In 2002, the Timberland Board of Trustees celebrated the completion of the new Yelm Timberland Library and tackled some difficult issues.

A new, larger Yelm Timberland Library has been created by means of a unique partnership. Prairie Park Holdings, a private company, has joined with the City of Yelm, the Friends of the Yelm Library and Timberland Regional Library for the benefit of the entire community.

The generosity of the individuals at Prairie Park and their commitment to excellence helped create a unique and beautiful space. The willingness of the city of Yelm and TRL to work together made it possible to develop an unusual contractual arrangement for the tenant improvements and lease costs. The Friends of the Yelm Library and the many local donors in Yelm purchased furniture for the building. From the murals on the wall to the tile river running from one end to another, it represents Yelm in a unique and memorable way.

This year, the Timberland Regional Library Foundation kicked off its first comprehensive fundraising campaign, Building Our Future: The Campaign for Timberland Libraries. Founded in 1998, the Foundation provides financial support for the mission of the Timberland Regional Library system in the belief that support from individuals, corporations, community organizations and foundations is needed to ensure an excellent, accessible library system in the future.

Two years after last making changes to Timberland's Internet Access Policy, the Board undertook a review of the policy and solicited public comment. Timberland's revised policy reconfirms that parents are responsible for their children's choice of library material, including Internet access. The Board has been working to balance the First Amendment rights of all with the protection of children.

Fiscal challenges persist as the impact of Initiative 747 limits the amount of property tax that Timberland can receive. The Board continues to tackle how we can ensure the continuation of excellent library service as property tax revenue diminishes and operational costs increase.

As Timberland Board members, we encourage you to attend our Board meetings to share your ideas and opinions on Timberland services. The Board's regular meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Call 360-943-5001 to confirm date and location. These meetings are held at libraries throughout the five-county Timberland Regional Library District.
TRL Director, Thelma Kruse

After having served as Timberland Regional Library's Director for the past 10 years, I will retire in May 2003. As I look back, I am proud of all we’ve accomplished – and amazed at how much we’ve changed.

In the last ten years, the population of the five-county district has increased 16% to nearly 413,000 and the number of library cardholders increased 76%. The number of items in the collection increased by just over 361,000 to 1.2 million. Many of these items are in formats that were not even available in 1992 including CDs, DVDs, electronic books, online databases and the Internet.

One of Timberland's greatest assets is our committed and resourceful staff. To serve the growing population of our district, the number of full time employees increased over the last ten years from 153 to 225. The number of Timberland volunteers, who provide service in libraries as well as outreach to homebound senior citizens, nearly doubled from 351 to 686.

The most significant change is in the area of technology. Computers have changed every aspect of how Timberland operates. Timberland has moved from a three-library consortium with 25 computer catalog terminals to a total of 589 computers for public and staff use. The public can now access library services from any Internet-capable computer. The public also has direct access to reference databases previously only available to librarians.

Over the past 10 years, Timberland has opened new libraries in Yelm, Salkum, North Mason (Belfair), Hoodsport, Tumwater and Elma. In a unique reuse of an old library building, the old North Mason library was cut into thirds, barged to Hoodsport and remodeled into a larger library. The Timberland libraries in Tenino, Ilwaco, Aberdeen, Raymond, Lacey, and Olympia were also remodeled or expanded.

We’ve faced a variety of challenges; developed creative solutions to problems; invited public input on controversial issues and stayed focused on maintaining the excellence of our library services. As our society continues to experience an even greater divide between those who are educated and financially well off, and those who are falling behind, the public library remains the major institution available to help individuals educate themselves. This has been our role in this country since the 19th century and it is just as important today as it was then.

Thelma Kruse

Our Mission

The Timberland Regional Library District was created by and belongs to the people it serves. The Library exists to advance intellectual curiosity, promote lifelong learning and enrich environments in which minds can grow. It supports an active, informed community by providing all people with access to materials in various formats representing diverse points of view.

Our Governance

The District is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees with one member from each of the five participating counties and two additional members filling at-large positions. Local library boards are appointed by the various cities. Local boards are responsible for city owned library buildings and act in an advisory capacity to the cities and the District.
accomplishments
building our future

Comprehensive Campaign

The Campaign for Timberland Regional Libraries

The TRL Foundation and the Timberland Board of Trustees initiated a comprehensive fundraising campaign called Building Our Future: The Campaign for Timberland Regional Libraries. The campaign consists of 4 components:

Local Library Development Initiatives support local library renovation and building. These projects combine TRL resources with those of local communities, including cities, local Friends groups, the Foundation and regional funders. The first phase of this component focuses on the libraries in Chehalis, Mc Cleary, South Bend and Westport.

