



# Western Counties Regional Library

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March 31, 2021

Alain Muise, CAO  
Municipality of Argyle  
27 Courthouse Road  
Tusket, NS B0W 3M0

Dear Alain Muise,

On April 1, 2021, Nova Scotia Public Libraries will enter year two of the new funding formula for public libraries. The provincial government and municipal units across the province have renewed their commitment to fund library service and some municipal units will be funding public libraries at the new funding level for a second year. It is still unclear at this time however, from a regional library standpoint, whether municipalities will be required to provide the increase in funding this year as prescribed by the new formula. It is for this reason that we write to you and your council, as you prepare your budgets for 2021-22, to ask that you consider funding libraries at the new funding rate as prescribed by the new funding formula for public libraries.

The new funding formula, when implemented for municipalities, will see municipal units in the tri-counties increase their funding to libraries (collectively) by 74,300. For the Municipality of Argyle, the new municipal unit contribution will be \$63,900, an increase of \$9,887.

Municipal funding to regional libraries for public library service has been stagnant for more than a decade. During this time, Western Counties Regional Library has worked diligently to streamline its operations and remove redundancies, all while improving services to library users across the region. Our priorities continue to be to provide full and equitable service to all while supporting our employees with living wages and benefits. We hope that your municipality considers budgeting the increase in library funding to help us achieve these goals.

To that, the Western Counties Regional Library Board requests that this matter be added on an agenda of Councils/ Committees of the Whole for review and consideration.

Please feel free to contact me should you want to discuss this request further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erin Comeau".

Erin Comeau, Executive Director

On behalf of Shaun Hatfield, Board Chair



# Some of the many reasons to support your local library

- Western Counties Regional Library operates 10 library branches in Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth counties, as well as an e-library service at [www.westerncounties.ca](http://www.westerncounties.ca).
- Literacy is a key determinant of health and well-being.
  - i. Good reading skills lead to better performance in school, more employment opportunities and a heightened enjoyment of life.
  - ii. The benefits include improved self-esteem, empowerment, creativity and an ability to better understand one's thoughts, feelings, and experiences.
  - iii. Our library branches offer this through its diverse and accessible collections including materials in multiple languages in print and audio formats.
- Public libraries are a selling point for a community looking to attract entrepreneurs and businesses to the region, much like recreational facilities and schools.
- The library delivers materials to local institutions such as day cares, schools and senior residences. It also provides services to persons with special needs and shut-ins.
- When not offering their own programming, most branches offer community space to local groups, and all branches act as distribution centres for government information and local organizations such as health care and cultural groups, and provide learning opportunities for children and their families through literacy-based programs.
- Our library branches are known as places of refuge for those seeking a safe, warm and welcoming environment where they can relax, socialize or embark on an intellectual adventure. The library provides these services – without discrimination – to all members of society.
- The library offers a wide range of technology to all age groups, providing entertainment and training to improve their skills and expose them to, and prepare them for the changing world around us.
- Every library branch offers free Wi-Fi and Internet access with WI-FI usage growing every year. This service is vital for students, individuals and families who cannot access these critical services otherwise. This factors in online learning, job searches and applications, and access to health care (such as registering for COVID-19 vaccination) and other services.



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# ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020

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## Regional Highlights

Western Counties Regional Library celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2019, marked by cake and refreshments on the actual anniversary date, Oct. 29, 2019, and year-long events such as library trivia, programs, and displays highlighting the past 50 years of service to Digby, Shelburne and Yarmouth counties.

Prior to COVID-19, library users who were unable to visit a library could receive materials in the mail. In addition, those who had difficulty reading regular print were connected to the CELA and NNELS digital services. Seniors living in residences, received regular deliveries of library materials. Several branches offered intergenerational story times where all ages could sing, read, play and socialize together.

Through a Seniors Digital Literacy Training grant, one-on-one training for basic computer skills were provided to older adults throughout the Tri-Counties. This improved participant's abilities to keep in touch with family and friends, use government websites and pursue their own interests using tablets, laptops and smart phones, as well as desktop computers.

