A New Leader and Plan for the Future

2013 began with a friendly face taking over a new role, as former Olympia Timberland Library Manager Cheryl Heywood began as Timberland Regional Library’s (TRL) new Library Director.

TRL established a theme for 2013: “Strong Communities: Building Our Future” which highlighted education and employment resources to equip people, businesses and communities to become more informed and successful. To meet these goals, TRL and each of its 27 libraries developed action plans for the year that prioritized library services and programs, outreach plans and partnership opportunities.

In the spring, TRL launched a Strategic Planning process to develop TRL’s roadmap for where to focus library services and programs to meet the needs of our communities over the next five years (2014-18). A dozen focus groups and a district survey were conducted among 372 people across the five-county library district, including library patrons, staff, community leaders, TRL’s Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library and additional members of the public. The goal of the focus groups and survey was to determine TRL’s strengths, current community issues and opportunities, key priorities and how all those are impacted by a tight budget and changing trends in the way the library will be used in the next few years.

From the Strategic Plan four organizational values were identified and prioritized by staff: Service; Integrity; Collaboration and Community Focus. In addition, based on data gathered from the planning process, the TRL Board of Trustees and staff developed six service priorities to focus upon.

These priorities include:

- Strengthen families & youth
- Support local economies
- Promote the library as a community gathering place
- Support community engagement through culture, history and the arts
- Enhance collections & technology
- Foster a supportive work environment

As a library district, TRL is continuing to develop ways to strengthen our service to patrons, communities and each other.
YOUTH PROGRAMS

Getting young learners and their families hooked on reading!
TRL’s Family Read Aloud began on Dr. Seuss’ birthday, March 2, at all Timberland libraries. The annual early learning initiative continued through April 12, Beverly Cleary’s birthday. Families and classrooms across Southwestern Washington stopped by their local Timberland Library during this six-week initiative to pick up a Read-Aloud kit and attend programs. Then they headed to the kitchen, the living room, bedroom, and laundry room—even the bathroom, back yard and garage—and read stories aloud as a family.

Family Read Aloud focuses on developing readers for future success in school. It emphasizes families building a habit of reading together and is designed for children from infancy to grade three. Prizes included hundreds of books provided by Friends of the Library groups and each library had a grand prize of a backpack filled with books. In 2013, 4,000 children attended 64 events with 1,420 families and 195 classrooms participating.

Kids and teens explore their world all summer long
Once school let out, to the end of summer break, children and teens had much to explore as all Timberland libraries hosted performers, led art activities and scavenger hunts, organized games and contests and recommended lots of books.

The 2013 summer program theme “Dig into Reading” was all about digging deep, through books, film and programs as they explored farms and gardens, dinosaurs and other fossils and creatures who live below the ground. The teen theme was “Beneath the Surface,” which explored worlds and creatures hidden underground and in the sea, secrets and mysteries, the inner self, and underground societies.

Each library hosted at least two children’s performers during the summer. For teens, Marissa Meyer, author of critically acclaimed young adult novels “Cinder” and “Scarlet,” visited teens at six Timberland libraries in July. Over 16,300 children participated in the program, with more than 55,000 attending approximately 500 events across 27 libraries. Various prizes, including coupons for area attractions, were donated by organizations, businesses, and Friends of the Library groups.
More than 1,200 adults stayed warm and dry last winter during the annual Adult Winter Reading program. Adult Winter Reading, in its 16th year, encourages adults to keep reading all winter long. Adults (18 and older) turned in 3,165 entries and read or listened to nearly 16,000 books. For every five books read or listened to between January 1 and March 15 an entry was submitted into a prize drawing. Grand prizes included overnight getaways at regional resorts and book-and-beverage baskets, as well as many local library prizes donated by the Friends of the Library groups and businesses.

People were engaged and entertained all October long with Timberland Reads Together, TRL’s annual one book-one community program offering opportunities to connect with others through discussion, images, film, music and theater. New York Times Bestseller “Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher: The Epic Life and Immortal Photographs of Edward Curtis” by Seattle-based author Timothy Egan was selected as 2013’s book. Mr. Egan has been awarded a Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award and Andrew Carnegie Medal for his writing.

Edward Curtis was a nearly-forgotten photographer from Seattle who gave up being a celebrity photographer to document the disappearing culture of the North American Indian. His 30-year pursuit produced a 20-volume, irreplaceable work of photographs to commemorate a way of life nearly lost.

Mr. Egan kicked off the program October 1 in Olympia as nearly 700 people came to see his presentation, hear him read from his book, answer audience questions and show historical photos taken by Edward Curtis in his effort to capture the lives of Native American tribes across North America. In addition to the event with Mr. Egan, TRL held 86 related events in October including book discussions, film screenings, photography workshops, stage adaptations performed by Seattle’s Book-IT Repertory Theatre, and original songs written and sung by members of the Bushwick Book Club of Seattle.
Library card initiative reaches new heights

To celebrate TRL’s 45 years of public library service, a 45-day promotion titled “Get the Card” ran from September 16 through October 31 encouraging people to get the smartest card they can carry, their Timberland library card. A library card is a ticket to information, resources and entertainment.

