

## **2014 Annual Report – Mesa County Libraries**

### **Director**

In many ways, 2014 was transformational for the services of Mesa County Libraries. One of the most significant aspects of this transition was the official launch of the library's effort to preserve the unique and vanishing cultural assets of Mesa County. We are proud to present our community with the Veterans Remember project, which can be found on our website. Three veterans' histories have been completed, and we plan to add one video per month during 2015.

We also are working with local photographers and artists to develop a digital art gallery and photograph collection of local wildlife and points of geographic or historic interest. Our goal is to capture and preserve in photographs and video the stories and people that give Mesa County its unique and colorful identity. We are especially interested in ranching, homesteading, and other aspects of the western history of Mesa County. If you know of anyone who can help us tell these stories, please contact me or the staff at your local library location.

We have managed to begin producing this digital collection while continuing our core services and programs, which have continued to grow in popularity from year to year. Given the increasing popularity of our book and DVD collection, we are excited to transition our collection to RFID, a high-tech tracking service that will allow us to check out and check in multiple items at once. This technology speeds up the checkout process for patrons and will help us process and return materials to the shelves more quickly.

You may have noticed the glowing blue and green "book slot machines" at the Central and Clifton libraries. These self-checkout devices allow patrons to check out multiple items at once with a few simple clicks on the touch screens. We anticipate rolling these handy kiosks out to Fruita, Palisade, and Orchard Mesa in 2015 as well. As a result, we anticipate shifting our personnel resources to other high-value services like assisting patrons and reshelving in order to deliver better, faster, and more streamlined services to our patrons.

We would like to thank our community and patrons for their ongoing support of Mesa County Libraries. It is a pleasure to serve you.

### **Associate Director Report**

As library services expand, we continue to reach new audiences and see increased use in library resources. Over 50% of Mesa County residents have an active library card, currently there are 76,962 library card holders. We saw library visits increase by 4.5% in 2014 with a 12% increase in visits at the Central Library. Over 2,500 people visits one of locations on an average day. Just under 1.5 million items were circulated in 2014, this is an increase of 3.7%. Mesa County Libraries saw a huge increase in the number of people attending one of our many classes or programs in 2014, with a total programming attendance of 35,428 people. 2014 also marked the first year that use of our wireless internet service exceeded the number of signups for our public computer stations. The library offers computers and free wireless access at all eight of our locations.

Internally, 2014 was the year to focus on strengthening the organizational culture, highlighting professional development, and establishing efficient workflows, thus providing a strong foundation from which we can meet the current and future library needs of our community.

The year started with a technology voyage in which each employee was given \$50 to purchase some type of new technology that would challenge them and add to their technology toolbox. Employees were encouraged to share what they learned with co-workers either formally during staff meetings or informally. This created an environment of learning and sharing.

A new technology training program was launched in March. Twelve learning modules were developed, each focusing on a different set of technology skills ranging from basic to more advanced. Each module is self-paced and includes activities and assignments as well as a place to share thoughts on the module. The program met the

organizational goals of improving the technology skills of all staff members. It was well designed, thorough, and scaled to meet the needs of most staff members. Many staff members have commented on how much they learned; they liked the self-paced design and the shared learning of the message boards.

In August, we started offering the Library 101 class again. This is a one-day introductory class for new employees that covers library history, founding principles, state library law, policies, organizational structure, funding, supporting organizations, general library information, and team building. The class was held twice in 2014 and will be scheduled three to four times per year going forward. The class is a great way for employees to learn about the library and to make connections with co-workers that they don't usually work with on a regular basis.

Staff Development Day was held Nov. 11 while all library locations were closed. More than 85 staff members attended. The focus for the day was team building, communication, and fun. The day included a scavenger hunt, relay race, and team project. It's the one day a year that we can all spend together to get to know each other better, share information, generate new ideas, eat, and celebrate our accomplishments. Several employees commented that it was the best staff day ever.

Three new managers were brought on in 2014. This was a great opportunity to evaluate workflows and update procedures. The new managers brought new ideas and a fresh perspective on library operations and collaboration. The management team meets twice a month to update each other, share ideas, and discuss any problems of upcoming changes. This time was also used during the first half of the year for Joseph to present a graduate-style course on the Future of Libraries, which created a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities that face libraries today.

Overall the organizational culture has improved, staff members are engaged in their jobs and focused on serving our patrons, and managers are working together to meet the information, early learning, basic literacy, digital literacy, and cultural preservation needs of our community.

