



Annual Report to the County Commissioners – 2018

Just as Pines & Plains Libraries increased material purchases and computing power in 2017, we have an unprecedented opportunity to significantly improve what we do for Elbert County taxpayers in 2018. Booming state and local economies have provided the District with increased revenue, and we're using that revenue to make our libraries better to serve our many patrons.

We believe in enriching the life of every Elbert County citizen through access to literacy in many forms, education, socialization and entertainment. Our core values of empowerment, adaptability, and good humor reflect why every library employee and stakeholder is passionate about achieving that vision. In 2018, we are satisfying demands specifically asked for by our communities in our 2016 public survey. This will help us achieve a number of key strategic goals:

1. We have expanded and adjusted hours: The Kiowa Library is now open on Saturdays. Elizabeth and Simla will stay open for an extra hour during weekday evenings. Our citizens called for more hours during 2015 needs assessments. We're answering that call.
2. We're getting all new computers: These computers are free to use for all citizens, and they will be significantly faster than our old computers. Surveyed citizens asked for better technology, and we have responded to that need.
3. We are funding more and improved programs/events for all ages: In addition to our creating a new, specialized position for programs, we have budgeted for more expert speakers and teachers to provide our customers with "free" learning opportunities. These opportunities include:
 - Improved Early Literacy Storytimes, which give kids the foundation they need to read.
 - Homework help for kids and teens that enables those who are struggling in a subject to get the attention they need to turn their grades around.
 - Games and food for senior citizens
 - Knitting, gardening, and crafting groups for adults to share and build knowledge
 - Free Career Online High School and GED Tutoring that put adults on a positive trajectory towards better education and jobs.

These are just a few of the essential, life-changing activities that we will host around the county every day.

4. We've created new full-time jobs, with benefits, to Elbert County citizens: These new Library Service Leads started in early January. They're busy with extensive training to help us become the best organization at customer service in the County.

Pines & Plains Libraries is providing a return on investment to taxpayers through these added services, but I also wish to reflect on the successes we experienced in 2017, and since the District gained new and consistent leadership in 2015.

Fiscal Responsibility. We're steadily increasing our financial reserves each year, and we anticipate the complete pay-off of our Elizabeth facility Lease Purchase Option by, at the latest, 2021. Today's Administration has added in-demand products while building capital. Fiscal discipline, sound governance, and adaptive management have already begun to bear fruit. We strive to be good stewards of public funds, and it shows. Most of the credit for effective leadership goes to the Board of Trustees. Their combined wisdom and expertise have helped us grow and prosper, with a positive future ahead of us. Library business is increasing as well.

By the Numbers:

- * Through the four library branches, we checked-out 130,000 items last year—or about six items for every Elbert County citizen.
- * 8,200 of those items were downloadable e-books and audiobooks.
- * 84,000 people visited our libraries.
- * 8,000 people used our in-house computers.
- * 8,500 visitors took advantage of our Free Wi-Fi.
- * 9,000 people attended in-library activities.

All of this is to say that we transform lives and help our communities thrive on a daily basis. "Thanks" for all of this belongs to Elbert County citizens, who voted to make us a District—independent of the County—in the year 2000. As the County grows, we look forward to better serving, enhancing and enriching the lives of everyone in our communities.