A PLACE TO GROW

Public libraries across the state continue to serve the needs of their communities as places to go for a wide range of experiences.

South Dakota's public library system grows and adapts to an ever-changing cultural and technological landscape

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The state's public library system got its start even before there was a state.

In 1886, three years before South Dakota achieved statehood, the Howard Public Library was chartered and quickly became a point of pride for the people of present-day Miner County.

The contents of the library have long since been relocated to a modern facility in the town's Municipal Building, but the original structure can still be visited at Prairie Village in nearby Madison.

As the first of its kind in the state, the Howard Public Library is still a thriving entity and serves as a testament to the versatility and resiliency of the state's library system. Standing strong through world wars, recessions, depressions, funding pressures, political challenges and changes in culture and contemporary lifestyles, South Dakota's libraries are still delivering the goods - and the books - in their respective communities.

Mary K. Schlim is the head librarian in Howard and says the community takes a lot of pride in being home to the state's first facility. She takes an optimistic view of the future of libraries...as long as they continue to adapt.

"I think libraries have a bright future," she said. "You just have to keep updating and modernizing and keeping up with the trends and the technology. We have the computers, but we're adding new books all the time. There will always be demand from people who want an actual, physical book to read. There will always be a need for libraries."
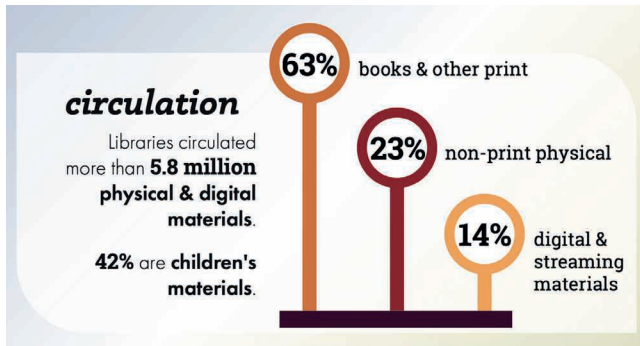
Schlim said her facility is open six days a week with more than 14,000 books on the shelves, five public computers with internet access, 37 subscriptions to magazines and periodicals, and free WiFi access.

In the year prior to the pandemic, 3.7 million visits were made to the state's 107 public libraries while nearly half the state's residents held a library card. In 2019, more than 600 of the state's citizens were employed at a public library, and a collective 5.8 million digital and physical materials were circulated.

Brenda Hemmelman, access and development services director for the state library system, said libraries return $4 in various programs and services for every $1 invested. She describes libraries as a sound investment in communities large and small.

Hemmelman recently announced the distribution of nearly $2 million in grant money disbursed to a total of 78 public, local school and academic libraries across the state. The grant money came from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

circulation

Libraries circulated more than **5.8 million** physical & digital materials.

42% are **children's** materials.

63% books & other print

23% non-print physical

14% digital & streaming materials

"This will help our libraries invest in infrastructure, technology and materials that will serve their patrons through modern, innovative facilities and practices well into the future," Hemmelman said.

Grant-funded items include the following:
- Technology to replace old computer equipment
- Podcasting equipment
- Digitization equipment
- Books, audio books, e-books
- 3D printers and other makerspace equipment
- Furniture with embedded technology
- Library automation software
- SMART boards/Promethean boards for classroom teaching and displays.

The state system also purchased an additional $76,000 worth of audiobooks and e-books for the South Dakota

Titles to Go (SDTTG) consortium with funds from IMLS through ARPA. Hemmelman said SDTTG program usage increased 18 percent from 2019 to 2020 as users checked out more than 400,000 titles.

Hemmelman said libraries face an ongoing challenge to remain relevant and useful in a rapidly changing technological landscape. She said libraries were fortunate to receive the recent grant money after 96 percent of the state's facilities closed temporarily during the pandemic.

She was quick to note, however, that 86 percent continued to provide public services even though the physical facility may have been closed. More than 80 percent provided outside or curbside checkout services and all of them increased access to digital materials.

For Hemmelman, those indicators point to a promising future for the state's public library system.

STATE LIBRARY DIGITIZES 41 VOLUMES OF SOUTH DAKOTA HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

As the South Dakota State Historical Society celebrates its 120th year, the South Dakota State Library has digitized all 41 volumes of the South Dakota Historical Collections. From 1902 to 1982, this series was published biennially by the Department of History (now the South Dakota State Historical Society) as part of its mission to collect, preserve and make accessible the history of the state. All 41 volumes are now available via the Featured Collections section of the South Dakota State Library's Digital Collections.

These volumes cover a wide array of topics and are a valuable resource for students, teachers, and scholarly researchers. Six editors presided over the South Dakota Historical Collections during its run, including Doane Robinson, Will G. Robinson and Dayton Canaday. Their different editing styles and interests are evident throughout the volumes. Taken as a whole, the series represents an evolution in perspectives on the state's history, heritage and culture. In 1989, an index to the collection was compiled and published to aid researchers.

The South Dakota State Library serves as the state's depository for current and historical state agency publications, some of which go back to territorial days.

The South Dakota State Library's Digital Collections reflect the history and culture of South Dakota. Primarily of interest to librarians, researchers, and genealogists, the digital collections include newspaper articles, South Dakota library photographs, state government annual reports and research reports, South Dakota Codified Laws, Session Laws, House and Senate Journals and more. Access the collections at: sdsdl-montage.auto-graphics.com/.