### **Finance Director Report**

The Business Office is tasked with the varied and comprehensive administrative duties for the Library District and the Foundation. Among the responsibilities of the dedicated and committed Business Office staff are these tasks, which they complete with a focus toward supporting the Library District staff and Foundation to best meet the needs of Mesa County residents:

- Accurate and timely issuance of all payroll and reimbursements for more than 90 staff members
- Process all expenditure requests for the District, including:
  - Purchase orders, Purchase cards, Accounts Payable, Liabilities, Staff benefits
- Manage incoming and outgoing mail
- Ensure timely and accurate reporting of the District's information to both internal and external users
- Reconcile, maintain, and ensure accuracy of the District's assets and liabilities to include:
  - Banking, Cash and receivables, Capital assets, Asset and liability balances
- Actively participation in grant reporting and annual audit, including preparation of the annual financial statements
- Compile, present and monitor the annual budget
- Maintain databases for the following:
  - Vendors, Staff members, Donors
- Prepare, record and maintain all comprehensive documentation of the district, including:
  - Memorandums of Understanding (MOU), Requests for Proposals and Qualifications (RFP and/or RFQ), Contracts and agreements, Insurance documentation and policies

As part of the Library District's planning processes, we have developed a long-range plan to project the preliminary needs of the Library District for a 10-year period. This plan undergoes constant revision to incorporate changes to revenues. These revenue changes will require adjusting operations or the timeline of

capital projects. The Library District can be somewhat flexible in adjusting the amounts used for capital expenditures according to projected revenues in order to best meet the needs of the public.

The Library District is heavily dependent on property tax revenues for both its operating and capital expenditures and is heavily impacted by decreased valuations in properties, both commercial and residential.

During the 2014 calendar year, the Library District was again faced with another year of decreased revenues. Due to management's continued diligence, the Library District was able to maintain great services. Library District's preliminary revenues and expenditures for the 2014 fiscal year. Total 2014 Revenue equal \$6,342,490 and Total 2014 Expenditures equal \$5,971,345.

During 2014, the Mesa County Public Library Foundation donors once again assisted the Library District with its challenge to meet the needs of residents with generous donations. These funds helped to offset the revenue loss and provided the much needed support in continued efforts to provide exceptional services to the citizens of Mesa County.

### **Human Resources Report**

One main change took place in the Human Resources Department in 2014 – 100% turnover of the Human Resources Department. The overall turnover rate for Mesa County Libraries was 31.32 %.

Barbara Burr departed in May after assisting with the recruitment of a new Human Resources manager, Cindy Farnsworth. Prior to Barbara's departure, she assisted the leadership team with the annual wage increase, discontinuation of the STEP Process, and routine employment changes. She left the department in a good position for review and updates.

Cindy was able to focus on the following items:

- a. Elimination of temporary staffing services / personnel (all personnel were hired as MCL employees)
- b. Transparency for staff regarding the hiring process
- c. Implementation of E-Verify
- d. Development of orientations for new hires and benefited staff
- e. Quality growth in documentation (i.e., performance improvement plans)
- f. Affordable Care Act measurement tracking
- g. Workers compensation / Focus on reduction in injuries (reducing Exmod)
- h. Coordination of HR Network with City / County / School District
- i. Recruitment of personnel / Review of interview systems - streamlining
- j. Gap Survey regarding performance evaluations
- k. Updated benefit options rolling into 2015 benefits

The key to 2014 Human Resources was the rebuilding of a solid foundation of relationships between the HR department and the staff, building trust and transparency in support of the vision of Mesa County Libraries.

### **Branches Report**

Mesa County Libraries has seven branch locations serving many communities in a large geographic area. Every location is unique in size, space, and programming. Branch staff are generalists, creating a one-stop-shopping experience for our patrons. Whether it's a tough reference question, children's programming, technology support, and building maintenance; we truly do it all at the branch level.

#### **Clifton Branch Library**

The Clifton Branch is the busiest branch library. After being in our strip-mall space for five years, we knocked out a wall and expanded into the space next to us in May. By adding 1,200 square feet, we greatly increased our children's area and rearranged the entire library. We now have a dedicated teen area, more comfortable seating, space for adult programming, and a staff room. Branch programming includes weekly story time and Kids Club, a twice-monthly Teen Time, adult book club, and technology sessions. The Head

of Branch Services, Wynell Webster, is also the branch manager. The Clifton Branch has one full-time staff person, six part-time staff, and several regular volunteers.

