

# Find Your STORY

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**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**



GARFIELD COUNTY  
LIBRARIES

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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To say that 2020 was a year like no other is certainly an understatement. We experienced a global pandemic. COVID-19 impacted all of us in some way. Those of us fortunate enough to avoid getting sick still experienced fear, isolation, and stress. Beyond the pandemic, Garfield County experienced a shaken economy, social unrest, and wildfires. Throughout all of this, I'm proud of the fact that our staff remained resilient, that our libraries kept delivering essential services, and that our buildings remained open throughout most of 2020.

Our staff and libraries remained committed to improving the quality of life of our residents and to helping our county's children learn to read so that they can excel in learning and become our future leaders. In 2020 our talented and dedicated staff worked tirelessly to pivot many of our bedrock services to an online environment. We launched online story times and events. We added online resources such as movies, homework help, an encyclopedia, and we vastly expanded our e-book collection.

We knew that parents were working from home or looking for work from home, and we knew that children were attending school remotely. Yet, many residents continue to lack high-speed internet in their homes. In order to get more residents connected to work and school, we purchased sixty mobile hotspots and made them available for home use. In 2021, we will add loanable laptops to our collection to help those who continue to have multiple family members working and/or learning from home.

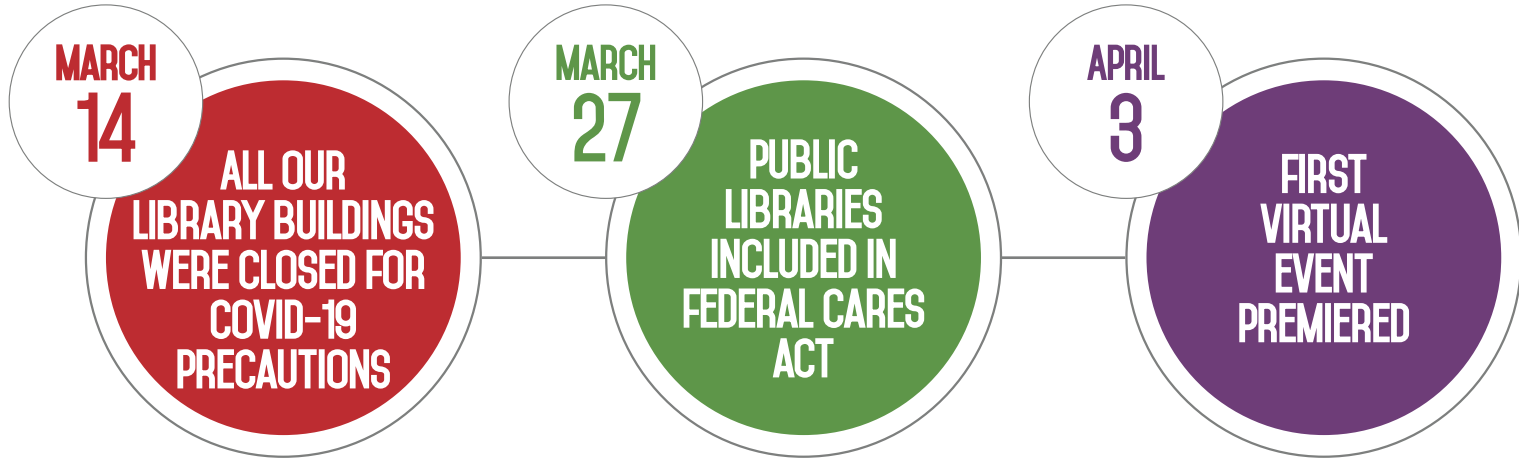
If there was any silver lining to COVID-19, it was that it inspired library staff to quickly develop services that have already become extremely popular, such as our online events and story times. Thousands of residents have attended these online classes and events, and we will continue to offer these online options in 2021 and beyond.

I'm excited about our future. I look forward to 2021 and the "new normal." As vaccines become available and the prevalence of COVID-19 subsides, we will resume in-person library events and we will set a timeline for expanding library hours.

I want to thank the residents of Garfield County for your continued support of our libraries.

-Brett W Lear, Executive Director

# 2020 ..... A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER



In 2020, we focused on helping our residents navigate through uncertainty, isolation, unemployment, and stress. Our communities simultaneously faced a pandemic, an economic downturn, social unrest, and wildfires. Our library staff responded quickly to adapt our services and programming to continue to conveniently and safely meet the needs of the community even during quarantine.