Seniors and low-income earners were able to find assistance in filing their income taxes through a partnership with Canada Revenue Agency's Community Volunteer Income Tax Program.

The library celebrated National Canadian Film Day by screening several noteworthy films. Local artists and artisans continue to exhibit their work at the library and share their expertise in creating both functional and art pieces.

Teens met at the library to play board games and participate in after-school chess clubs in some branches.

Children participated in the annual TD Summer Reading Club to maintain their reading skills while out of the classroom. The 2019 theme featured STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) programs. This theme carried over into after-school science clubs, coding, and makerspace programs throughout the year.

As part of the Summer Reading Club, Mi'kmaw dancer and drummer Trevor Gould performed in Barrington, Shelburne and Digby and members of the Maritime Centre for African Dance performed in Digby and Weymouth.

### 2019-20 REGIONAL LIBRARY NUMBERS

#### **Activity**

Registered Members	12,382
New Registered Members	1,387
Library In-Person Visits	128,859
Library Virtual Visits	58,359
Information Questions	14,533
Summer Reading Club Participants	751
Digital Loans (Overdrive and RBdigital)	19,211

#### **Regional Stats**

Population Served	56,677 *
Public Access Computers	81
Library Branches	10
Number of Staff	49**

\* The population statistic is from the annual July census adjustments.

\*\* Includes full-time, part-time and casual staff.

# Branches at a Glance

## Barrington

Seniors and preschoolers shared a multi-generational story time experience, monthly, at Bay Side Home.

A book club, crafts, DIY and adult colouring programs and LEGO club are a strong part of the library's regular programming.

Children and teens learned cursive writing.

Solar Nova Scotia staff conducted a presentation on alternative energy sources.

SuperNOVA day camp, a partnership with Dalhousie University initiative, introduced fun science, technology, engineering and math activities and concepts to children.



A participant in the library's LEGO Club works on his tower on Feb. 8, 2020 at Barrington library.

### Outreach & Book Deposits:

Bay Side Home  
Evelyn Richardson Memorial Elementary  
Forest Ridge Academy



1,149 Members



305 Program Attendance



9,773 Visits



15,659 Items Borrowed



89 Summer Reading Club Participants



1,483 Computer Bookings



12,923 Wireless Connections



248 Community Room Bookings

## Clare

The library is an important venue for exhibitions of local artists' work.

The library introduced a seed exchange, supported by Meteghan Home Hardware.

In partnership with the Caisse populaire de Clare, the library held a series of 'Debt Smart' programs.

The library partnered with the Réseau Santé to offer health related programming on such topics as nutrition, canning and food security.

SuperNOVA program, a partnership with Dalhousie University initiative, introduced fun science, technology, engineering and math activities and concepts to children.



Staff turned the Clare library into a mini-putt golf course on June 15, 2019.



884 Members



2,060 Program Attendance



10,182 Visits



11,739 Items Borrowed



98 Summer Reading Club Participants



1,600 Computer Bookings



1,706 Wireless Connections



273 Community Room Bookings

### Outreach & Book Deposits:

Au Logis de Meteghan  
École Stella Maris  
Foyer Celeste  
Su Martha au Bord d'la Mer  
Notre Jardin d'Enfance

## Clark's Harbour

Hand Crafters and Adult Colouring clubs met regularly to share their creations and artistic expertise. A play group met regularly, offering stories, games and crafts.

In partnership with the King Street Family Resource Centre, a series of preschool programs enabled caregivers and children to mingle and learn.

Seasonal crafts and activities had little ones searching for Santa, painting with pudding, carving pumpkins, playing I Spy, and discovering and identifying objects in sensory bins.



Teens participate in a night of pumpkin carving at Clark's Harbour library.

	320 Members
	779 Program Attendance
	4,384 Visits
	3,140 Items Borrowed
	24 Summer Reading Club Participants
	423 Computer Bookings
	6,479 Wireless Connection
	N/A Community Room Bookings

## Digby

The branch was re-located to the information centre while it received a refresh. Fresh paint, new furnishings and a redesigned floor plan made the library more inviting and made practical use of library space when it re-opened in February.

The Maritime Centre for African Dance taught participants about African culture.