### **Collbran Branch Library**

The Collbran Branch is housed in the historic Stockmens Bank building on Main Street. The branch manager, Amanda Sheley, has begun many popular programs, including a weekly Kids' Club and monthly technology support sessions. In 2014, Amanda began digitizing a Living History series, originally recorded in the 1900's, transferring them from cassette tapes to MP3s. The tapes contain recordings of the elderly talking about ways of life during the early 1900s, including farming, running cattle, and schools. The files are to be used for research and are accessible from the school, library, or the Historical Society. Equipment for the project was purchased from the Collbran Friends of the Library group.

### **De Beque Branch Library**

The De Beque Branch is unique because it is in the De Beque school building. Monday through Thursday until 3 p.m., the library operates as the school library, which works well with the school's four-day week. It becomes the public library from 3 p.m.-7 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday, all day on Friday, and most of the day on Saturday. Branch Manager Barbara Cook and the school librarian have a close working relationship, sharing the entire library space and serving both academic and public needs. One highlight from 2014 was a forensic scientist from the Colorado Bureau of Investigation who presented a program on crime scene investigating. She did an excellent job explaining what she does, talking about how & why blood is analyzed, and answering many impressive questions. This program was for tweens/teens and reinforced the Summer Reading theme.

### **Fruita Branch Library**

The Fruita Branch is located in the Fruita Community Center. Even though wet swimsuits are not allowed in the library, it has proven to be a great partnership with the City of Fruita. In 2014, the children's area was updated to a more functional, pleasing area, with an additional table and seating for homework and socializing. The branch added a Middle School Book Club to the program lineup, complementing the ongoing Elementary Book Club. Branch Manager Giselle Smith, along with one full-time library assistant, four part-time assistants, and several volunteers, offer complete library services as well as an array of library programming. One special program last summer was the "Kids' Camera Club," facilitated by a community volunteer and the branch manager. The program ended with a photography show by all the participants. Cameras were purchased with a mini-grant from the Colorado State Library.

### **Gateway Branch Library**

The Gateway Branch is open Tuesdays 4-6 p.m. and Thursdays 11 a.m.-5 p.m. When not in Gateway, branch liaison Elise Forte spends her time at the Clifton Branch. The Gateway Branch shares a community building with the post office and the fire department. Strong collaboration with the school provides weekly trips for checking out items, crafts, and stories. Library patrons have access to public internet and printers. Collection rotation and items placed on hold are key for this small space. Elise and a small group of volunteers provide library services for the community.

### **Orchard Mesa Branch Library**

The Orchard Mesa Branch went through many changes mid-year. The library went to a Tuesday-Saturday schedule, a new branch manager came on board, and story time moved to Fridays. The branch manager, Andy Hamilton, hosted a meet-and-greet that drew good attendance and connected the community. Andy also offers monthly technology one-on-one sessions, and a part-time assistant, Janice, connects with children at story time. The branch has a very nice telescope available for checkout which was purchased with a State Library mini-grant.

### **Palisade Branch Library**

The Palisade Branch has seen increased use of the patio space. It took some time for the patrons to realize the patio was for them and that they could access the Wi-Fi from one of the many available tables and

chairs. The branch's large room serves the community by hosting the Palisade Chamber of Commerce, Palisade Art Lovers, the Palisade Historical Society, and a weekly knitters group. Connect for Health representatives used the library to assist patrons with health insurance enrollment. The Palisade Branch had a well-attended fairy house family craft event in August. Palisade has one full-time employee, Branch Manager Karen Maheux, and several volunteers.

### **Information Services Report**

From helping people through individualized appointments to partnering with organizations throughout Mesa County, Information Services connects people with the skills and resources they need to succeed. Our staff of librarians and paraprofessionals work to meet the information needs of adults in our community. We have not forgotten the traditional services our patrons expect from the library, though we are continually finding new ways to provide for the needs of our community. No question is too small to be given our full attention at the Reference desk; the librarians in Information Services dedicate an average of 10-15 hours each week at a service desk. In addition to the outreach, programming, classes, and individualized assistance for patrons that Information Services provides, we also provide Mesa County Libraries' staff with training through monthly classes and our Tech Competency program. Staff training ensures that patrons consistently receive the best service possible throughout the library district.

#### **Individualized Assistance**

Information Services had 375 Tech Table visitors in 2014. They conducted 258 Book-a-Librarian appointments at the Central Library. The 30-minute Book-a-Librarian appointments are an avenue for offering patrons individualized research assistance. The appointments also allow Information Services to meet the unique needs of our patrons that are not addressed by the classes we have scheduled. We have assisted patrons with a wide variety of questions ranging from genealogy research to help with basic website design.

