

SUMMER 2009 MLA RECEPTION EVENT SUMMARIES

NORTH COAST LIBRARY FEDERATION MLA RECEPTION – TERRACE, JUNE 23



*From left to right: Karen Filipkowski (NCLF Coordinator),
MLA Robin Austin (Skeena Riding), MLA Gary Coons
(North Coast) and MLA Doug Donaldson (Stikine)*

Event Summary

THE NORTH COAST LIBRARY FEDERATION hosted an MLA Reception at the Terrace Public Library on June 23rd. Three MLAs from our region were able to attend: MLA Gary Coons – North Coast, MLA Robin Austin – Skeena, and Doug Donaldson – Stikine.

Brief speeches were delivered by North Coast Library Federation Trustee Boyd Brown, Terrace Deputy Mayor, Carol Leclerc, and by the Terrace Literacy Coordinator Rosemary Craig. Each speaker spoke about the programs libraries are able to deliver with provincial funding and how these programs impact our communities. Each MLA was then presented with a North Coast Library Federation book bag and book.

After speeches and the presentation of gifts, the MLAs and others in attendance were invited to view displays on Summer Reading Club, Books for Babies, and the North Coast Library Federation. In addition to the displays, a computer lab was set up so that the virtual reference program, Askaway and the provincially licensed databases could be demonstrated and explored. Incentive to explore the displays and ask questions was provided by having a modified scavenger hunt which consisted of a few questions on the backs of our programs. Answers were found by going to each display. Completed answers were then put into a box for a prize. Each library donated prizes so we were able to have a number of draws.

The search for answers to our scavenger hunt, while fun, provided opportunities to open up discussion about our libraries and our programs. Food at each of the displays also helped!

We followed up with thank you notes to the MLAs for taking the time to attend and enclosed a pamphlet which summarized some of the ways in which provincial funding is spent as well as some statistics about our service area and the services we offer.

As Houston Public Library's constituency is shared with a number of libraries in the North Central Library Federation, a reception was held in Houston and organized by Chief Librarian for HPL, Toni McKilligan. Toni will submit a separate report for this reception.

Media Coverage

[Libraries say thank you](#), Terrace Standard, June 30... THE NORTH COAST Library Federation, which includes the Terrace Public Library, held a thank you reception the afternoon of June 23 to thank the area's MLAs for the support shown by the provincial government.

Each MLA was presented with a tote bag and a book. On hand for the occasion was Skeena NDP MLA Robin Austin. Also attending from the City of Terrace was councillor Carol Leclerc. In attendance was North Coast Library Federation coordinator Karen Filipkowski.

NECHAKO LAKES DISTRICT MLA RECEPTION – JULY 8



MLA John Rustad at the Houston Public Library

Event Summary

Purpose

In June the BCLTA encouraged all public libraries in BC to host, either singly or in partnership, appreciation receptions for their local MLAs. The purpose of the receptions was to demonstrate how provincial funding was being used in libraries and to emphasize the importance of it to library communities. The Houston Public Library (HPL) designed its reception to show appreciation for the funding that it receives annually and to showcase the ways in which that funding is put to use.

Planning

An effort was first made to have all of the MLA receptions simultaneously on June 26, 2009. Houston Public Library was unable to do so on that date, but coordinated with other Nechako Lakes District libraries and the MLA for the region, Mr. John Rustad, to hold the reception on Wednesday July 8th. The event was planned for 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and included a community lunch, which was paid for by a donation from a concerned and supportive patron.

There are six public libraries in the Nechako Lakes District: Houston, Burns Lake, Granisle, Fraser Lake, Ft. St. James and Vanderhoof. With the exception of Houston, all of these libraries belong to the North Central Library Federation. Houston is a member of the North Coast Library Federation.

Representation

Vanderhoof, Granisle, Burns Lake and Houston were represented at the reception by staff, board and/or local government officials. Members of the literacy movement also attended as, in many cases, partnerships exist between them and the libraries. Funding impacts partnerships such as these. The Coordinators for the North Coast and North Central Library Federations were in attendance as well as many community members. In total 62 people, including 11 children were present at the event.