MAY  
11

OUR  
LIBRARY  
BUILDINGS  
REOPENED WITH  
LIMITED HOURS &  
SERVICES

JULY  
20

EXPANDED  
OPEN HOURS TO  
PRE-PANDEMIC  
LEVELS WITH ONLY  
MINIMALLY LIMITED  
SERVICES

AUGUST  
27

FIRST  
IN-PERSON EVENT  
HELD OUTSIDE WITH  
SOCIAL  
DISTANCING



IN THIS UNPRECEDENTED TIME, THE LIBRARY WAS GREAT ABOUT COMMUNICATING, PRACTICING THE BEST PROTOCOLS FOR SAFETY, AND PROVIDING A VAST ARRAY OF SERVICES. THANK YOU TO ALL THE GREAT PEOPLE WHO MADE THE LIBRARY AN EXTRA SPECIAL ANCHOR-IN-THE-STORM THIS PAST YEAR.

-DEBBIE W.



# MATERIALS TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

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In response to increasing needs and desires of our community, we grew our online collection of materials in 2020. This included e-books and e-audiobooks through OverDrive along with the addition of other platforms and content. The library added streaming access for movies, TV shows, skills training, and documentaries through Kanopy and Hoopla.

When schools transitioned to online learning, we realized it was important to add school and homework help for all ages - as well as for parents and teachers. We added Scholastic Teachables with downloadable lesson plans, Bookflix which pairs animated stories and nonfiction e-books, World Book Online encyclopedia, and free 1-on-1 homework help through Brainfuse. We also added *The New York Times* online and CreativeBug for those seeking information and creative resources.

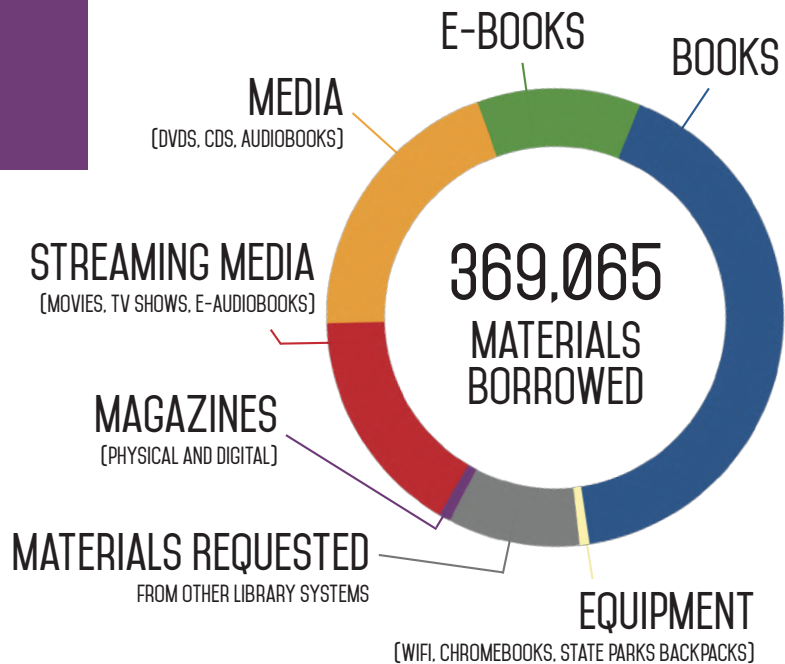
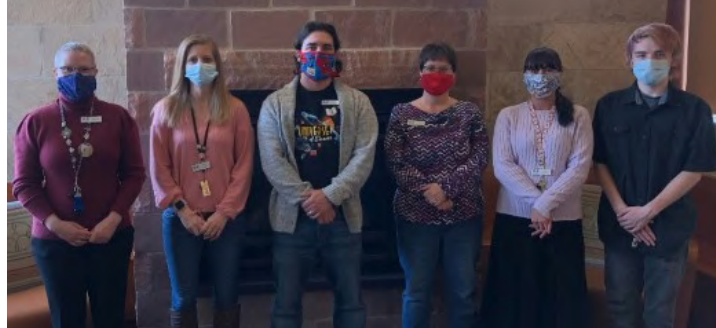


# FAST FACTS

LIBRARY  
MEMBERS:  
68,187

WEBSITE  
VISITS:  
188,627

WIRELESS  
SESSIONS:  
55,337



# PIVOTING EVENTS TO THE **ONLINE LANDSCAPE**

We provided approximately 275 livestream and/or recorded virtual events in 2020 as well as approximately 50 safe in-person events such as outdoor events, scavenger hunts, and take home activity kits. We also contracted with local musicians to provide virtual and/or in-person outdoor concerts at a time when few live concert venues were available.

“**WE LOVE THE ‘STORYTIME AT HOME’ AND MAKE SURE TO WATCH THE NEW ONE EACH WEEK. MY TWO BOYS WERE ABSOLUTELY THRILLED TO RECEIVE A ‘STORYTIME TO GO’ BAG TODAY TO GO ALONG WITH THE ‘STORYTIME AT HOME.’ GARFIELD COUNTY LIBRARIES IS THE ABSOLUTE BEST!**

-JENNA B.



