

# Red Deer Library Council Annual Report 2005-2006

A partnership of:

Red Deer Public Library

Red Deer College

The City of Red Deer



December 2006

## Introduction

In 2005-06 the partnership between the City of Red Deer, Red Deer College, and Red Deer Public Library continued to offer services and resources to all Red Deer residents in three library facilities: the Dawe and Downtown branches of Red Deer Public Library (RDPL) and the Library Information Common (LIC) at Red Deer College. The management and staff of both libraries promoted the benefits of the partnership to their library users, which ensured the continued success of this partnership in meeting the information needs of the citizens of Red Deer.

Discussions during the year identified a need to market the partnership in a variety of ways to ensure that all Red Deer residents are aware of it and the ways in which they can benefit from it. As we look ahead to 2006-07, one of the priorities of the Library Council is to implement an extensive marketing initiative. All libraries continue to offer complementary resources and services, with the inclusion of the Literacy Program at the RDPL's Dawe branch, and events and exhibits at RDPL's main branch and RDC's Library Information Common.

## Members

### **From Red Deer College:**

Alice McNair, Manager, Division of Learning Resources  
Maureen Toews, Library Team Leader  
Greg Joice, Student

### **From the City of Red Deer:**

Colleen Jensen, Community Services Director

### **From Red Deer Public Library:**

Suzanne Alexander-Smith, Board Member  
Dean Frey, Director

## Marketing Highlights

An important focus of the Library Council partnership is promoting the libraries within the community and bringing the community into the libraries. As such, here are marketing highlights from the two libraries.

Red Deer Public Library opened “the mezz,” their new teen space, in early 2005, and was the recipient of the 2005 Canadian Library Association/Information Today Award for Innovative Technology.

In November 2005, Red Deer Public Library launched their Public Art Lending Program. One of a very few such programs in North America, this initiative provides opportunities for borrowers to take home unique pieces of art, while supporting the many artists in the community by exposing their work to the public and by cultivating an appreciation for visual art in the community. The Library's Art Lending Program grew throughout 2006, with the addition of new works by Central Alberta artists. A partnership with the Red Deer Regional Hospital made 50 works available to patients staying for longer terms in the hospital.

Meanwhile, Red Deer College Library continued to build on their successes of previous years, keeping up the college-wide marketing and the library-specific marketing. One new way to reach the internal student audience was through the introduction of “previews.” Similar to the previews shown at movie theatres, they introduced a preview to be shown in the Library Instruction Lab prior to classes taught by the librarians. A looped PowerPoint show was developed and changed throughout the year, highlighting library events, library products, and library services. The feedback from students has been positive.

External marketing ventures focussed on local print media. A relationship was developed with Red Deer Advocate reporters and photographers, resulting in greatly increased coverage of Library events and art exhibitions. The Library continued to receive coverage in other print media sources, as well as from local radio and television media. This increased media coverage was successful in raising community awareness of the Library.

The Red Deer College Library Events Committee created a new speaker series, called *Homegrown*, in which the Library acts as a bridge between the College faculty and the wider community. The Library invited faculty to present on a topic of their choice, and took care of local arrangements and publicity, including hosting the events in the Library. Two *Homegrown* events were offered in the winter 2006 term, both of them highly successful, especially with the wider community. This series will continue for 2006-2007.

The College Library participated on a 4-institution panel at the annual Canadian Library Association conference. The topic was “Marketing Your College Library: the Centre of Your Community.” Since it is not common for an academic library to market events and programs, Red Deer College Library has been recognized as a leader with its successful marketing initiatives. Over 60 conference attendees took in the panel presentations, and the session was very well-received.

## Red Deer Urban Community Access Program (CAP) Network

Both Red Deer Public Library branches and Red Deer College Library are leaders in Urban CAP, a program originally funded by Industry Canada to provide public Internet access. The 200 computers available at the three libraries dwarf the total of the other 20 sites (mainly smaller agencies) combined. The libraries provide quality as well as quantity, with the highest level of support available in basic computer literacy as well as more advanced research using online resources. Internet access is a value added service involving customized support in finding and evaluating appropriate information sources.

## **Partnerships**

The Library Council partners are involved in many additional partnerships which add value to the services and resources available to Red Deer residents. As members of The Alberta Library, both libraries are able to provide greater access to resources within the community and the province. The Lois Hole Campus Alberta Digital Library initiative will benefit all library users by providing expanded access to digital resources. Resources will become available beginning in January 2007. As gathering places, each library is able to contribute to the educational and cultural fabric of the city in partnership with many community stakeholders.

## **Measures of Use**

There are a number of traditional measures of use for libraries. The most common measure is how many people visit the libraries each year. With our evolving service model, which is seeing more resources move from the physical to the virtual world, this number no longer accurately reflects the work of our libraries. We must combine the number of physical visits with the number of virtual visits to gain an appreciation of the value of the libraries to the community. From July 2005 to June 2006, the three libraries (RDPL – Downtown and Dawe branches; RDC Library) were visited 1,145,781 times in person, and 624,949 times virtually. This means that the three library locations have received over 1.7 million visits during the year. That's like every citizen of Red Deer visiting a library, physically or virtually, 21 times during that year.

Since marketing and events are such a large part of our outreach to the community, that is another measure of our success. During this time period, the three libraries held 583 events, with an attendance of 23,871 people. On average, each event attracted 41 members of the public.

Another relevant measure of use is circulation of our collection. During the reporting year, the three libraries circulated 724,749 items to the public, or about 9 items for every person in Red Deer.