The Program

Upon Mr. Rustad's arrival guests gathered in the center of the library. Mr. Rustad was welcomed to Houston by emcee, Maureen Czirfusz, District of Houston Chamber of Commerce Manager. Mr. Bill Arkinstall, District of Houston Council Representative to the HPL Board of Trustees, gave the opening speech. The representatives from the other libraries were then introduced and Mr. Rustad was invited to peruse the display boards they each had contributed for the event. Mr. Rustad said a few words, recognizing the importance of libraries in BC and stating his understanding of the need for funding to continue in order to maintain the high level of service currently being enjoyed by library patrons. HPL staff members discussed programs and services emphasizing acquisitions, databases, Summer Reading Club and other services provided by the Public Library Services Branch, which administers provincial funding for libraries. Handouts were given to attendees describing the types of funding and how it is used, as well as listing library use statistics for the Nechako Lakes District.

After the demonstrations, Mr. Rustad was presented with a gift of an NCLF tote bag, a book and a HPL mug. Mr. Rustad, guests and community members then enjoyed a light lunch of sandwiches and salads.

Conclusion

The MLA reception hosted by HPL was deemed successful in that awareness was raised in the community and MLA Rustad had the opportunity to experience first hand what the provincial funding accomplishes in the libraries within his riding.

KOOTENAY LIBRARY FEDERATION MLA RECEPTION – JULY 10



From left to right: Gord DeRosa, Councillor, City of Trail; Katrine Conroy, MLA, Kootenay West; and Mayor Lawrence Chernoff, City of Castlegar.



From left to right: Margaret Sutherland, Castlegar Library Board Chair; Maureen Krohman, Beaver Valley Library Board Chair; Richard Jupp, Beaver Valley Library Trustee; Joanne Richards, KLF Director; Brian Volpatti, Chair, Trail Library Board; Gord DeRosa, Trail City Council; Lori Walmsey, Rossland Library Trustee; Katrine Conroy; Helen Graham, Library Director, Trail Library; Dave Ross, Beaver Valley Library Trustee; Mayor Lawrence Chernoff, City of Castlegar; Marie Onyett, Library Director, Beaver Valley Library.

Event Summary

ON JULY 10th CASTLEGAR PUBLIC LIBRARY hosted a meeting with Katrine Conroy, MLA for Kootenay West. The meeting was in two parts. For the first hour, representatives from libraries in Trail, Beaver Valley, Rossland, Castlegar and the Kootenay Library Federation met with Ms. Conroy in her office to explain to her the impact that provincial grants and funding have on library service. Nakusp Public Library sent a letter. The libraries have promised to forward some statistics to her on how the services benefit her constituents. Following the meeting, a reception was held at the Castlegar Library for Ms. Conroy, the media and of course any members of the public.

Media Coverage

Librarians talk cash with MLA, Trail Rossland News, July 14... THE CASTLEGAR PUBLIC LIBRARY hosted a meeting between Kootenay West MLA Katrine Conroy and representatives from the Trail, Rossland, Beaver Valley, Castlegar and Nakusp public libraries.

Conroy said the librarian representatives scheduled the event to better inform her of how valuable the libraries services are to the community and the amount of support libraries receive from the provincial government.

Conroy said one of the concerns the representatives have is that the support they receive from the government may decrease as it is expected the provincial government will put forth a deficit budget. "They just want to make sure that MLAs understand the beneficial services that libraries provide to the communities," said Conroy.

Joanne Richards, director of the Kootenay Library Federation, said the funding libraries receive from the provincial government is really important.

"We let her know that this funding is key to some of the programs and services offered by libraries here," said Richards.

According to Richards, it was a provincial initiative to have the MLAs meet with the local library representatives to make them all aware of the services and programs that libraries provide.

"We have not experienced any cuts and nothing has been announced, but of course, they are forecasting a budget deficit and we are concerned that libraries have a voice in the process and the government recognizes that we do appreciate and value their support," said Richards.

Conroy said that if the provincial government announces cuts to the libraries she, along with the NDP will lobby on their behalf.

SALMO PUBLIC LIBRARY SUMMER READING CLUB EVENT – AUGUST 7



From left to right: Dennis Rorick; Rose Merell; Hans Cunningham, RDCK Representative; Amy Veysey, Salmo Public Library Director; Jess Clark, Salmo Public Library Board of Directors; Janine Haughton, Village of Salmo Council; Michelle Mungall, MLA Nelson-Creston; Bailey Peters, Summer Reading Club Coordinator

Event Summary

ON AUGUST 7th SALMO PUBLIC LIBRARY welcomed Michelle Mungall, MLA for Nelson-Creston to a cowboy performance by singer Dennis Rorick and his daughter Rose Merell, as part of the Library's Summer Reading Club.