#### **Classes, Programs, and Outreach**

Our department contributes to the economic development of Mesa County by helping individuals use technology and find information that increases their employability and contributes to the quality of life they enjoy in Mesa County. Information Services grew computer class attendance by 19.6% in 2014. The attendance for adult programs increased by 4.4%. We also increased awareness of library resources and supported the goals of other community businesses and nonprofit organizations by offering presentations and outreach throughout the community. Information Services represented the library at the Downtown Farmers' Market, Chautauqua, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce's Annual Business Showcase, and various other outreach events. We offered presentations for a number of community organizations including the Museum of Western Colorado, the Western Colorado Center for the Arts, and the Center for Independence. Information Services staff work with Colorado Humanities via the Colorado Book Awards, expanding our knowledge of regional authors, improving our abilities to help our patrons select from regional authors, and broadening our connections with the literary community. We also have staff representing the library as contributors to other organizations' newsletters, including the Museum of Western Colorado, and the Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers Newsletter, giving us an opportunity to expand the scope of our outreach.

#### **Mesa County Libraries Business Connect**

Supporting the growth and development of area businesses highlights our department's flexible approach to meeting the variety of our patrons' needs by offering assistance through multiple access points. In addition to offering carefully selected subscription databases, we offer individualized assistance, classes, and community partnerships that contribute to the success of our local businesses. In 2014, our library received funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services through a grant from the Colorado State Library. Past organizations received funding for their work related to assisting individual business owners, but our

program to expand our reach through partnerships with the Small Business Development Center and the Business Incubator Center was the first of its kind to receive LSTA funding in Colorado.

In addition to our ongoing Excel, Social Media, and Build a Free Website with Weebly classes that appeal to entrepreneurs and small business owners, we added a workshop at the Incubator to help patrons use three of our top business databases and to help them improve their understanding of the basics of social media and website design. We started a monthly walk-up table at the Incubator to make it convenient for entrepreneurs visiting the Incubator to get timely assistance. One of the priorities of our workshop and the walk-up assistance is to increase awareness of our subscription resources for business research. Mesa County Libraries Business Connect expanded in the fall of 2014 to offer a monthly walk-up opportunity at the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce.

## **Youth Services Report**

First, let me share a perspective of our library in general. Some of our residents use the library frequently, some occasionally, and some not at all. About one-half of Mesa County's population are library card holders. Despite individual usage, however, our existence is good for everyone in the county, because it contributes to a healthy, prospering community. Often, when unaccustomed residents find their way through the door, they share amazement with library staff at the value they experience.

Youth Services play an important role in this value. While overall library service includes all ages, service to youth is distinct in that it not only prepares and supports youth with their educational careers, our services also launch them toward embracing their lifelong library privilege.

A 2014 report about libraries from the Pew Research Center reports "the most highly engaged groups in our typology contained higher proportion of parents, students, and job seekers." (Find the Pew Research article "Younger Americans and Public Libraries" at [www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org).)

This national perspective holds true locally. The newcomers we see are typically young parents, navigating new responsibilities and prioritizing resources. Some are confident in their role, while others are not. Many parents of preschoolers do not have solid support systems, yet in the library they have a place to break isolation. Regardless of who they are, the reception they receive from us tells them that they are welcome, and our audience is growing. With an increase of only 11% in Youth Services programs offered last year, the overall attendance has increased by 29%.

**Preschool—We Teach:** When parents walk through the door with young children, we are sensitive to their needs. The basics are in place—changing table, no small objects laying around for swallowing, and interesting things to look at and do.

We understand that every child's preschool years are the precursor for learning to read. This is important because once they hit fourth grade, there is a pedagogical shift from learning to read to reading to learn. Incidentally, third-grade reading levels are used to predict incarceration and dropout rates.

Our job is enjoyable—and effective. The Every Child Ready to Read model informs decisions about programming, collection development, and environment. Its proven strategies of Talking, Singing, Reading, Writing, and Playing are essential early literacy skills.

Throughout the district, we host 11 story times per week incorporating best practices into each unique program. Puppet shows in 2014 drew in 4,842 people (the highest number to date). We promote free book giveaways such as One Book 4 Colorado and Imagination Library, and we are nearly ready to launch the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten initiative.

When children visit the library, we want them to have fun, learn, and read books. Ollie the Owl, the mascot for our new early learning brand, wants that too. The strong attendance at programs suggests that children

are having fun and learning, and the 4% increase in picture book circulation suggests that they are reading books.

Parents have fun and socialize, too. And while they are busy teaching their children the ways of the world—including when it's time to go—they may get a visit from the Abe the Ape puppet. When Abe says goodbye, it takes the sting out of having to leave, often quieting tears.