New cardholders during this period were entered into a drawing to win an e-reader, donated by the Timberland Regional Library Foundation. This brand new endeavor yielded great results as 3,848 people signed up for a Timberland library card during the promotional period, an increase of 21% over the same time in 2012.

Nook e-readers made available for checkout

TRL began offering Barnes & Noble Nook e-readers in the summer for patrons to check out. They come in two models, the Nook HD and Nook Simple Touch with Glowlight. These e-readers give patrons another way to access popular titles in our collection. Each e-reader has 15 or more e-books pre-loaded in one of several genres, such as bestsellers, mysteries, science fiction, fantasy, romance, westerns and many more. They can be checked out for 3 weeks with no renewals and patrons must be 18 or older to check out a Nook e-reader. Based on demand by patrons for the e-readers, TRL is considering the purchase of additional e-readers in 2014.

DSHS grant funds new copiers & scanners for libraries

TRL received grant funding from the Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to purchase 16 public copiers capable of scanning documents to an email address or USB flash drive. Eleven Timberland libraries already had this equipment. With the funding, all 27 branches now have copier/scanners.

The purpose of the grant was to provide computers where people can enroll or renew online for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and scan and submit verification documents. A survey by DSHS of its clients revealed that public libraries were the most popular location (66%) for enrolling in CHIP.
Library kiosk opened in Morton
The Centralia College East in Morton and Timberland Regional Library partnered to provide the public a kiosk at the main office of the campus this past September as the City of Morton, Morton School District and TRL discuss a future library. A drop box was installed just outside the front entrance where materials can be returned. To celebrate this new service point for Morton area residents, a grand opening took place in September as people applied for new library cards and learned how to use the kiosk.

Toledo votes to annex to TRL
Residents in Toledo, a city in the southern part of Lewis County voted this past November by nearly a 2 to 1 margin to annex to TRL. After the election was certified in late November, Toledo residents became eligible to get their own Timberland library cards and start accessing library services. Since the election was held so late in the year, Toledo residents will not begin to pay for library service via their property taxes until 2015.

Celebrating 100 years of Library Service
TRL held three centennial celebrations at libraries: in Centralia in May, South Bend in August and Raymond in September. Each celebration became an opportunity for the people of each city to reflect with pride on their public library, on the generations that came through its doors, the lives it’s changed and the vital services it continues to deliver every day. TRL also partnered with Washington State Parks in its 100th anniversary with contests and a map showing the state parks and libraries in our five county service area.
TECHNOLOGY

TRL mobile app goes live
Dozens of public libraries across Washington State joined with the Washington State Library (WSL) to offer a new statewide app called Library Now thanks to a $200,000 grant to the WSL from the Paul Allen Family Foundation. The app offers library cardholders access to their library’s online catalog and website content, including downloadable e-books and digital audio books from a smart phone or tablet.

Features include the ability to search the TRL library catalog and put holds on library items, access your library account to check the status, renew items, and search and check out digital e-books and audio books. App users can also search events, find library locations, chat online with a librarian and connect to the library’s Facebook or Twitter pages.

Free, online, self-paced technology courses
Through a partnership with the Washington State Library, TRL began offering library patrons free, online technology training through the Microsoft® IT Academy in November. These self-paced courses range from developing basic digital literacy skills to learning how to use Microsoft Office software up through advanced skills for IT professionals.

The Washington State Legislature funded $1.5 million for the IT Academy for public, prison, tribal and community college libraries through June 2015. Public libraries were included based on the broad accessibility they provide the people of Washington State.

The Microsoft® IT Academy could help with college preparation, job searches, career advancement or improving productivity.
Borrow free streaming video, music and audiobooks with your library card

Hoopla is a new service that began in late November via the Library’s website. TRL cardholders with their library card number and PIN can borrow from a large selection of movies, television shows, educational/instructional videos, documentaries, music and audiobooks via smartphone, tablet or computer. All titles can be streamed to PCs and mobile devices.

Hoopla movies and TV shows can be checked out for 3 days, music for 7 days, and audiobooks for 3 weeks. Items are always available and there’s no need to place a hold if a title is checked out by other patrons. Cardholders can download 10 items per month.

Freegal expands with new streaming service

TRL’s popular Freegal (free and legal) music resource expanded in December with a new streaming option where users can enjoy 3 free hours of music daily. This means library cardholders can now stream entire albums at a time, including entire symphonies or operas.