EAST KOOTENAY MLA RECEPTION – CRANBROOK, AUGUST 11



*Ursula Brigl, Chief Librarian, Cranbrook Public Library;
Hon. Dr. Moira Stillwell; Hon. Bill Bennett*



*Hon. Dr. Moira Stillwell and Jim Bertoia,
Chief Librarian, Sparwood Public Library*



*From left to right: Camilla Merritt, Chair, Fernie Public Library Board;
Ursula Brigl, Chief Librarian, Cranbrook Public Library; Councillor Angus
Davis, City of Cranbrook; Mayor Scott Manjak, City of Cranbrook;
Hon. Dr. Moira Stillwell; Keith Powell, Chair, Cranbrook Public Library
Board, Hon. Bill Bennett*



*From left to right: Arline Davis; Deanne Perrault, Children's and Youth
Librarian; Marilyn Forbes, President, Friends of the Library; Pat Casey,
Friends of the Library; Hon. Dr. Moira Stillwell*

Event Summary

The event began with a brief overview of each of the four public libraries in the East Kootenay Service Area: Cranbrook, Elkford, Fernie and Sparwood. A presentation on the benefits of provincial funding followed, with an emphasis on how provincial dollars enable libraries across BC to cooperate, collaborate, and work together to better serve their own residents and all British Columbians. Next was a tour of the Cranbrook Public Library and then 45 minutes of open discussion time for event attendees. In addition to the Honourable Bill Bennett, Minister of Community and Rural Development, the Honourable Dr. Moira Stillwell, Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, was also able to stop by for part of the reception.

Media Coverage

Library thanks province for support, Cranbrook Daily Townsman, August 13... AT A RECEPTION FOR MLA BILL BENNETT AT THE CRANBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY the MLA said that funding for the library is to remain intact, but the future is a bit shaky as the government struggles to stay on budget.

The Cranbrook Public Library held a reception for MLA Bill Bennett on Tuesday to show the provincial government what their funding is doing for the community.

The provincial government contributes about 16 per cent of the Cranbrook library's budget, and the library wanted to show Bennett just what it is contributing to the community.

"We depend on the funding of a number of partners," said Keith Powell, president of the Cranbrook Public Library board.

Bennett thanked the library for holding the informational meeting, and lauded the library and others around the province for the great idea to show MLAs just what the money they contribute is going to. The attendees, including Minister of Advanced Education Moira Stilwell, joked that the library's attendance beats out the Kootenay Ice Hockey games.

So far this year 112,000 people have stepped through the doors of Cranbrook's library.

"It's a pretty important symbol of what's important to the community," said Powell.

Bennett discussed challenges his government is facing and the reality of future funding for important programs like libraries.

"It's like the children's burn unit, you don't cut it until it's the very last thing," said Bennett.

He reminded the attendees that while reports are stating the recession is over, governments take a while to catch up.

"Government revenues tend to drag a bit behind the economy," said Bennett. "We are at the absolute worst of the economy."

Bennett says the government's budget is down \$5 billion from last year, a challenge that has resulted in cuts from every ministry except for healthcare and education, which make up about 76 per cent of the provincial budget. The government has promised that those two ministries will not receive any cuts as it tries to correct their own budget.

"I've had two ministries in the last six months and I've had to try to find 40 per cent savings from [them]," said Bennett.

One of the attendees asked Bennett if a library, which could be considered in the category of education, would be susceptible to cutbacks.

"I do think my colleagues recognize the importance of libraries," said Bennett. He said that as far as he knows, no talks about cutting funding from libraries have been had in Victoria yet.

Powell says that during a recession a library is an important part of the community. The Cranbrook Public Library has seen a rise in attendance since the economic downturn began.

Last year 125,412 people visited the library. In July 22,200 items were borrowed alone. The Cranbrook library lies within a district that includes Fernie, Sparwood and Elkford. 334,868 items were borrowed in the entire district in 2007, and attendance to the libraries has risen by 4 per cent in recent years.

"We do believe this is a valuable community service," said Powell.

The library's budget is \$750,000 annually from many different contributors including the Friends of the Cranbrook Public Library, the provincial government, the City of Cranbrook and community donations. Funding goes towards paying the few staff members, enhancing the catalogue, keeping up with technology and more.

The provincial government has contributed to more than just the budget, they have given the library access to search databases that would be too expensive for the library, as well as the B.C. OneCard, which allows library goers to get books from any library in B.C. and return them to any library.