

2016 Annual Report



Find Your
STORY



Message from Our Executive Director

When I was brought on as the Executive Director in October of 2016, it was humbling to see how our staff, our volunteers, and the communities of Garfield County all believe in the transformative power of their public library.

In 2016, we saw increases in the number of items checked out and the number of people discovering new library educational programs. We hear stories daily about people passing their final college exams after countless hours of studying in our study rooms, children and families discovering Colorado's State Parks through our backpack program, community members coming together to share their unique skills in our Community Education Network, and countless other personal achievements. With 95% of Garfield County holding a library card, you probably have a library story, too.

Unfortunately, the story of your libraries also exists with the reality of constantly declining funding. A predicted \$1.2 million decrease in property tax revenue for 2017, in addition to persistent sales tax refunds, forced the libraries to make tough decisions - cutting the number of books and DVDs we buy, reducing hours, and undergoing cuts to administrative and front-line staff positions.

Despite these cuts, your libraries remain committed to fulfilling our mission and we hope to continue serving you in the coming years.

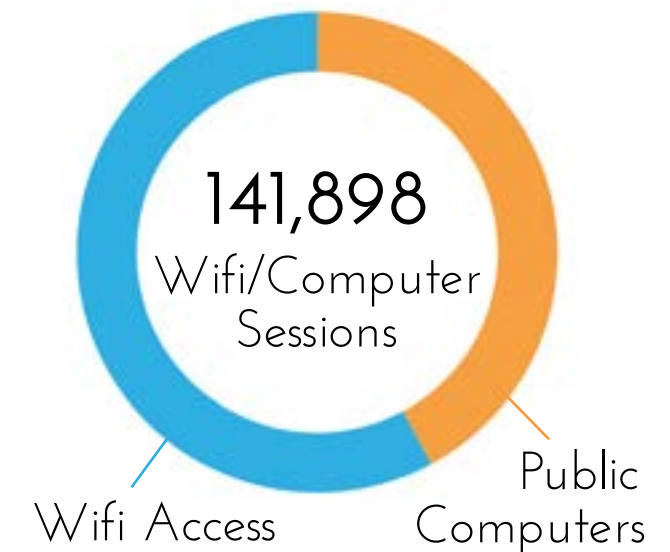


After an extensive nationwide search, Jesse Henning was chosen as Executive Director.

Members Experiences: *In Numbers*



1,741
Educational Events



Members of Garfield County Libraries: 57,935

Population of Garfield County: 58,887

Adding Valuable Experiences

Your Garfield County Libraries are funded mainly through sales and property taxes. We understand this investment is made by our community members, and we are constantly working to offer quality materials and services to benefit our communities so you get the greatest return on that investment.

It drives us to explore opportunities such as Rifle being a pilot location for the Check Out Colorado state parks backpacks program in 2015. By partnering with the Colorado State Library and Colorado Parks and Wildlife, we were able to offer two backpacks to our library members for checkout in Rifle. The backpacks were filled with wildlife guides, binoculars, and a seven day state parks pass which allowed the user free entry into any state park in Colorado.

The overwhelming success of the program led to a statewide expansion in 2016, including all six of our locations - which each now have two backpacks available for checkout!



*ROI calculated by using data from the Library Research Service.



Families enjoy walking through Gregory Park and reading StoryWalk®.

Your libraries have also worked hard to design new experiences for families in our local parks. In 2016, we launched StoryWalk® Glenwood Springs in Gregory Park. It's a fun, educational activity that places a children's story (a deconstructed book, page by page) outside to promote literacy, physical activity, and family bonding. Each book is bilingual and includes activities and engaging questions to bring the book to life. If you see people roaring like dragons or marching in place, it's all part of the fun!

The project was made possible through a grant from Garfield Health Communities Coalition and included partnerships with the City of Glenwood Springs Parks & Recreation and the Glenwood Springs Kiwanis Club.

The project's success also led to a partnership with Two Rivers Community School for a student-created book, *Dippers Adventure*, to be featured in 2017.