Special Program Initiatives fund program development in family literacy and other areas. One of the first programs to be supported is Mother Goose, which provides books and reading activities to families-in-need with infants, toddlers and pre-school-age children. Another is Talk Time, which encourages limited English-speaking patrons to fully use library services and develop their language skills.

Endowments ensure a permanent source of Library revenue. Endowments allow the Foundation to invest funds and reinvest a portion of the returns to sustain excellence in services. The campaign builds on existing endowments, such as the Bill Lawrence Endowment and Relt and Edith McWhorter Endowment, as well as create new ones.

The Annual Fund helps our libraries create a truly cutting-edge library district. As the annual fund grows, the Foundation will launch new programs to improve service to our patrons. Building Our Future is about strengthening and improving our libraries and the lives of those in our Library district.

New Yelm Timberland Library

Through a unique partnership, Prairie Park Holdings, a private company, along with the City of Yelm, the Friends of the Yelm Library and Timberland Regional Library, worked together to create a modern library for the benefit of the entire community.

Previously operated from City Hall, the old library served an average of nearly 400 people a day and was the most crowded of Timberland’s 27 libraries. Over the last ten years, use of the library more than doubled. The number of cardholders grew from 4,200 to 9,700 and the number of items borrowed increased from 70,000 to over 209,000.

The new Yelm Timberland Library opened in July of 2002. At 8,000 square feet, the new library is 4 times the size of the old space.

The new library combines the library of the future with the best elements of the past. Over 10,000 new books, videos, talking
accomplishments
service improvements

books, periodicals, CDs, and DVDs were added to the collection. After just six months, circulation increased 39%. There are twice as many public computers as before. The new library is the first Timberland Library to offer Express Check-out.

The library is home to several works of art created especially for the new site. Sculptured ceramic fireplace surrounds for the library's double-sided gas fireplace were designed and created by artist-in-residence Barbra Kates, Yelm Middle School art students and their teacher Amy Bartley. On one side is a scene of Mount Rainier, a river and a prairie wagon; on the other is a waterfall scene with a tree and deer.

Neo Brown, artist-in-residence at Yelm High School, worked with 40 art students and teacher Jeff Stefanski to design and paint two murals. One, entitled "Imagination Information," graces the center of the library and the other, a forest scene, creates a setting for the TeenZone (pictured on the cover).

Express Checkout

Timberland's first Express Checkout stations were installed last July at the new Yelm Timberland Library. This new system allows patrons to check out materials themselves for faster, easier and more efficient circulation of materials. An average of 90% of Yelm library patrons now use Express Checkout. Six of the busiest Timberland library branches now offer library users the option of Express Checkout.

Express Checkout frees staff for complicated or lengthy transactions, such as registering new users for library cards.

While revenues are shrinking, use of library materials is increasing. Express Checkout helps busy libraries maintain high service levels without adding staff. More libraries will receive Express Checkout in 2003.

Internet Access Policy

After a thorough review of Timberland's Internet Access policy, 536 public comments and current information, Timberland's Board of Trustees decided to require parents to make an Internet access selection for their children under the age of 18. Timberland's policy states that parents are responsible for their children's choice of library material, including Internet access. If a parent does not make a selection, children under age 14 will have filtered Internet access when they log on to library computers, and children ages 14 and over will be able to choose filtered or unfiltered Internet access.

The Library has been working to balance the First Amendment rights of all with the protection of children. The Library's filter blocks access to sexually explicit sites. The Library does not tolerate any illegal use of the Internet. Currently all computers in the library located in designated children's areas are filtered. Timberland also provides classes and information on Internet use, recommended web sites and Internet safety for parents and children.

Electronic Use
Number of PCs: 595
Website Hits: 1,756,249
Reference Database Sessions: 146,557
Public Computer Sessions: 536,944

Interlibrary Loans
Items Borrowed: 12,095
Items Loaned: 9,214

Staff
Employees: 366
FTE: 225

Volunteers
Individuals: 686
Total Volunteer Service Hours: 21,524

Programs
Summer Reading Program Participants: 36,951
Programs & Events: 647
Adult Winter Reading Club Participants: 920
Books Read: 12,395
Family Read-Aloud Month Participating Families: 1,440
2002 Actual Revenues: $14.5 Million (General Fund)

2002 Actual Expenditures: $13.5 Million (General Fund)

2002 Revenues: Timberland’s largest source of revenue at 81% is property taxes levied at 49.36¢ per $1000 of assessed valuation in the five counties. Timberland also receives revenue from six cities, not annexed to the library district, that contract for library service at the same rate as the property tax levy. Timber taxes and sales are the second largest source at 9%.

2002 Expenditures: Library operations are labor intensive. Salaries and benefits are the largest items in the Library budget at 70%. The Library under-spent its personnel budget in 2002 in anticipation of continued library service reductions due to the passage of Initiative 747.
Timber Revenue: Timberland Regional Library is well named because the large amounts of timberlands within its boundaries provide a source of revenue that many other taxing districts do not have.

