment to our community, and connection to the world." The organization values excellent customer service; open and respectful access to all; diversity, intellectual freedom, and personal privacy; collaboration with local agencies and organizations; effective and efficient stewardship of library resources; and staff for their initiative, flexibility, and teamwork.

Goal #1 – Mesa County Libraries provide safe and welcoming facilities.

Goal #2 – Patrons of Mesa County Libraries find, evaluate, use, and create information effectively.

Goal #3 – Mesa County Libraries support school readiness and continued educational success for youth.

Goal #4 – Mesa County Libraries support basic adult literacy, English language instruction, and preparation for U.S. Citizenship to ensure that Mesa County residents may fully participate in American life.

Goal #5 – Mesa County Libraries provide a generous variety of materials in physical and electronic formats for reading, viewing, and listening, and staff members assist with patron selections.

Goal #6 – Mesa County Libraries foster civic engagement, cultural awareness, strong enterprises, and community partnerships.

### **Financial Progress**

As of June 30, 2013 total operating expenditures were at 46.7% of budget with 50% of the year completed. 2013 operating expenditures have increased by \$9,849 or .37%, demonstrating conservative spending and continued fiscal responsibility. Additionally, 90.7 % of revenues have been collected year-to-date with only \$641,379 in remaining revenue to be collected for 2013.

### Highlights:

The Business Office now coordinates collection activity on billings for overdue accounts. Year-to-date, the Library collected a total of \$29,646, with June 2013 the biggest month at \$9,914.

The 2012 audit was successfully completed by July 1.

Laurie Cole, Finance Director, is preparing for amendments to the budget for 2013 that will concur with the 2014 budget process. The amendments are primarily associated with the Capital Project Budget related to construction costs.

The library's participation in a rebate-earning purchase card program netted a rebate check in the amount of \$17,428, received in April 2013.

### Technology

In March, the library received federal funding for a patron-based content creation studio. Using funds allocated from a competitive grant program by the Colorado State Library, the Library purchased an IMAC computer with audio and video production software and recording equipment.

As of the end of June, 68% of the technology budget was expended. Twenty percent of the Library's computer workstations were replaced. All staff computers were upgraded to Office 2013. One new self-check station and two new public catalog stations were added at the Central Library. Wireless was added to the Collbran and Gateway branch libraries. Collection HQ, a sophisticated acquisitions management software product, was purchased to better analyze our collections.

Shana Wade, Public Services Director, served on several committees of the Marmot Library Network, which provides information technology support to the District. These committees include: Marmot OPAC Task Force, chair; Marmot Access Services Committee; and the Marmot Communication Task Force. She also services on the KMRJ Rocky Mountain PBS Local Advisory Committee.

### Library Development

Lois Becker, the Library's Development Director, maintained her dedication to the Library Foundation's successful capital campaign to benefit the Central Library project.

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

Several sponsors donated funds to secure naming rights and recognition on the Donor Wall. To date, the capital campaign is fewer than \$10,000 shy of the \$1.25 million fundraising goal.

### Public Services

Excellent customer service is the top priority for the Central Library's materials handlers and they strive to create a satisfying experience for members of our community. Year-to-date statistics reflect an impressive level of activity that go far to dispel the myth that books and reading are in decline:

Central Circulation and Words on Wheels (Homebound) 349,160 items (53% of all activity for the District)

Courier bins received: all time record for one day (49)

New patrons registered 2,888

Laurie Gomez, Head of Public Services, is a member of the Latin Anglo Alliance, the Western Colorado Latino Chamber, and supervises a number of bi-lingual staff members.

### **Youth Services**

The disruption of the temporary location, combined with the closure of the library for the move for the first 20 days of June, reduced overall statistics for the Youth Services Department (as well as for most service departments across the organization). During this time, the staff made efforts to increase attention on the branches.

The annual Summer Reading Program continues to serve thousands of Mesa County residents. A summary will be provided in the library's annual report.

Highlights for the first half of 2013:

Summer Reading Kick Off parties, early literacy story times, puppet shows, bilingual story time, "Kids' Club" on D51 early release days, Junior Scientist Series, Teen Author Visit, Teen Tech Tuesdays, and Mindful Parenting

### **Collection Management Services**

The Library's book and media budget has been restored to pre-2012 levels. This allows for the purchase of a greater number of copies of bestsellers as well as to start the "Lucky Day" Collection. Lucky Day books are high-demand fiction titles and a few non-fiction titles that will be checked out on a seven-day loan, with no waiting list, no renewals and no holds.

The Library's Collection Management staff has added 14,854 items to the collection between January 1<sup>st</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. This compares with 14,040 items added to the collection January through June of 2012.