In addition to the music downloading service that began in 2011, which allows 3 songs per week to keep (no due dates), an additional 4.5 million songs and 12,000 music labels from nearly 100 countries were made available, plus music videos became another downloadable option.

Wi-Fi Hours Expanded

Wi-Fi hours at all libraries increased last spring by six hours every day to 6:00 a.m. to midnight. Hours were expanded based on requests by patrons. Wi-Fi use, which began in 2005 has increased dramatically of late with the number of sessions climbing from 20,826 (2012) to 33,934 in 2013, an increase of over 60% in just one year.
In 2013, Timberland Regional Library (TRL) celebrated 45 years of library service to dozens of communities across Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pacific and Thurston counties. TRL’s focus on providing the best possible value with exceptional service has not changed since opening its doors in 1968. Today, TRL serves nearly half a million residents across 7,000 square miles through 27 community libraries, 4 kiosks, 2 co-operative library centers and two book drops.

As President of the TRL seven-member Board of Trustees, my role is to lead fellow trustees in making policy decisions and setting the budget for the Library District as fiscally responsible stewards of the public’s resources. Service is a priority: TRL fosters a workplace that attracts, retains and values its employees so they can deliver friendly and efficient service. Additionally, TRL continues to focus on providing a vibrant and diverse collection of materials along with access to informational resources and programs that meet the needs and interests of a large and diverse region.

2013 saw the TRL Board and staff work together in the development of a 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. This plan outlines six key service priorities to guide TRL in best meeting the changing needs of the people, businesses and communities in its service area over the next five years.

The Board of Trustees appreciates the ongoing efforts of the Friends of the Library groups, the Timberland Regional Library Foundation and library volunteers as they donate thousands of hours each year to make the most of their libraries and communities. Joining your local Timberland library is a great way to make a positive difference and make some new friends. I invite you to attend an upcoming TRL Board Meeting and share your ideas and opinions about library services.

Regular meetings are usually held on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Call (360) 943-5001 or 1-877-2TIMBER to confirm the date, time and location. Meetings are held at libraries throughout the five-county library district.
Timberland Regional Library (TRL) began 2013 with a new Library Director and the launch of a Strategic Planning process. It was an eventful year with much accomplished and so much more to achieve. The year included dozens of opportunities to introduce myself and speak about library services at county commissioner meetings, chamber forums and service clubs across TRL’s five-county library district.

For 2013, TRL’s theme was “Strong Communities: Building Our Future” and centered on providing education and employment resources to equip people, businesses and communities to become more informed and successful. To meet these goals, TRL and each of its 27 libraries developed action plans for the year that highlighted library services and programs, outreach plans and partnership opportunities. Late last year, TRL’s Strategic Plan (2014-18) was completed after a thorough discussion with the public, library patrons, staff and the TRL Board of Trustees. The plan delivers a roadmap for where to focus library services and programs to meet the needs of our communities in times of change.

The number of new library cards issued in 2013 rose by over 10% compared to 2012 figures to 27,738. Also, numbers increased in several areas, including:

- Library visitors - 2.8 million (5% increase)
- Library materials borrowed - 4.35 million (1% increase)
- Downloadable e-books, audio books, music and video - 266,835 (52% increase)
- Library programs & attendance - 3,344 programs (19% increase) & 82,151 attendees (40% increase)
- Reference questions answered - 433,030 (20% increase)
- Volunteers - 350 people gave 6,300 hours (number of volunteers more than doubled)

Although Timberland’s 27 libraries are spread across 7,000 square miles from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, they each provide access to computers, databases, Internet, Wi-Fi and a myriad of services including a collection of 1.2 million items. Highly trained library staff deliver exceptional service by bringing programs for all ages, answering questions and helping people access the resources they need. Stop into your local Timberland library and you’ll be amazed at what you find!
2013 STATISTICS
Library cardholders: 243,428
New Library cardholders: 27,738
Visitors to TRL libraries: 2,805,253
Computer use in Timberland libraries: 512,761
Audio books, music and video downloaded: 266,835 & Freegal music downloads: 112,377
Reference questions answered: 433,030

Circulation
Cardholders borrowed 4,353,138 items.

Collection
Timberland added 150,941 books, magazines, DVDs, talking books, music CDs and more and withdrew 51,392 items for a total collection of 1,149,568 items.

Programs & Attendance
Children and family programs: 1,884 programs with 61,173 people
Teen programs: 352 programs with 3,919 people
Adult programs: 1,108 programs with 17,059 people

Volunteers
TRL received support from nearly 350 volunteers that gave approximately 6,300 hours of their time. Thank you volunteers for your commitment and dedication!

2013 REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

Total Revenues: $21,107,735.50
Total Expenditures: $22,669,308.85

*Includes selecting and acquiring materials, preparing them for lending, delivering holds to patrons’ libraries, borrowing from other library systems, and mending.
Decrease to sustainability reserves - $1,562,573.35