Timber taxes and sales represent only 9% of the general fund budget. It is a highly volatile source of funding. Timber revenue peaked in 1995 and has been declining since. It is not expected to recover to that level.

The Library budgets about half of timber revenues to the General Fund. The other half is budgeted to the Capital Fund: for buildings, computers and tele-communications.

Lost Revenue* Due to Initiative 747

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Impact of Initiative 747

87% of the Library’s revenue is based on the levy rate – property taxes and city contracts. Because the Library is so dependent on property taxes, the passage of Initiative 747 affected the Library more negatively than most other government entities. The Dept. of Revenue estimates that, without approval of a vote to increase the property tax rate, the Library will lose $5.1 million over the next six years due to Initiative 747. The Library’s actual property tax collections in 2002 were $11.7 million.

Cost Savings

In early 2002, Timberland cut four service hours per week in six of its largest libraries to help meet the revenue shortfall resulting from the passage of Initiative 747. Additional cutbacks were made in substitute staffing, computer services, books and other library materials, supplies, consulting and postage. TRL is also evaluating whether to eliminate or reduce positions as they come open. Due to these changes in practices and vigilance in reducing expenditures whenever possible, staff realized over $900,000 in savings in 2002. This reduces the need for substantial reductions in service in 2003. More cuts will be needed in future years as the cumulative impact of I-747 results in significant reductions in Timberland’s revenue.

Lost Revenue* Due to Initiative 747

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* Total projected revenue loss over 6 years: $5.1 million. Source: Department of Revenue.

Financial Background

Timberland Regional Library is a municipal corporation with the authority to levy tax on property to fund free public library service. Most of TRL’s general fund revenue comes from property tax levy related sources. Most areas of the five counties are annexed to the library district. Several cities that are not annexed, contract with TRL for service.

Timberland’s property tax levy is limited by the Legislature to 50¢ per $1,000 of assessed valuation. Until 2002, there was a levy increase limit of 6%. Starting in 2002, Initiative 747 limits the increase to 1% unless changed by a public vote. Property tax dollars are used solely for operations.

Another major revenue source is timber. The District receives a share of a tax on private forest harvest sales, and a portion of the net proceeds from D.N.R timber property managed for taxing districts.
today's library is **growing**

Timberland patrons are checking out more items than ever. In 2002, over 4.3 million items were checked out, an increase of 3.4% over 2001. Outreach circulation to seniors and the homebound is up even more – 16%. One of the largest increases is in use of audio-visual materials. Almost one third of items borrowed by adults are talking books, DVDs, and CDs.

Timberland’s focus is on having a popular, practical, well circulating collection but the libraries are also building local history collections and special collections such as genealogy and materials in other languages.

today’s library is **vital**

Libraries are places of opportunity, self-help and lifelong learning where we can find what we need for our health, school, jobs and family.

A library is a cultural, sociological and economic advantage to a community and its citizens. Just as they have throughout our history, local libraries serve as physical places to meet, to study, to do research and to introduce children to reading. A library is also a vital resource for those who are out of work or newly arrived in the area. Senior citizens and youth with limited transportation find particular advantage in having a local library. It is important that we continue to work with our communities to maintain these valuable community assets.

today’s library is **high tech**

Timberland first added public Internet access in its libraries in 1995. The number of public computers and their use has grown substantially every year.

Now people with a library card can use reference databases and other electronic resources on computers in the library and via the Internet—right from their home or workplace computer. The 35 subscription resources that make up Timberland’s reference databases provide information and images on current issues and events, health, business, non-profit organizations, education,
the sciences, literature, leisure, the arts, and much more. The databases were created, and are constantly updated, by professionals in each field. These resources are for students at all levels, business people, parents, educators, artists, collectors, gardeners, book lovers—seekers of knowledge in any area of interest. Use of the databases from outside the library was up 36% in 2002 over the previous year.

Patrons also rely on Timberland's Central Reference staff to answer their questions by phone and e-mail seven days a week. In 2002, Central Reference responded to 43,103 questions, an increase of 29% over the previous year.

today's library is connected

At your Timberland library, there is always something going on. From programs and classes, to speakers and author visits, your library is busy with services and programs that make it a central place in the community. With today's library technology, Timberland libraries are reaching beyond their walls to connect to the larger, global community.

Information is available from around the world and affords us opportunities like never before. Today's libraries are changing and dynamic places.

Today's library is used

People use libraries in four major ways. Three are traditional.

· People visit the actual building for materials, programs and information services.

· They telephone for information.

· They participate in services libraries have traditionally carried into their communities, such as school visits or service to the homebound.

· And now, people take advantage of the speed and convenience of online access through the Internet to supplement the ways they use their library's resources. Use by Timberland patrons is growing in all four areas.