We also transitioned the popular “Business and Breakfast” series online and increased the frequency of it during the COVID-19 shutdown. This gave local businesses a free lifeline to learn and collaborate during a time of constant change and financial stress. These efforts led to the series winning the Colorado Association of Libraries’ highly-competitive “Library Partnership of the Year Award.”



# EXPANDING SERVICES **IN SPANISH**

Increasing the variety of books, e-books, and materials in Spanish was a priority in 2020. We not only purchased more titles, we also added a new high-quality vendor in order to expand the collection of Spanish language books for all ages.

We also greatly increased the quantity and variety of Spanish and bilingual events, hosting over 100 livestream



and/or recorded events from April through December. In fact, we hosted bilingual community conversations regarding how people experienced COVID-19 and how people's racial or ethnic identity impacts their life in our community. These virtual conversations are included in the book *Going Virtual: Programs and Insights from a Time of Crisis* published by the American Library Association.

# STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

## Resilient Communities LIBRARIES RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Garfield County Libraries was one of only twenty-five libraries nationwide to be awarded a “Resilient Communities” grant. We were designated as a Climate Resilience Hub and worked with local partners to provide an array of community events on the topic.

“Lasso a Library Card”  
25 local business participated  
912 new/renewed library cards



“ I’M SO EXCITED TO BE WORKING WITH GCPLD BECAUSE THE MISSIONS OF OUR ORGANIZATIONS ARE VERY SIMILAR IN THE SENSE THAT WE BOTH WANT TO KEEP THE COMMUNITY INFORMED.

-BRYCE JACOBSON, POST INDEPENDENT



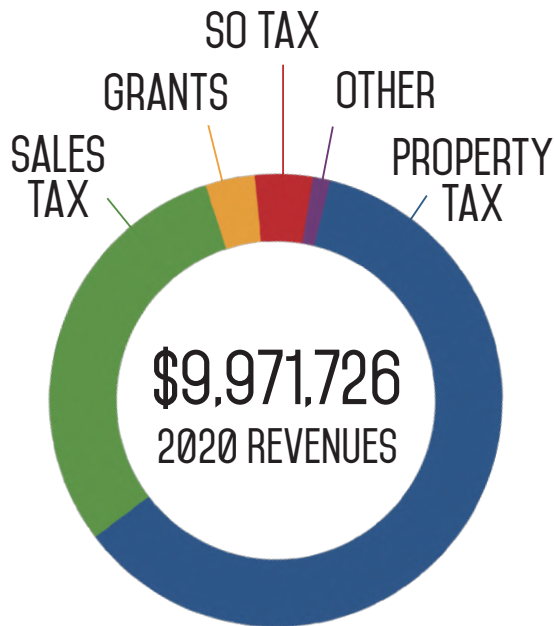
Garfield County Libraries is now a member of the Hispanics in Local Leadership Committee (HILL) and has formed strategic partnerships with the *Post Independent* and Western Slope Veterans Coalition (WSVC)

The year began with great enthusiasm around ballot measure 6A being approved by voters in 2019, resulting in the funding needed to place the library district on a path to financial sustainability.

The economic impacts of the pandemic were initially unknown, but as the year unfolded, we saw our sales tax revenue stabilize and recover. Additionally, through the Federal CARES Act, we were recipients of grant funding that reimbursed for expenditures incurred in responding to the COVID-19 emergency.

Through this funding we were able to launch a wireless hotspot lending program that kept families connected to work and school from home during the pandemic.

We don't know what 2021 will bring, but the Library District's financial position remains healthy heading into the new year.



OUR LIBRARIES  
ARE IN A  
HEALTHY  
FINANCIAL  
POSITION

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# LOOKING AHEAD

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In 2020, our libraries and staff focused on helping our residents navigate through uncertainty, isolation, unemployment, and stress. Looking ahead, Garfield County Libraries will continue to act as a community partner and provide information and answers that help guide people through these unprecedented times. We'll also continue to offer events, movies, games, and other services that bring hope, wonder, and comfort to our residents.

Our future is bright. We'll continue to buy more print books and e-books to meet the needs of our residents. We'll also continue to offer a full schedule of educational and recreational events for seniors, children, and people of all ages. In late 2021, we will be one of the few libraries in the country to receive a traveling exhibition from the American Library Association called "Thinking Money for Kids." We will expand our efforts to connect our residents with the technology they need to stay informed, get online, work from home, and engage in remote learning. We will begin loaning laptops to help people stay connected from home and elsewhere.

And finally, once COVID-19 has subsided we will expand our hours and open our libraries on Sundays!

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STORY