The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg Hubbard Library. Storywalk® is a registered service mark owned by Ms. Ferguson.



Two state parks backpacks became available at each library for week-long checkouts.

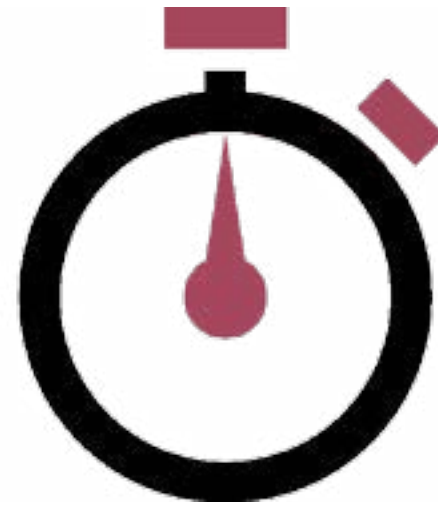
Summer Success

Research shows that students experience learning loss over the school summer break and that summer learning programs are essential to getting kids ready for the next school year. Our Summer Reading Program offers incentives which help children and teens get excited about reading while also helping fight that “summer slump.”



Each year, the Summer Reading Program also includes free, fun, and educational events in each of our communities. In 2016, over 9,100 children, teens, and adults joined us as we hosted magicians, authors, a puppeteer, food tastings,

concerts and a former member of the Denver Nuggets. These events not only enrich our summers with memorable, educational opportunities, they also encourage participants to develop positive habits of visiting the library and borrowing books on a consistent basis.



904,880+
Minutes Read

Partnership Creates Opportunities



The joint grant application was approved by the Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District committee, and the Garfield County Libraries and Colorado Mountain College were also designated the “Grantees of the Year” for the partnership.

Working in partnership with the Colorado Mountain College, we received a grant for \$750,000 from the Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District - the largest grant ever awarded by the GCFMLD - to construct Morgridge Commons, a 13,000 square foot multipurpose space for community meetings, and further expand library public meeting space in Glenwood Springs. The new space on the second floor of the Glenwood Springs Branch is slated to open in late 2017.

