

Library looks at strengths, opportunities and resources

I just finished my fifth year as your Jefferson County Library director. Every year at this time, I look back and consider where the library was in 2019 and where we are today. When I started working here, I had a clear vision of what this library could be with a substantial online presence and place in the community. Luckily, everyone – staff and board – also saw the potential, and we've worked hard to re-imagine our library.

This library was where people came to check out materials or attend a children's storytime. During my first weeks on the job, several board members mentioned that it didn't seem like a friendly or welcoming place. Over the last five years, we have all turned the library into a fun, sometimes noisy, welcoming place. (I think I'm the worst noise offender.) Our focus on programming has increased tenfold; we are coordinating with the schools to prepare students by providing inquiry-based learning support. This program, Springboard to Inquiry, proved to be so popular with the schools last year that we asked for and received a grant from the Library Services and Technology Grant coordinated through the

State Library of Oregon and administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services to add additional full-time staff to expand it for the upcoming school year.

By increasing our Spanish Services librarian from 10 to 30 hours per week, she has expanded her programming, partly because of a 2023-2024 grant from the Oregon Community Foundation. We have added free Notary Services, started the "Talk About" and "Talk About Town" speakers' series, and expanded outreach activities in our communities. These are just a few examples of how we are redefining what the Jefferson County Library District is and can be.

Our Year-End SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- A dedicated staff who finds new ways to meet the community's information needs.
- Educated staff – 2 MLS-prepared librarians, 1 BA-prepared librarian, 1 staff with a master's in animation, 1 staff with a master's in psychology, 3 staff members with bachelor's degrees, and three

others working toward their bachelor's degree.

- A focus on finding grants that allow service enhancements (we received over \$100,000 in grants in 2023-2024)

- The ability to change eBook/Audiobook providers significantly reduced our digital content expenses from an estimated \$50,000 in 2024-2025 to under \$20,000. More importantly, we can (1) respond to purchase requests

from our readers and build our collection and (2) access user statistics that help us make data-based collection development decisions.

- Reducing our digital collection expenses allowed us to purchase Freegal (free-legal) music streaming subscription. (More information on downloading the app and using the service is on our website). Bringing Accounts Payables/Receivables in-house allowed for real-time budget information and increasingly accurate revenue and expenditure predictions.

- A dedicated and engaged JCLD (Jefferson County Library District) Board of Directors who support the

LIBRARY HAPPENINGS



Jane Ellen Innes



library's outreach activities

- An active and supportive Jefferson County Library Association that has provided funds for our annual Summer Reading Program, provided food at our events, allocated funds to enhance our digital collection, and supported staff training and grant writing.

Weaknesses (we all have them)

We aren't perfect. We can improve how we evaluate our programs and services. I can do a better job of onboarding new employees, which is why it's important to me to keep and enhance the skills and knowledge of our current staff, so I don't need to do a lot of new employee training. (That's working great so far.)

Opportunities

Mid-year in 2023-2024, I re-established our Outreach Coordinator position, which improved our community activity scheduling and supported the implementation of community programs. We've also shifted staff to add adult and youth services program assistants. We continue increasing attendance at civic and other community meetings and networking. By continuing to review recurring costs with service providers, we make sure we are using the most cost-effective options.

Threats

School breaks, illnesses,

or vacations create staffing issues, employee burnout, and meeting room and overall space constraints.

Challenges

Inflation is around 3.5%, and our raises are 3%. The management team did not ask for salary increases this year so we could increase clerk staffing. Establishing and maintaining a work-life balance for employees. Staffing the library 5 days/week with at least two people has been challenging, especially with increased programming and visibility outside the library. We've addressed this by increasing the front desk staff hours and will reopen on Fridays from noon to 5 p.m. beginning after Labor Day.

What we are – and what we are not

We are – creative problem-solvers who look for innovative ways to provide additional programs and services. We're adding an online speaker series and a music streaming service this year. By becoming a member of the Libraries of Eastern Oregon, this fall we are adding new cultural activity passes – renamed Discovery and Go Pass. You can still access the High Desert Museum and the Central Cascades Wilderness Pass, plus you will be able to use your library card for the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum, The

Dalles, OR, <https://gorgediscovery.org/>

Columbia Gorge Museum, Stevenson, WA, <https://www.columbiagorgemuseum.org/>

Maryhill Museum of Art (paper pass required), Goldendale, WA, <https://www.maryhillmuseum.org/>

Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), Portland, OR, <https://omsi.edu/>

Oregon State Parks: parking permits for day-use parks

We are not – a branch of the Deschutes Public Library. Your Jefferson

County Library District is an independent entity governed by a Board of Trustees. We have a collaborative agreement with the Deschutes Public Library (DPL) and the Crook County Library (CCL) to share our physical collections (books, movies, audiobooks). In 2023-2024, our patrons borrowed approximately 5,400 items from DPL or CCL, and we lent almost 33,000 items to DPL and CCL.

As I start my sixth year at the best job I've ever had with a dream team of co-workers, we are a library of programs, services, and collection borrowing. We work hard to be a community partner, gathering place, and community asset. Today, your library is so much more than just books. If we can imagine it, we can create it. It is my honor to work with these dedicated folks every day and to be guided by a board that took a chance with someone who had no public library experience and never looked back. Finally, thank you all for welcoming me into your communities.

"Well-run libraries are filled with people because what a good library offers cannot be easily found elsewhere: an indoor public space in which you do not have to buy anything in order to stay."
— Zadie Smith

In Loving Memory

Lon Kimpen Ihrig Emick
December 9, 1963 - June 15, 2024



It is with great sadness and love that we announce our beloved Lon Kimpen Ihrig-Emick was called to the Lord June 15, 2024, after a brave fight with cancer at the age of 60. Lon was born in Prineville, Oregon, December 9, 1963, to Jack and Sandra (Gregg) Emick. In 1968, he was adopted and raised by William (Bill) Ihrig when his mother remarried. His early years were spent

in Culver, Oregon, and he came back as a young adult. In 1984, he married Donna Whitted and had two sons; James and Christopher. He raised his family in Madras, Oregon. Lonnie received his associates degree, masters ASE certification and numerous other automotive certifications

Thomas Orchards

Kimberly Oregon

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BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Miles Anthony

Paternal grandparents are pleased to announce the