

## **Royal Society of Canada**

The public library sector is aware of the need to expand both an increasing digital presence and print services to satisfy demands across the province.

Each of the 10 agencies has a varied service level approach, depending on individual budget and staffing capacity strengths, abilities and limitations. The detail is much too large in scope to identify given the time constraints and I cannot give specifics for each agency's plans.

### **1. Public Library response to technological advances.**

Over the previous decades, a commonly used public library phrase was "adapt or die" with reference to the digital revolution of the mid-80's and subsequent technological advances. Public Libraries in Saskatchewan have adapted with varying degrees of success, however many agencies have also been limited by decades of inadequate funding to maintain existing levels, while striving to keep up. Saskatchewan Regional libraries aspire to spend \$1/per capita on digital materials purchases to build embryonic collections like DVD's, plus ongoing services such as the MDLP databases and growing subscriptions such as eBooks, through Library2Go (Overdrive). The initiation and implementation of SILS, (Saskatchewan Information and Library Services, inc.) has made a huge impact of the ability of public libraries to offer seamless customer service. Initial satisfaction rates on SILS policies and services are 95%. I trust that you should receive specific information on this elaborate unique Canadian service elsewhere.

It appears that the Royal Commission has solicited input from the MLB, plus each agency in addition and specifically also requested Saskatchewan information on services to First Nation and Metis communities, which is best answered at the agency level.

### **2. Service to Metis and First Nations communities.**

i. Public Libraries have participated in a series of four Round Dances, in Saskatoon, SouthEast and Regina, concluding in 2011 at Wapiti in Prince Albert. The goals strengthened respect and protocol, featuring library services and opening up community dialogue with elders, First Nations and Metis attendees with Library trustees and workers.

ii. Wapiti has maintained two library service agreements with James Smith First Nation, Sturgeon Lake First Nation for branch services over many years.

iii. The Wapiti Regional Board has maintained an Executive position for Metis and First Nations communities for the last decade or longer. It is currently filled by a Metis Female Elder.

iv. Wapiti Regional Office has a professional librarian designated to coordinate Metis and First Nations community needs, programming and awareness, as part of the duties.

In 2010 and '11, a professional First Nation's librarian was employed to recommend and update relevant aboriginal content bibliographies and eliminate stereotypical materials from purchases.

v. This position also attends regular meetings of the Committee on Aboriginal Library Services (CALs), plus Library Services to Saskatchewan Aboriginal People, (LSSAP). Programs such as the annual province wide Aboriginal Story-telling month, plus displays and library staff attendance at Metis 'Back-to-Batoche' celebrations in 2013, are facilitated by the LSSAP committee.

vi. Aboriginal employment by Wapiti and John M. Cuelenaere Libraries are a goal in trying to achieve workplace diversity in hiring and grant applications.

vii. The First Nations and Metis population of Wapiti, including the city of Prince Albert, is estimated at >25% of the 123,000 residents.

viii. What more needs to be planned by Wapiti to serve Metis and First Nations communities? in areas of:

- Continuous feedback and needs assessment,
- Additional branch libraries on reserves, as requested,
- First Nations library boards, or support groups, need to be established and strengthened,
- Collection building more suited to needs-based demands,
- Having funding available for a base collection ready for one or more additional First Nations branches,
- Literacy needs assessments,

- Digital literacy needs assessment,
- Regular communication channels, respecting self-government and protocol, need to be enhanced or established such as Facebook for programming, promotion and library services with Metis locals and First Nations,
- Lack of Capacity for Assessment of Metis and First Nations student achievement and engagement,
- Research into successful international jurisdictional or parallel models of indigenous centers of excellence needs to be assessed.

Submitted by

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1. What is the nature and make-up of your organization?

**Wapiti Regional Library is comprised of 116 municipal members, rural municipalities, towns, cities and villages, plus 17 First Nations. We are governed by a Regional Board through an Executive of 12 elected trustees.**

2. Does your organization provide services: (a) directly to Users? Or, (b) to members who make-up the organization?

**The Region, the first established 63 years ago, services 45 local branch libraries, serving 123,350 residents.**

3. In terms of Question 2, describe the services provided directly to Users, and if they are consortial in nature please describe the mechanisms in place to define, refine and measure the impact of the services, particularly as they relate to Canadians.

**Wapiti Regional Library is an agency level member of SILS consortium, a province wide common library user experience database integrating all 10 public library agencies collections, of over 4 million items.**

4. Would Canadians know of, or understand, the contribution you make to library/archival service in Canada?

**Not to a satisfactory degree due to cuts, we now lack Communications, Promotions staffing and Budget funding.**

5. What inhibits you from providing services that ultimately would improve library/archive services to Canadians?

**a. Chronic inadequate provincial funding for professional staffing positions and resultant inadequate compensation levels. Senior management positions were eliminated or reduced and compensation levels were 40% behind other parallel positions researched in 2009.**

**b. Government funding levels to Regional Offices, of zero percent in 3 of the last 7 annual provincial budgets, culminating in 40% behind inflation rates over past two decades. This severely restricts the ability to keep up with current technological adaptation and ventures in digital live streaming content, digital magazine services plus community library contact, involvement**

**c. Inability to attract, train and retain senior experienced professionals to smaller rural cities in Regional Libraries.**

**d. Inability to plan for succession management, with older senior management facing retirement.**

**e. Lack of professional capacity to assess needs for Literacy's many challenges early, adult, digital, Aboriginal, New Canadians,**

6. What do you see as the challenges for libraries and archives in the forthcoming years?  
**A sustainable long term Library plan for 3 -5 years, for provincial government and municipalities to ensure stability and growth in a prosperous provincial economy.**