Seniors and low-income earners benefited from the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program.

Drop-in makerspace activities provided STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) learning opportunities.

Little ones and caregivers bonded through story times offering a reading, learning, and playing experience, including a monthly intergenerational event at Tideview Terrace.



Paint Nights such as this one on June 5, 2019 proved popular among adults at the Digby library.

	1,987 Members
	1,568 Program Attendance
	14,167 Visits
	23,543 Items Borrowed
	79 Summer Reading Club Participants
	1,586 Computer Bookings
	4,179 Wireless Connections
	63 Community Room Bookings

### Outreach & Book Deposits:

Digby Neck Consolidated School  
Digby Preschool Co-Op  
Tideview Terrace

## Lockeport

A chair yoga program, funded by a Wellness Grant from Nova Scotia Health Authority, kept older adults active.

Local photographer Gina Bond-Goyetche exhibited her work.

Authors Marsha Curry and Laurent d'Entremont did readings at the branch.

A library program introduced teens to the art of Mehndi (henna tattooing).

The library hosted music programs in partnership with Harmony Bazaar, a women's music festival.

The Lobster Loop Walk, part of the local lobster festival, finished at the library.

The library hosted the Town of Lockeport Easter egg hunt.

The library offered seasonal crafts, science experiments, Survivor and DIY programs.

The Alzheimer Society informed and engaged people in a discussion about this disease.



A wide range of ages found refuge at Lockeport library during Hurricane Dorian on Sept. 7, 2019.

### Outreach &

### Book Deposits:

MacLeod Surf Lodge Nursing Home  
Atlantic Heights Rest Home Ltd.  
The Fox and Hare Daycare  
Lockeport Area Preschool



402 Members



1,388 Program Attendance



6,026 Visits



8,500 Items Borrowed



53 Summer Reading Club Participants



938 Computer Bookings



2,749 Wireless Connections

## Pubnico

A Valentine's Day Tea for seniors provided older adults with an introduction to library services.

A book swap offered an opportunity to engage people in conversations about what they were reading.

The library revived a traditional holiday cookie decorating program, adding a delicious, festive air to the branch.

Library staff began book deposits at École Pubnico Ouest.



Pubnico's book swap created conversations around books.



387 Members



34 Program Attendance\*



792 Visits



3,492 Items Borrowed



13 Summer Reading Club Participants



98 Computer Bookings



2,258 Wireless Connections



67 Community Room Bookings

\*Four (4) months of programs.

### Outreach &

### Book Deposits:

École Pubnico Ouest  
Nakile Home for Special Care  
Pont du Marais

## Shelburne

The library coordinated a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program providing free income tax return assistance to seniors and low-income earners.

A SuperNOVA day camp, through a partnership with Dalhousie University, brought science-based activities to youth.

The library offered science, technology, engineering, arts and math learning through coding programs, science clubs, LEGO club and game days.

Residents at Roseway Manor enjoyed a monthly intergenerational story time.

Crafting clubs made good use of the program and community rooms and makerspace equipment.

Author Susan Cameron gave a reading at the library. A program on Gaelic songs introduced the music and culture to a wide range of ages.

The library held presentations on radon detection and Alzheimer's awareness.



Cape Breton singer, songwriter Robyn Carrigan, left, leads a Gaelic song program in celebration of Gaelic Nova Scotia Month in September 2019.

### Outreach &

### Book Deposits:

King Street Family Resource Centre  
Mary's Abide Awhile Home Limited  
Roseway Manor Inc.



1,429 Members

2,038 Program Attendance

12,856 Visits

17,864 Items Borrowed

119 Summer Reading Club Participants

1,995 Computer Bookings

6,063 Wireless Connections

842 Community Room Bookings

## Westport

People learned bridge and helped each other enjoy the game through a newly formed club.

A fibre arts group and book club met regularly at the branch and continued to be popular.

Family enjoyed seasonal programming resulting from the library's partnership with The Family Centre, Digby Site.



The Fibre Group has been a mainstay program at Westport library.