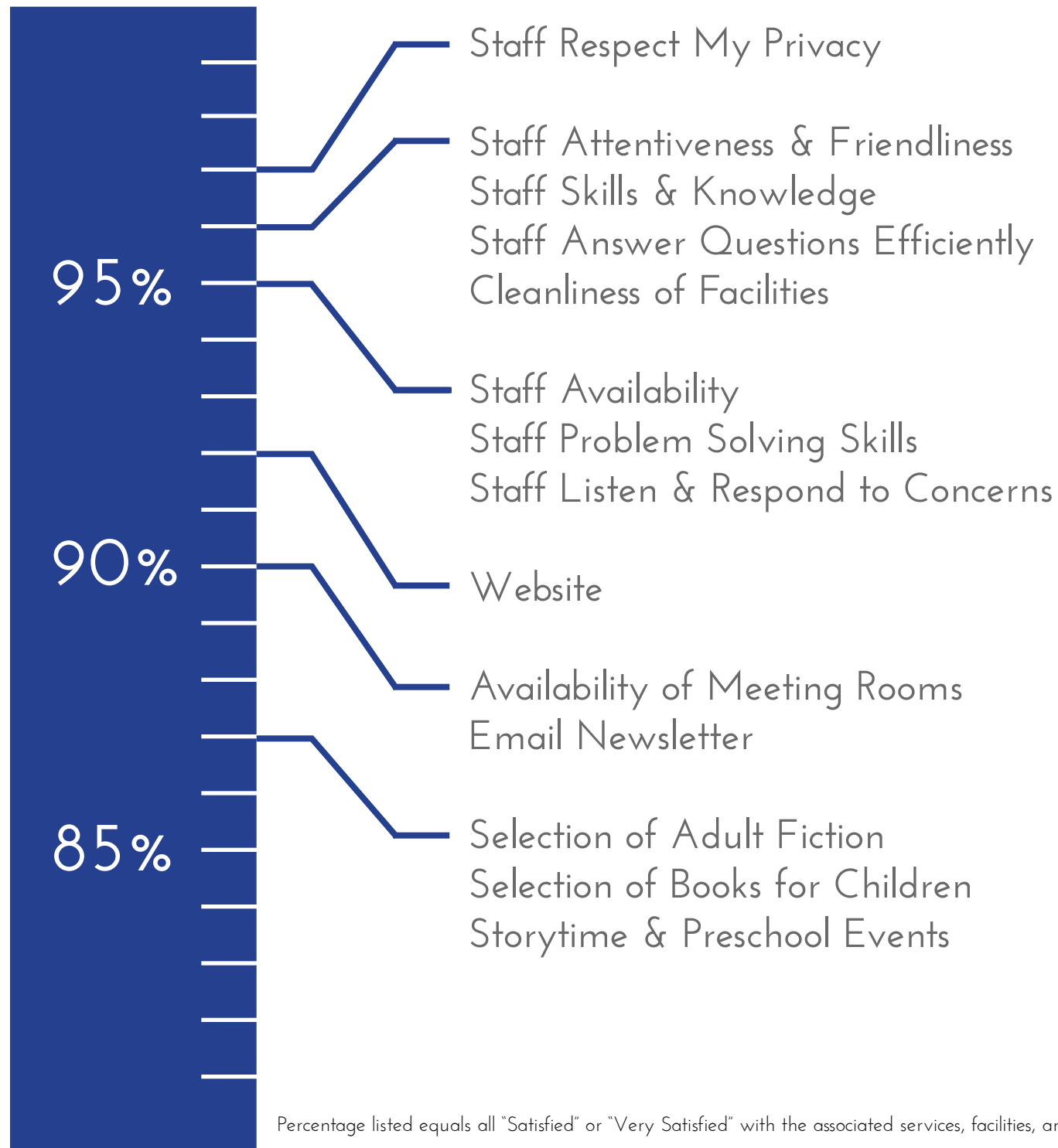
This is the second such library construction project funded by a GCFMLD grant. The first was a smaller-scale project in 2014 when the libraries finished the second floor in Rifle, adding a multi-purpose public meeting space called the “Classroom.”



Children play and learn about the physics of water balloons during a Summer Reading event in Silt.

Overwhelming Approval

We conducted our second annual satisfaction survey in December asking 48 questions in six categories. While we did identify areas for improvement, for two-thirds of the questions an astonishing 80% or more of respondents said they were "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with the materials, facilities, and services. This overwhelming approval spread across all categories, and some of the highest numbers overall are shown below:



Library staff members show children in Parachute how to play ukuleles.

“ Survey Comments

“I find myself using the library more and more. I credit that to the ease of access of materials and buildings, the staff, and the website.”

“Thank you for being part of my life.”

“This is just crazy amazing. I’ve used many aspects of the facility, joined in on community events, and now find myself at our library every week. I LOVE it.”