**School Age—We Support:** Then the kids reach school age (hopefully ready to learn). As teachers will attest, however, students vary on the learning continuum.

Some arrive at school not knowing how to turn the pages of a book. As they progress through the grades, reluctant readers and voracious readers represent the two extremes. We vary our service to meet these individual needs.

Colorado educational budget cuts over the last several years have dwindled the number of support staff and library personnel in schools. Some parents have taken up the slack by using the best available classroom—the public library. Expert staff members help with book selection, reading strategies, and encouragement.

Families are met with programs aimed at inspiring learning, engaging imaginations, and progressing reading abilities. Dog Ears, for example, is held each Wednesday where kids practice reading to registered therapy dogs. At Kids' Club, they get creative, and Lego Zone stretches their engineering skills. At Fruita's and Central's Book Clubs, kids read and reflect. And the Colorado Mesa University professors who host the Junior Scientist Program offer a lasting peak into higher education.

Helping kids find the books they want or need is an extremely rewarding part of librarianship. We use effective tools for selecting purchases, keep the shelves fresh and relevant through weeding, and create timely displays for browsing. Our online service improved in 2014 with an e-book browsing landing page called "The Reading Room" and new databases such as BookFlix and PebbleGo.

When kids reach the age of 11, they can visit the library without an adult, but they are still expected to stay in the children's center. It's a transitional year before they go to the next level ... the teen center.

**Teen—We Promote Ownership:** Graduating to "teen" status is a big deal in the library. Parents take a step back and trust that their teens will have positive mentoring and plenty to do while they explore their independence.

At this age, we want them to not only have the information they need, we want them to have a sense of place. They are often surrounded by like-minded peers in a safe environment with plenty of books at their fingertips. Circulation for this audience has increased over the past year by 16%.

After school, the Teen Center is extremely busy. Our 10-member Teen Advisory Group contributed ideas that helped bump teen program attendance. For example, Teen Book Club saw the largest attendance ever in 2014, and the Teen Art Wall has really grown in popularity. Also, for the first time, Mesa County teens will submit a video entry in the national Collaborative Summer Reading contest promoting our Summer Reading Program.

Along with consistent, regular use of the Teen Center, teen events such as the Fire Dancer performance, StarWars Reads Day, and Free Comic Book Day drew triple-digit numbers and appeared to be lively, social hotspots bringing together kids who may not have otherwise found each other.

Then our teens become adults and at some point are likely to become new parents themselves. And the circle continues.

Serving youth involves other important considerations. For example, owning a library card carries responsibility, and at times young patrons rack up fines but have limited means to pay. Beginning in 2014, the Read It Off program gives them a chance to form positive habits and get their library privileges back.

Once enrolled, they may check out one book at a time to read, and after each successful transaction, they earn \$5 off of their balance. More than 50 kids benefited from this program in 2014.

The Youth Services Department consists of six full-time staff and one half-time staff member, including four master's-degreed librarians. Creative and capable branch staff members also serve the youth in our district. Additionally, to provide the most benefit to our audiences, engaging community partners is essential. The co-hosted Symphony Storytime, one of many examples, offers a close-up experience with story and music. We blend library and symphony audiences to produce heightened awareness of each other's benefit to the community.

### **Literacy Services Report**

The Literacy Center's adult literacy program began in 1987 to address the needs of native English-speaking adults 16 years of age or older with low literacy skills (reading below a sixth-grade level) residing in Mesa County. Services provided were confidential one-on-one tutoring by trained volunteers. No fees were charged for the instruction or materials.

The definition of literacy has evolved since 1987 from "the ability to read, write, and compute" to include "the ability to use technology at a level that will enable an individual to reach their full potential as an employee and community member."

In Mesa County, the high school graduation rate is only 74.9%. In addition, the increasing immigrant population has contributed to a realignment of services provided. Today, services provided by the Literacy Center include a Life Skills-based curriculum, individual and small-group instruction in basic literacy, English and computer skills, computerized language learning, conversation groups, and U.S. citizenship preparation.

The Literacy Center would not be able to provide the services and programming without the time, energy, and dedication of its volunteers. During 2014, 98 volunteer tutors contributed 5,657 hours of instruction for 426 adult learners.

The Literacy Center collaborates with many agencies and organizations. Collaboration with School District 51 resulted in continuing English classes being given at Dual Immersion Academy for non-native English speaking parents. Classes were also given in basic computer skills and navigation of the Parent Vue program.

