

Okanagan Regional Library Fall 2003 Presentation Package

1. 2003 Library Initiatives

- Additional Open Hours for Silver Creek Branch – this was one of the four smallest branches that had not yet reached the number of hours in the old library standards based upon the 1996 population served by that branch.
- Building Renovations and Planning
 - New expanded **Enderby** branch opened in February. Usage has increased significantly since the new branch opened.
 - **Rutland** branch had to be relocated within the mall. There was significant disruption but the new space is better laid out, more appealing to the public, and now includes public after hours book returns.
 - Proposed **OK Falls** branch late fall or early 2004.
 - Site Selection guidelines and building program developed for new **Vernon** branch budgeted for the fall of 2005. Site selection review process begun with expected site selection to be completed by year end.
 - **Summerland** building program developed for proposed new branch, budgeted for 2004.
- Continuing Automation and Computer Upgrades
 - Self Checkout Pilot projects undertaken in Kaleden, Peachland, Westbank, and Vernon
 - First year of a three-year project to replace dumb terminals with pc's or thin client technology. This will prepare the library for a necessary future move to a windows based circulation system.
 - Cap sustainability grant enabled us to speed up replacement and purchase of computer equipment throughout our branches.
- Strategic Planning
 - The library began to implement the strategic plan this year. Much of the initial work involved planning, studies and reports. The details of the budget for 2004 and onward begin to implement some of these plans as resources allow.
 - New telephone systems have been installed in Headquarters, Salmon Arm, Vernon and Kelowna that include voicemail. This replaces obsolete and failing technology with up to date equipment that will allow us to expand in the future as needs demand. It also allows us to gain some benefits from routing some of our voice traffic over our existing data network.
 - Materials budget has had a small increase after several years of frozen budgets. This and the planned for increases over the next several years will enable our collection to grow to meet the needs of library district residents.
 - The Board's Branch Guidelines were reviewed and updated. The guidelines will determine the direction of branch development over the next 5 years.

2. Tax Cost

Two years ago, an independent public survey strongly supported (over 70%) steady tax increases of approximately \$1.00 per household per year. There was significant support for larger annual tax increases. Our Board has worked hard to develop a five-year financial budget plan to hold tax increases to the range of \$1.00 to \$1.50 per year for the average household over the next five years. The annual tax survey (graphs attached) supplied by each member treasurer show an **average increase in tax for an average home to be \$1.04 for 2003** (average per capita tax levy change was \$0.92). We anticipate 2004 and 2005 to be very similar, with 2006 being at the high end of the range due to the impact of the proposed expanded Vernon branch.

3. Library Use and Activity Levels

- Library circulation levels continue to stay flat, but reference questions are still increasing, even though many people are now using the Internet to find bits of information. Staff report that the reference questions are more complex than they once were. Interlibrary loans have tripled during the last year, as Internet users are able to look at catalogues from other institutions to locate items they want to read.
- Internet use in library branches continues to increase, as well as use of the library's web site, and use of the licensed databases we provide. By the end of July, usage of most of our databases, such as World Book Encyclopedia, or our databases of magazine articles, had exceeded usage for all of 2002.

4. Plans for 2004 Library Budget

- Add to the Materials Purchasing Budget (amount spent on books, electronic resources and other materials for the public). Over the past few years, print resources have shrunk from 1.96 items/capita, to 1.61 items/capita. At the same time we plan to improve the speed of delivery to branches, so that items will get to library users faster.
- We are going to use money from book sales to put a small collection of bestsellers into branches that circulate more than 40,000 items annually. These collections will not move from branch to branch. The loan period is to be one week, and the overdue fines will be a dollar per day. We hope that this "Fast Lane Collection" will take some pressure off the request system.
- Addressing Branch Size Deficiencies – included are new branches in Summerland and Vernon, as well as beginning the planning and funding for an eventual expansion or replacement of our headquarters facility.
- Additional open hours to be added to Mission branch in 2004, followed by Sorrento and Peachland in 2005 to bring them up to branch guidelines based upon the 2001 census population served.
- Adding some self-checkout machines in our busiest branches to handle increased circulation pressures.