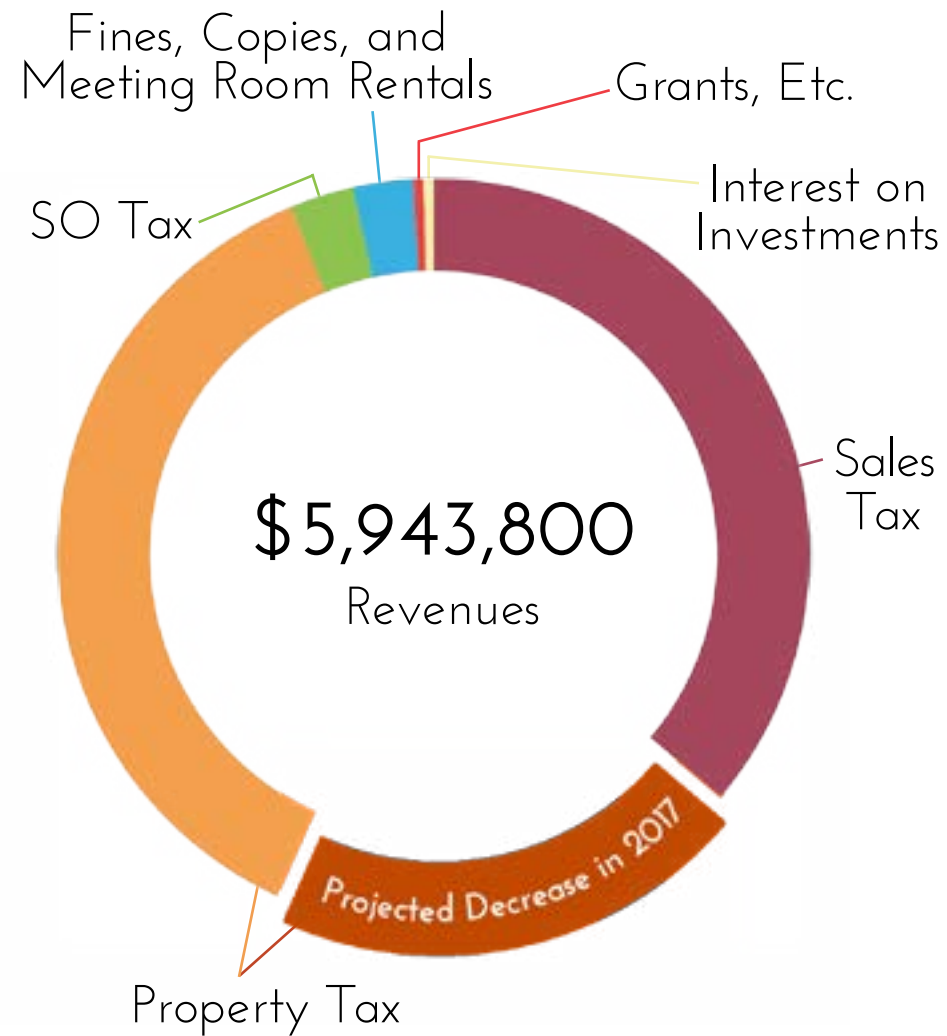
Finances are Changing the Landscape

Your libraries are supported by a variety of tax revenue sources encompassing a county-wide 1 mill property tax, a quarter-cent sales tax, and specific ownership (SO) taxes on vehicles registered within the county. Revenues in 2016 were up slightly from 2015. However, the annual revenue collections are still \$1.78 million below 2010 levels.

This decrease in funding is directly tied to the decrease in oil and gas development activity in Garfield County and low sales tax collection coupled with ongoing sales tax refunds as part of the 2011 Noble Energy settlement with the State of Colorado. In the five years following the settlement, sales tax refunds have removed \$2.1 million in funding from your libraries.

These reductions in revenue are occurring alongside heavy use of library materials and facilities. In 2016, the Garfield County Libraries added over 6,400 new library cardholders and greeted over 636,000 visitors - a 37% increase since 2010. Additionally, since the six new library branches were completed (on time and under budget) the Garfield County Libraries have seen skyrocketing demand for new books, public meeting space, and access to our free broadband Internet connection.

In late 2016, the Library Board of Trustees was made aware of another drastic reduction in property tax funding arriving in the 2017 fiscal year. The libraries expect to see their funding decreased by an additional \$1.2 million, or 30% of the annual operating budget in 2017. With this cut on the horizon, your libraries went on a hiring and spending freeze and postponed all but the most essential building repairs. This freeze allowed the