The Literacy Center along with The Latin Anglo Alliance, Colorado Mesa University, Western Colorado Latino Chamber of Commerce, The Hispanic Affairs Project, and Welcoming Colorado hosted Hispanic Heritage Month activities from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 at various venues throughout Mesa County. As part of Hispanic Heritage Month, Bin 707 Foodbar hosted "Sabor Latino" with 10% of all proceeds going to the Literacy Center.

The Literacy Center, a recipient of United Way funding, hosted the annual United Way Pacesetter kickoff for the 2015-2016 Campaign. An English language class of the Literacy Center is featured in the ad campaign.

In November, the Literacy Center presented Culture Fest, the annual event created to celebrate the diverse cultures of Mesa County. As part of First Friday, the Culture Fest Art Exhibition was unveiled at a reception on Friday, Nov. 7. Artwork, food, demonstrations, and information about the many countries represented was on display throughout the Central Library on Saturday, Nov. 8. Culture Fest was generously sponsored by The Grand Junction Commission on Arts and Culture, Friends of Mesa County Libraries, Welcoming Colorado, and the Hispanic Affairs Project. One hundred forty-five individuals made the event possible, and more than 1,600 people attended the two-day event.

The Colorado Association of Libraries awarded the Literacy Center the 2014 Jean Maio Award for Excellence in Adult Literacy at its annual conference. In addition to the recognition, the Literacy Center was presented with a check to assist in programming.

## **Technology Services Report**

2014 saw many changes in Technology Services. There were a couple of staffing changes with people taking other opportunities within the library, but that opened up space in our department for new faces ready to add their skill set to our group. The focus of our work and intent of our new projects became clearer as we transitioned Library Director Joseph Sanchez's digitization concept into a reality.

We serve a diverse population in regards to the technology skill level of our patrons. While some have been living with technology their whole lives, many are playing a perpetual game of catch-up. Unfortunately, technology advances faster than some of our patrons can adapt. They are still learning how to set up a Facebook page while others are trending toward a diversified social media presence with Twitter, Instagram, and Vine. Part of our department's purpose is to help fulfill goal number two of the library's strategic plan: "Patrons of Mesa County Libraries find, evaluate, use, and create information effectively."

We supervise the adult public computers so we are helping to work toward this goal every day. Simple technology questions often turn into impromptu lessons on how to create an email account, download an eBook, or fill out an online job application. By helping our patrons complete these tasks, we empower them to take another step the next day. Eventually these skills add up to allow a person to become self-sufficient and confident in navigating the online world.

Another facet of our department, and a fairly new concept for libraries in general, is the creation and cultivation of digital content for our patrons to consume. We like to ponder the question of how libraries can stay relevant in a society where our patrons are accustomed to an on-demand content delivery system and intelligent and polished media production. A new buzzword in the advertising world is hyperlocal, which means something that is from or focused on a small area, town, or region. While Amazon, Apple, and Spotify can cater to a national, and even global, audience, they can never compete with us in cultivating content from our community – our hyperlocal area. This advantage gives us the opportunity to create a collection unique to Mesa County and the Western Slope of Colorado. The question then becomes about how to leverage this advantage.

Digital content creation was an ambitious but worthy endeavor. All of our staff had a background in working with technology and computers in a library context, but not everyone had been exposed to media creation-specific hardware and software. The learning curve for much of what we use is fairly steep, but the desire to learn is a powerful ally. We didn't get to where we are overnight, and we still have a long way to go, but I'm constantly impressed with the progress we have made so far.

The content creation portion of our department can be divided into two sections. The first is video production, and the second is the digitization of physical objects. While we have plans to expand our production capabilities into audio and possibly 3D pursuits, the first two are our main focus for now. Videography can be an artistic and technological pursuit in and of itself, but we are looking for the story behind what we film to give it a lasting presence. We started the Veterans Remember project in 2014, which is an effort to collect video interviews of World War II veterans who live in Mesa County. The first few we completed were very well-received in the community, and we even had a showing with around 50 people attending the event. These videos, along with the others we have made so far, are uploaded to our YouTube channel for anyone to watch. So far we've had 1,300 views, which leaves us a lot of room to grow.

The Veterans Remembers project is the perfect example of the goal of our digitization efforts. The veterans we interview are from an aging generation that still has a lot to offer. By capturing their experiences, feelings, and thoughts on a war that changed the course of history, we are making sure their voices can be heard by future generations.

