

December 5, 2016



Dear Reader,

Your libraries have come a long way.

Over the last ten years since voters approved the formation of our special library district and a 1.0 mill property tax levy, Garfield County Libraries have accomplished the following:

- Witnessed an increase of 93% in checkouts of books, movies, eBooks, and other library materials. On average, each Garfield County resident checked out 12 items in 2015.
- Experienced a doubling of the number of visitors we see each year, from 303,535 to 653,420.
- Added 26,861 new library card holders – more than the populations of Glenwood Springs and Rifle combined.
- Constructed six state-of-the-art library buildings on time and under budget.

Looking at this level of success, it is difficult to imagine that your libraries will be laying off staff, eliminating some services, and reducing open hours before the end of the year. Wait times for new books and DVDs will increase as the budget for library materials is cut by 50%. You may notice fewer public Internet-access computers at our branches.

Why is this happening? Next year, your libraries will experience a \$1.2 million decrease in operating revenue - a reduction of 30% - due to decreased economic activity and lower property tax revenues from the oil and gas sector in our county. This cut comes on top of the \$2.18 million of revenue lost in sales tax refunds related to the Noble Energy settlement over the past five years. These decreases in funding are occurring outside of the Library District's control and, despite your libraries' dedication to responsible financial management, these cuts in funding cannot be avoided.

In spite of these challenges, the library management team, staff, and the Board of Trustees have worked together to create and approve a balanced budget for 2017. Reaching this balance, however, will require your libraries to make tough changes. On December 6<sup>th</sup>, some staff members will be laid off. A reduced schedule of hours at each of our six library branches will begin on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

The coming years will be a trying time for your libraries. While we remain dedicated to our mission – connecting our communities to a world of possibilities – we will need your help and support more than ever as we develop a recovery strategy for the future. Visit [www.gcpld.org/changes](http://www.gcpld.org/changes) for more information.

Most sincerely,

*Garfield County Public Library District Board of Trustees*

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