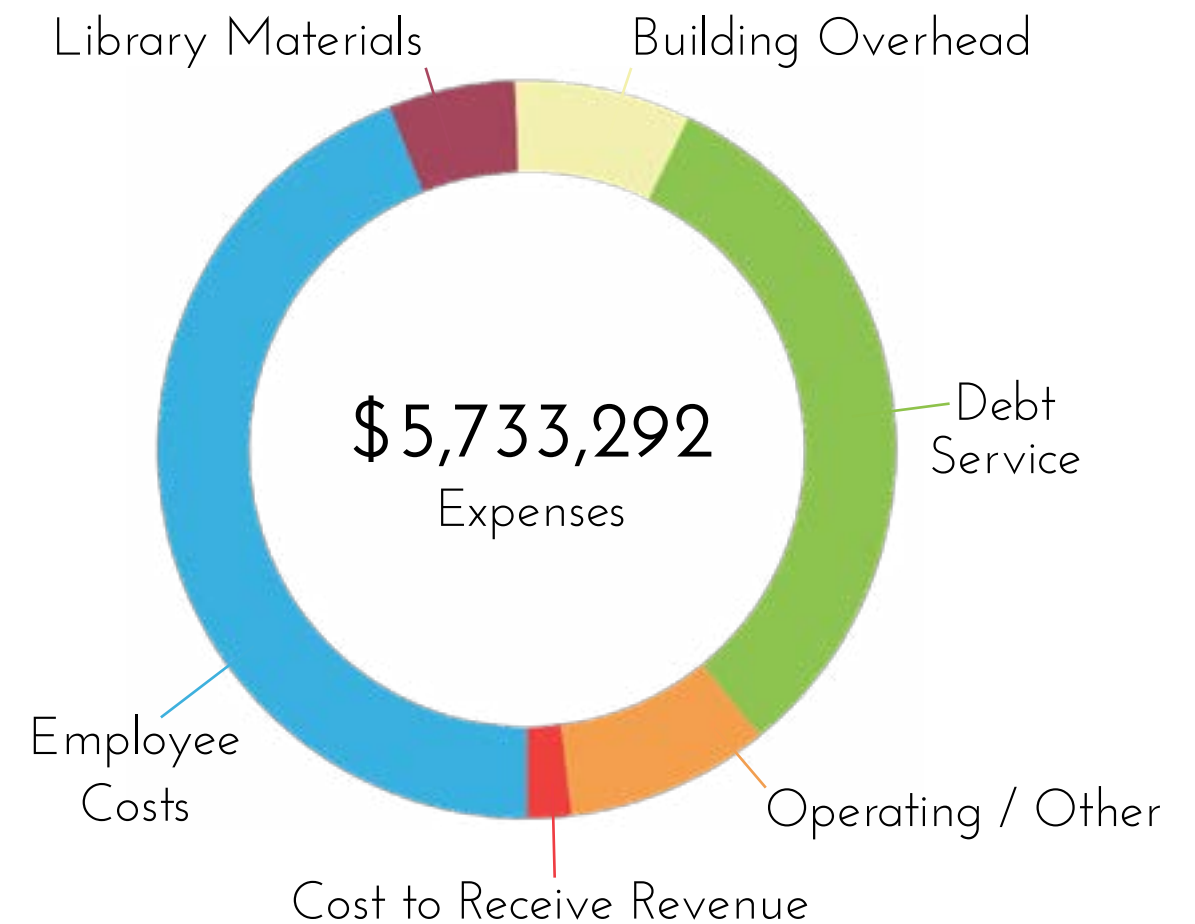


libraries to save \$200,000 in preparation for the deep cut expected in 2017 (reflected in the revenues and expenses graphs).

To ensure a balanced budget in 2017, the Board was forced to make drastic cuts including decreasing the number of new library items purchased by 50%, cutting open hours, and laying off library staff. Without these resources and essential staff, library users will see a decrease in the amount of educational programs and storytimes for children, longer wait times for popular items, and a reduction in the number of public Internet access computers.

Despite these decreases in funding, your libraries remain fiercely dedicated to providing excellent service to the people of Garfield County and ensuring that every person that walks through our doors can access opportunities in education, technology, literacy, and community building.

The Library District will embark on a new strategic planning effort in 2017 to address the future of our libraries in the face of declining revenues and develop a roadmap for serving the communities of Garfield County.





Thank You 2016 Donors & Grantors

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Garfield County Libraries Foundation
please contact Jesse Henning at
970-625-4270 or jhenning@gcpld.org
or visit www.gcpld.org/foundation.