Our other big project of 2014 was digitizing the artwork of local artists. This process involves taking the physical paintings to our study room-turned-photography studio and taking high-resolution pictures that capture the texture, brush strokes, and color fidelity of the originals. The intent is to host these images on the library's website to create virtual galleries. Attached to the images will be pertinent metadata such as the title, medium,

size, creation date, and physical location of the piece. We found there was a lack of high-quality images that the artists could use for self-promotion, so that was a void we were happy to fill.

With these new directions and goals for the library, we decided it would be a good idea to immerse ourselves in technology culture. To that end we sent staff to attend the Consumer Electronic Show (CES) and the National Association of Broadcasters show (NAB). Both of these conventions are showcases for the latest advances in the world of technology. While not everything displayed at these events is relevant to us, the mindset of forward-thinking and anticipating future trends before they happen is a valuable lesson for our department to absorb. If we can stay ahead of the curve with new technology, then that can only help us better serve the community.

In the end, 2014 was a big year for our department because we finally took the step from planning projects to completing projects. We started creating real content that could be consumed by our patrons. Our other responsibilities will adapt and grow as they need to with the advancing evolution of consumer electronics, but our digitization efforts will allow us to create our own future and provide Mesa County with content that can be consumed by all audiences.

### **Public Services Report**

The Public Services department of Mesa County Libraries is a dynamic and multifaceted operation. This department is responsible for the circulation of the Central Library's physical materials, inventory, and patron library card registrations. In many ways, our department is the face of the library because our staff are often the first ones patrons see as they enter the library and we serve as the hub of circulation transactions.

In the Public Services department, we register patrons for library cards, check-in and out library materials, manage inventory lists, investigate missing media, issue and collect fines, place holds, operate a disc cleaning machine and manage reports to account for missing items from other libraries. We also process courier deliveries which contain holds from lending libraries. We set outgoing items in transit to borrowing libraries, answer patron phone calls, assist other branches in troubleshooting technical issues, and handle complaints and patron account issues. Our staff is a talented team of individuals who regularly balance several competing demands.

The Public Services department has experienced several changes over the past year. A change in leadership resulted in the interim management of Matt Alleman, the Head of Technology Services, followed by my own appointment. Matt implemented many great ideas, some of which we are still using. For instance, we have transitioned from using a schedule on paper to using Google calendars and Drive to create employee schedules. This feature allows employees instant access to their schedule, greater flexibility in altering documents and saves us 80% in paper every time we print a schedule since virtual copies are available instead.

We have added RFID tags to nearly every item in Mesa County, ensuring a greater level of security and a streamlined process of inventory management. The Public Services department received a new Words on Wheels (WoW) delivery vehicle, a Nissan Rogue, which has already improved the efficiency and safety of our delivery routes. A new disc cleaning machine was acquired in early 2014 to replace the defective one we had. We have also observed an increase in circulation transactions, totaling 822,202 circulation transactions in 2014; an increase of over 7% from 2013.

Ongoing training for all Public Services employees persists as we advance technologically and challenge ourselves to cultivate a stronger working knowledge of circulation procedures. Five new self-checkout stations were installed on January 7th and we have rearranged our department to better accommodate these advancements, as well as our volunteers and staff.

I am currently working with Wynell Webster, the Head of Branch Services, to maximize the efficiency of our procedures and research other business models to increase productivity and efficiency. I look forward to the coming year, to improving as a leader and to serving my employees, employers and our patrons. It is a challenging, yet very exciting time for the Public Services department.

## **Collection Management Report**

The Collection Management Department is responsible for four main tasks—acquisitions, cataloging, processing, and collection maintenance. Acquisitions involves budgeting, selecting, ordering, receiving, and paying for library materials, as well as maintaining relationships and agreements with vendors. Cataloging involves uploading vendor records, importing records from other sources, or creating original records. Processing involves creating artwork, labels, covers or cases for items to make them consistent with the collection and ready for circulation. Collection maintenance involves mending, maintaining our periodicals, running collection maintenance lists, branch visits, and weeding. Collection Management added more than 40,000 library items to our collection in 2014, and we maintain a collection of more than 260,000 items. The team had a management change in July and welcomed Betsey Dick as the Head of Collection Management. Our other staff include the Head of Collection Development, who oversees the adult collection, our Acquisitions Coordinator, and two part-time Library Assistants.

The Collection Management team saw several changes in 2014, beginning with the implementation of SkyRiver, a cataloging service provided by our Innovative ILS (Integrated Library System). SkyRiver gives our catalogers access to more than 50 million unique records, increases efficiency, includes a record requesting service, and allows us to share our work with other subscribers. A record describes the information about a library item, provides authority standards, makes our collection searchable, and provides discovery access. You are seeing a public view of a record when you look up an item in our online catalog.