171 Members\*

91 Program Attendance\*

175 Visits\*

1,128 Items Borrowed\*

0 Summer Reading Club Participants\*

51 Computer Bookings\*

2,557 Wireless Connections

\*Branch closed May to July 2019.

### Outreach &

### Book Deposits:

Individual seniors



## Weymouth

Several artists displayed their work. The installation of slat display walls enhanced the branch's ability to host exhibits.

Laughter and tears were shared as author Lesley Crewe read from her book *Are You Kidding Me?!*

The library hosted an evening of card games to celebrate Senior's Week.

Programming included learning about bees, a nature scavenger hunt, Pokemon card trading and flower arranging

The Maritime Centre for African Dance enthralled participants with a "moving" experience about African culture and dance.



There were plenty of smiles at Weymouth library's Christmas tea.

### Outreach &

### Book Deposits:

La Petite Academie

Weymouth Consolidated School Pre-Primary

Weymouth Consolidated School

Maison Jerome



990 Members



953 Program Attendance



11,708 Visits



13,265 Items Borrowed



87 Summer Reading Club Participants



1,707 Computer Bookings



7,698 Wireless Connections



324 Community Room Bookings

## Yarmouth

The library coordinated a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program offering free income tax return assistance to seniors and low-income earners.

Mid-Week Break program hosted speakers on topics such as travel; African heritage; Alzheimer's awareness; birding; and lichen.

ParticipAction chair yoga had seniors moving and keeping fit.

The branch continued to partner with Toastmasters, developing public speaking, communication and leadership skills.

Time for Tots had little ones and their caregivers enjoying stories, crafts and games while learning new things and sharing new experiences.

A special program with Ron Surette of Kespu'kwitk Métis Council was part of a National Indigenous Peoples Day celebration on June 21, 2019.

The library offered a wide range of programs for children, including LEGO creations, Connect games, Bloxels, Ollies and Makey-Makey in addition to seasonal crafts.



Things were interactive as library clerk Yvette Frost reads a story during Time for Tots at Yarmouth library.



4,529 Members



2,231 Program Attendance



58,796 Visits



55,041 Items Borrowed



189 Summer Reading Club Participants



9,275 Computer Bookings



12,541 Wireless Connections



274 Community Room Bookings

### Outreach &

### Book Deposits:

12 local seniors residences

Seniors Expo

# **LIBRARY SUPPORT**

Western Counties Regional Library continued to receive strong support and generous sponsorships and donations from many individuals, organizations and businesses. The library is grateful to all those helping to make the library and community a better place. Regional media outlets continue to provide invaluable airtime and newspaper space, promoting library programs, events and news.

The library's third Dining Among the Stacks in support of the Literacy Legacy Fund was held on Nov. 2. The dinner raised over \$11,000 and pushed the fund over the \$100,000 mark. Public awareness of the fund continues to grow with more donations being directed to the fund.

Management prepared for the launch of the 2020 Adopt-A-Book campaign, the library's largest fundraiser, in late 2019 and early 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the postponement of the campaign.

## **REGIONAL LIBRARY FINANCES**

Expenditures			Revenues		
	2019-2020	2018-2019		2019-2020	2018-2019
Salaries and Benefits	\$1,100,245	\$1,185,637	Province of Nova Scotia	\$1,172,967	\$1,120,300
Library Materials	\$ 182,045	\$ 193,977	Municipalities	\$ 373,500	\$ 373,500
<u>Other Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 352,672</u>	<u>\$ 289,479</u>	<u>Other Revenues</u>	<u>\$ 88,495</u>	<u>\$ 175,293</u>
Total Expenditures	\$1,634,962	\$1,669,093	Total Revenues	\$1,634,962	\$1,669,093



Participants conduct a pressure test as part of Dalhousie University's SuperNOVA Camp at McKay Memorial Library in Shelburne June 4 and 5, 2019.



Mufaro Chakabuda of Maritime Centre for African Dance leads participants in a dance at Weymouth library in July 2019.



There is nothing like being able to eat your paint during Pudding Painting at Clark's Harbour Library on Aug. 16, 2019.



Staff toured library branches along the south shore during the September 2019 in-service, including a stop at Lockeport library.