### **The Literacy Center**

As of June, 2013, 18.2% of The Literacy Center budget has been expended. Thirty-nine percent of The Literacy Collection budget has been spent. Upcoming expenses include Student Recognition Event, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Culture Fest.

The Literacy Center was awarded \$8,259 from United Way in March, 2013. As well, The Literacy Center received a grant in the amount of \$1,100 for Culture Fest from the Grand Junction Commission on Arts and Culture in April.

Karen Kllanxhja, Head of Literacy Services, was instrumental in formulating objectives regarding literacy and citizenship education for the Library's strategic plan. There are currently 344 students actively enrolled in classes, with individual tutors, or who are utilizing the Rosetta Stone language-learning software. There are 148 students "on hold" and another 45 waiting to be placed. During the reporting period, 30 classes were offered and 56 pairs of students and tutors met individually. The Literacy Center staff members collaborate with local and regional organizations serving immigrants and foreign-language speakers, including Colorado Mesa University, Mesa County Valley School District 51, HeadStart, and Western Colorado Community College. A tutor from The Literacy Center provided "Spanish Conversation and Cultural Nuances" to health care professionals at Community Hospital in February, March, and April.

## **Technology Services**

This new department, located at the Central Library, is comprised of existing staff members who were selected for their excellent customer service and technology skills. The team provides technology assistance to patrons, staffs the public computer service desk, operates the call center, and provides “roving” assistance throughout the building. Many of the staff members are bilingual.

Matt Alleman, Head of Technology Services, partook in the technology assessment that will be mandatory for all staff. Staff members assist other departments, including all branches and especially the operation of the Gateway branch; provide a bilingual story time; and two staff members who select and deliver Library materials through our Words on Wheels program

## **Information Services**

Though total library visits were down 18% and Central visits were down 32% due to the temporary location and closure for the move, Information Services sustained a high level of program attendance for adults, 2,180 attendees. Information Services staff initiated Tech Table Tuesdays to offer patrons easy walk-up assistance with their gadgets and downloading. In addition, the staff continues to work closely with the Business Incubator Center’s Leading Edge Classes.

In addition to maintaining high levels of service at library locations and regularly scheduled outreach, Information Services implemented several new classes including sessions on using Skype, eBay, and PC First Aid.

## **Public Information Department**

Publicity in the first half of 2013 centered largely on the closure of the Ashley building and the Grand Reopening of the Central Library at 5<sup>th</sup> and Grand. At the same time, our two-man team kept up with major demands, such as promoting One Book, One Mesa County and the Summer Reading Program.

Highlights:

Worked with the Grand Junction Rockies to promote the library through baseball games.

Began the process of producing a 30-second TV commercial promoting Mesa County Libraries that will run for the next 12 months on KKCO Channel 11.

Created and launched a new marketing framework for Mesa County Libraries. The framework seeks to explain to the public that library services are offered in a variety of ways: “On the Shelf, Online, and In Person.” Future information and promotional materials will be built around this framework, which lets the public know that Mesa County Libraries are “Books and so much more.”

The Marketing Coordinator worked hard on graphics, end-panel design, signage, and many other interior elements of the Central Library.

## **Branches**

Highlights:

The Collbran branch has a new branch manager, Amanda Sheley. After many years of excellent service, Sharon Jordan retired.

New hours in DeBeque are being well received from the community. A laptop computer for public use was issued to the branch.

The Palisade Branch patio was put to good use on several occasions: Soup day, the Honey Bee festival and Summer Reading kick-off.

The branches did a great job serving the Valley during the closure of the Central Library.

Clifton and Orchard Mesa saw a large increase in activity with hold pickups, patrons, and phone calls. Clifton usage in June was 18,923 (up 24%) and Orchard Mesa was 9688 (up 30%).

Clifton had about 3,000 more patrons than last June.

### **Volunteer Program**

During the first half of 2013, MCPLD recognized the exceptional service of its volunteers by instituting a service award program. During Volunteer Appreciation Week in April, volunteers with over 5, 10, 15 and 20 years of service were recognized at a luncheon. The volunteer with the most hours served during 2012 was also recognized.

A widespread media campaign to generate more Adult Literacy Center tutors was implemented early in the year. The community response was exceptional, adding over 30 new volunteer tutors and creating a backlog of applications we continue to process.

Community interest in volunteering at the Central Library has increased since the move to the new building. Demand now exceeds supply of volunteer positions available, which is prompting a focus on generating new volunteer opportunities for the remainder of the year.