In September, our team implemented another module of our ILS—an acquisitions module that is added onto our database and assists with acquisitions activities. The acquisitions module required that we transition to EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) ordering. This greatly reduces the amount of paperwork being generated and handled. Orders are submitted and confirmed electronically, and invoices are received and funds are encumbered electronically. The acquisitions module creates “on order” records that are visible in our online catalog as soon as an order is placed. This means patrons are able to view and place holds on items much sooner, providing better service. The acquisitions module also maintains the materials budget for the entire collection and provides accurate, current funds information for all selectors of library materials.

Starting in late September, we were heavily involved with RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) implementation. Collection Management was responsible for tagging all new materials, while simultaneously working with all vendors to arrange that Library materials arrive tagged. This involved changing our processing profiles, which dictate to our vendors how our materials should be handled. We made the biggest change to our adult fiction vendor, Ingram. These materials now arrive cataloged, which means they have barcodes and records in our database and arrive more fully processed. This allows us to place highly sought-after titles on the shelf faster.

Related to our RFID project, the Department was tasked with converting our TV series collection. We are combining several parts of one season back into one case. This involves recataloging, recasing, relabeling, and occasionally finding new covers for each set. We have been able to utilize volunteers for the project and hope to finish by mid-March 2015. We have received very positive feedback from staff, our consortia library staff, and patrons on this conversion. Multi-disc sets now loan for three weeks instead of one week.

Patron requests also underwent a transformation in 2014, becoming a function of our online catalog instead of an emailed form. Our Head of Collection Development began using this method in May, and we have since implemented its use for Interlibrary Loan requests and other selectors of library materials. This system allows patrons to view their Materials Requests and their status using their library card login, similar to system holds. We receive about 75 patron requests a week and order about half of those materials. Materials not purchased are often obtained through our Interlibrary Loan service.

Digital collections are a new venture for Mesa County Libraries. A committee formed in our local consortia, Marmot, in November. We have two staff on this committee, whose goal is to submit a grant application in June

2015 to secure funding for a regional, collaborative digital repository. In the meantime, our library has been digitizing artwork that we own, securing agreements with the artists, and we have successfully made records and images available in our online catalog. We are also purchasing collections of digital images from photographers for inclusion in our digital collections. There will be a much stronger emphasis on implementing digital collections in the coming year, and we're developing project management to build this new collection into our ongoing tasks.

### **Public Information Report**

The Mesa County Libraries Public Information Department is responsible for marketing and media relations for the library system.

The driving philosophy behind the Public Information Department's work is that accurate, timely information about library events and services should be easily accessible and understandable to library users, cardholders, and residents of Mesa County. To that end, the Public Information Department uses advertising, collateral materials (e.g., flyers, brochures), social media, the library's website, blogs, online calendars, free media, and other appropriate means to convey information about library events, services, and news.

Here is a roundup of Public Information Department activities in 2014:

- Publication of a weekly event-oriented ad in The Daily Sentinel's Out & About section and a monthly Spanish-language ad in the La Voz del Pueblo newspaper, as well as occasional ads as needed in other publications and on broadcast media in Mesa County.
- Regular television advertising exposure via spots on KKCO Channel 11 and Rocky Mountain PBS.
- Plan and host a regular monthly show on radio station KAFM about library events and services.
- Regular disbursement of press releases about upcoming library events; many releases attract further media attention in the form of preview reports or news coverage. The Public Information Department responds to an average of one to two media calls per week.
- Ongoing production of a full suite of flyers, posters, and other promotional materials for library events. The Public Information Department provided publicity for approximately 200 library events and services in 2014.
- Promotional materials of extraordinary quality are designed in-house by the Public Information Department for the library's three signature events: One Book, One Mesa County; the Summer Reading Program; and Culture Fest.
- Developed and launched a successful "Overdue for a Library Card?" campaign in late 2014 that included promotional stickers handed out to the community and an advertising effort to put a library card application in every Mesa County home as an insert in a popular phone book. As of early 2015, more than 65 new card applications had been received as a result of the phone book campaign.
- At Library Night at the GJ Rockies in late July, the library distributed almost 500 READ posters to the public featuring the team's mascot and the library logo. Another 100 posters were distributed to schools by the GJ Rockies and to Story Time attendees in the Central Library Children's Area. Game attendance was almost 2,000 people, who heard several promotional announcements about the library.
- The Public Information Department helped to organize, launch, and promote the Veterans Remember project, which interviews and records the memories of World War II veterans living in Mesa County and publishes the interviews as part of the library's digital video collection.