

Library Report

Library making website more accessible

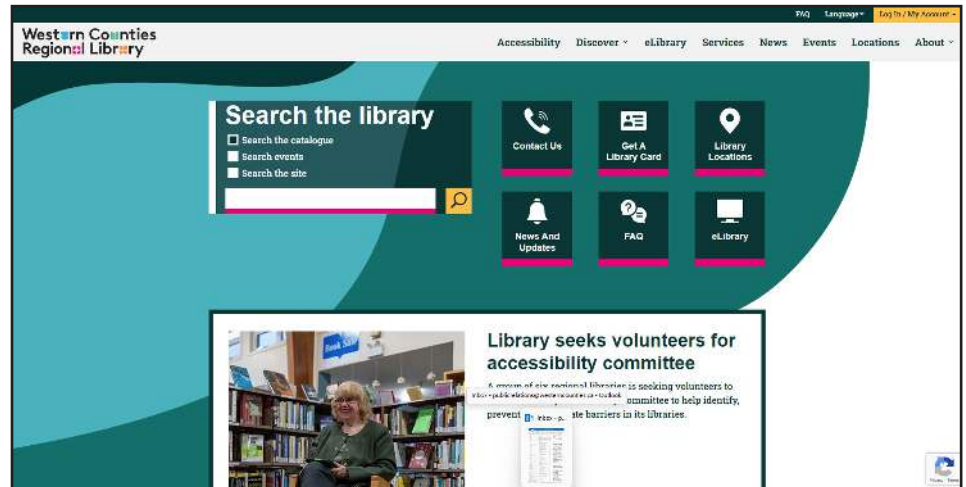
Western Counties Regional Library continues to strive to make its website more accessible.

“Last fall we had an accessibility audit done of our new website to see if it met the necessary standards,” says Executive Director Erin Comeau. “We discovered we had some changes to make to meet those standards.”

She says the library’s online experience needs to be welcoming and inclusive to people with a wide range of abilities. This includes people who rely on assistive technology to use library online services.

The changes should make it easier for a diverse range of people to use the website and access the library’s services online.

“There was a lot of background



The library has updated its website to meet necessary accessibility standards.

work done to the site, changes to the colours, providing alternative tags for images, and highlighting links that make the site more user-friendly,” she says.

The changes are part of the effort to make Nova Scotia an accessible province by the year

2030.

“Libraries are an important public service,” says Comeau. “We need to be a leader to help remove barriers and provide meaningful access to the entire library experience.”

The library website is westerncounties.ca.

Library outreach on the rise post pandemic

Post-pandemic, library outreach is on the rise as staff from Western Counties Regional Library set up booths at local exhibitions and summer events, school fairs, and regional information sessions.

“Outreach is an important part of interacting with the community and bringing our services to people and areas that might not be fully aware of what we offer,” says Executive Director Erin Comeau.



Library outreach highlights a variety of programs and services.

In the past two-and-a-half

months, the library has set up information booths at Yarmouth Seafest, Western Nova Scotia Exhibition, an open house at Digby Elementary School hosted by the home and school association, and the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia’s Community Week.

“These events allow us to connect with families and educators and support their educational and reading

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People surprised by variety of items to borrow

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goals while encouraging life-long learning,” says Training and Development Manager Shannon Raynard.

It allows the library to showcase the changing

programs and services offered at the library, highlighting a wide range of new technology and items available to borrow.

“During the exhibition, people enjoyed using the library’s Sphero robots,” says Public

Relations Manager Ian White.

“People were also surprised that they could borrow binocular kits, autism tool kits, Be-Fit Kits, radon detectors, energy meters, mobile hotspots and carbon dioxide monitors,” he says.

AROUND THE BRANCHES

Headquarters

Summer Reading Club finished on Aug. 26. Participation levels were on a par with 2022 except for teen numbers, which doubled over 2022.

Shelburne

The library had a new bike rack installed in September. The Shelburne Library Building Association received two grants to help fund the project, the Physical Activity Strategy Funding Assistance Grant, supported by the Town and Municipality of Shelburne and the Town of Lockport; and the Active Communities Fund, through Nova Scotia Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage. Library staff thank Elizabeth Acker, Benn Himmelman, and Adam Dedrick who helped make this happen.



McKay Memorial Library’s new bike rack.

Clark’s Harbour

Children flocked to the library to take part in the library’s Summer Reading Club maker table. Staff provided crayons, glue, scissors and little treasures like stickers, feathers, glitter, sea glass, and Styrofoam shapes and letters to allow the children to get creative in the library. “The little kids loved them,” says library clerk Yumiko Vaughn.

Digby

Library clerk Joanna Jarvis officially retired

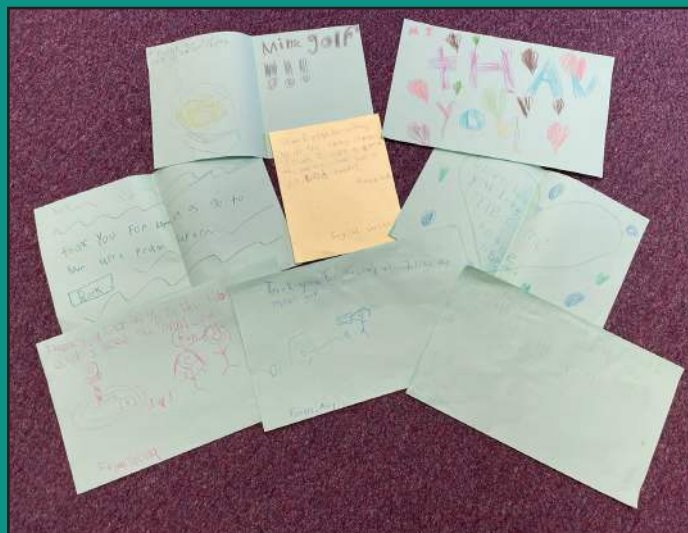
after 15 years at the library on Sept. 20, but her last day of work was Aug. 25. Congratulations, Joanna.



Joanna Jarvis, left, receives her retirement cake from branch manager Shannon Raynard on Aug. 25.

The library began its new hours of operation on Sept. 19. Early feedback on the change has been positive. “Many are very happy we no longer close on the supper hour, and being open Thursday mornings is much more convenient for patrons,” says library clerk Cindy Hazel.

Yarmouth



A group of children from Yarmouth Recreation summer day camp sent thank-you letters for Yarmouth library staff following a visit in August.