### **Human Resource Management**

At midyear, 50% of the compensation budget had been expended. The wellness budget was at 56% due to the popularity of the fitness benefit. The library has paid no unemployment claims in 2013. The tuition reimbursement account is at 50%. Recruitment Expense is 70% expended to date, and this is expected to be over budget due to moving expenses for the new Director.

Highlights:

49% of eligible employees applied for STEP merit pay consideration. Thirty-two promotions were awarded, and all received a wage increase ranging from 1-3%.

In addition to the announcement of the Director's retirement and the hiring of the new Director, there were four new hires plus one temporary hire, five internal transfers or reclassifications, four resignations, and three retirements. For ten vacancy postings, the Library received 785 applications.

### **One Book, One Mesa County**

Peter Heller is the Colorado-based author of *The Dog Stars*, which was this spring's popular selection for this annual event involving a community-wide common reading. More than 650 people attended events, book signings and the author's reception. Six weeks of book discussions and a movie series concluded with the finale with Peter Heller on March 9 at the Avalon Theatre.

### **Green Team**

One goal of the Library District is to improve the environmental and economic sustainability of the organization. The Green Team is an employee committee dedicated to conserving resources and reducing our impact on the environment.

Team: Eve Tallman, Nancy MacDonald, Tim Davis, Diana LaCount, Ike Rakiiecki, David Goe, Rachel Hansen, Laurie Cole.

Highlights:

Central Library Project—Purchased recycling containers and bins for staff and patrons; reupholstered existing furniture; supported Green Globes Certification; facilitated the donation of bicycles racks for the new building from US Bank and The Bike Shop; and the team put together an Earth Day Library Resource Flyer.

### **Spanish Language Task Force**

Team members: Jennifer Murrell, Chris Flenniken, Dave Goe, Eusebia Garza, Laurie Gomez, Grace Herrerra, Karen Kllanxhja, Lisa Will, Gail Yerbic, Jennifer Murrell, and Charlie Blackmer. In an effort to get the word out to the Spanish-speaking community concerning our programs, databases, classes, materials and services via targeted marketing and merchandising, team members lent their voices to the Spanish language puppet show, translated it, and managed the puppets; translated information for the new library directory; distributed fliers and brochures; advertised in *La Voz* newspaper; attended Cinco de Mayo; represented the Library on the new Latino Chamber of Commerce, and educated staff about the Library's Spanish Language services.

### **Merchandising Committee**

The goal of the Merchandising Committee is to create more displays in general and to use displays to cross-promote library materials (books, dvds, music, audio).

Highlights:

Updated signage in branch locations; Wi-Fi signs were installed at Clifton and Orchard Mesa; designed and developed signage, graphics, and display space at the new Central Library.

### **Safety Committee**

In the first half of 2013, the Safety Committee advanced several on-going projects, and accomplished a number of tasks. Some of the issues addressed included:

The development of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program (WVPP) and formation of a Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT).

Hosted staff trainings on Distracted Driving and on What to Do If There Is an Active Shooter.

The Library has completed the third year of a 5-year study with Trotter Wellness and Pinnacle Assurance. Indicators are that health among staff is improving, and having a positive influence on accidents. Slips, trips and falls remain our most frequent accidents, but are being reduced in frequency and severity. This will assist in lowering Worker's Comp costs, the aim of the study.

### **Art Committee**

The committee is made up of staff members, Friends of the Library representatives, and one library patron. The main task for the committee was to select art for the Central Project. Over

70 regional artists submitted pieces for consideration. The committee selected 18 pieces to purchase. In addition, three large hanging bird kites were made for the Children's room, and kinetic sculptures were added to the new library plaza.

The new History Room window image, courtesy of the Museum of the West, portrays an early photograph of downtown Grand Junction.

David Goe designed three end panels from images purchased from photographers for the Children's room. He also designed two end panels for the Teen collection.

Mesa County Libraries and The Western Colorado Center for the Arts collaborated to present "Stranger Than Fiction, A Paradox in Landscape" for the Central Library's grand re-opening. The exhibit will hang through August, 2013.

### **Wellness Committee**

The first half of the year has been a success for the Wellness Committee. The results from *myHealthConnection* (the workplace wellness initiative that lowers the Library's health insurance premiums) demonstrate our staff's ability to make measured steps to improve their health all year long and not just in March during the screenings.

Wellness Activities:

Using pedometers, the staff "walked" to the Library of Congress and back, measuring progress over several weeks. 68 participants.

Offered an online Financial Fitness program to staff, designed to reduce personal stress.

Completed another fitness challenge with a "Walk to Cabo." 32 participants.

Sugar Shock! Health Challenge during month of April.