

Jewels of the County - Worth Checking Out

A Report on the Nevada County Library System

Summary

The Nevada County Library System consists of six libraries, five of which are circulating libraries, and one non-circulating historical library. Two libraries hold the distinction of being Carnegie Libraries, built by the Andrew Carnegie Foundation.

The circulating libraries contain extensive information in all forms: books, magazines, newspapers, audio books, video recordings, music recordings, and DVDs. Media is integrated as the industry progresses. Library staff is also equipped to instruct patrons on internet searches for specific topics. Each library is geared toward the subjects of its patronage and strives to enhance the materials for future needs. The libraries provide many free specialized programs for all ages.

The Friends of the Library is a non-profit volunteer organization that provides valuable resources to our local library system to assist in staffing libraries, raising funds, and hosting programs which enrich the community.

Reason for Investigation

The Nevada County Grand Jury (Jury) has the responsibility to investigate the functions of government and tax-supported agencies within the county pursuant to the California Penal Code. As such, the Jury may investigate the county's public libraries, including the management practices employed by such entities. As a result, the Jury elected to review the Nevada County Library System as a follow-up to the 2007/08 Grand Jury report.

Background

On December 19, 1857, a group of men in the mining town of Nevada City initiated a plan of a public library association. Gifts from six residents of the city set in motion origination of the libraries Nevada County enjoys today. The first library was housed on the corner of Broad and Pine Streets. Within two years, it had accumulated over 1,000 books.

The Andrew Carnegie Foundation built about 1,690 library branches between 1883 and 1929 throughout the United States, plus another 700 libraries in other countries. In 1901, this foundation contributed \$10,000 for the construction of a new library building located on the corner of Pine and York Streets in Nevada City. On October 4, 1907, a formal opening of the Nevada City Library was held with many citizens donating cash, furniture, and books to the new library. Both the Royce Branch in Grass Valley and the Doris Foley Branch in Nevada City are Carnegie Libraries, built by Andrew Carnegie's foundation. In August 1972, the Nevada City Grass Valley, and Truckee libraries were incorporated into the Nevada County Library System. In 1997, the Nevada City Library was renamed the Doris Foley Library of Historical Research.

Today, the Nevada County Library System consists of six library branches. The Madelyn Helling Library is the main branch library housing the administrative services for the County Library system. The Doris Foley Library of Historical Research is a reference library staffed by the Friends of the Nevada County Libraries (FOL).

FOL is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and improving library services in Nevada County.

Procedures Followed

The Jury interviewed the county librarian for an overall view of the state of the libraries. Members of the Jury visited each of the six libraries listed below for on-site inspections and interviews with the staff.

- Bear River Library
- Doris Foley Library of Historical Research
- Grass Valley Library - Royce Branch
- Madelyn Helling Library
- Penn Valley Library
- Truckee Library

The Jury also reviewed previous Grand Jury reports for comparison to current library conditions and functionality.

Facts

F.A.1. A circulating library is a library main branch, branch or station that offers materials for checkout by patrons.

- F.A.2.** A main branch library is a library branch that houses the administration of the County Library System and has a circulating library that is staffed by a professional librarian.
- F.A.3.** A branch library is a circulating library that is staffed by a professional librarian.
- F.A.4.** A station library is a circulating library that is staffed by a library technician.
- F.A.5.** The libraries offer a variety of materials including books, magazines, newspapers, audio books, video recordings, music recordings, DVDs, and internet services.
- F.A.6.** Circulating libraries have created the floating library system. A floating library system allows materials that are checked out at one library to be returned to any other branch.
- F.A.7.** FOL offer innovative free programs intended to stimulate interest in reading and promote cultural awareness and literacy.
- F.A.8.** FOL provide volunteers who are valuable assets to the libraries.
- F.A.9.** FOL raise funds by collecting and reselling previously-owned books and media.
- F.A.10.** FOL seek out gifts of materials, services, and monetary donations.
- F.A.11.** Money raised by FOL is donated to the Nevada County Library System for books, media, and other materials, as well as programming and equipment.
- F.A.12.** FOL also raise funds for use in building improvements, such as repainting of the Grass Valley-Royce Branch.
- F.A.13.** FOL fund the operating cost of the Doris Foley Library for Historical Research in Nevada City. Their volunteers provide staffing so that library can be open four days a week.
- F.A.14.** FOL host author discussions and other programs.
- F.A.15.** FOL sponsor a Children's Summer Reading Program.
- F.A.16.** FOL also support Nevada County Reads and Writes, and the Halloween Book Give-Away in Grass Valley.

Bear River Library

- F.A.17.** The library is located at Bear River High School, 11130 Magnolia Road, Grass Valley.

- F.A.18.** The library is located on school property; therefore, the public library hours are limited to non-school hours.
- F.A.19.** The public library hours are 3 pm-7 pm, Monday and Wednesday; 9 am-noon, and 1 pm-4 pm on Saturday. It is closed Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.
- F.A.20.** The library is a 3,000 square foot station which has a circulation in excess of 10,000 materials.
- F.A.21.** Patrons include students at the high school and members of the local community.
- F.A.22.** The library has two reading programs available: Storytelling Time held weekly for three to four year olds and a monthly Book Club for adults.
- F.A.23.** Much of the graphic art/posters displayed in the library are done by students.
- F.A.24.** The school does not charge the library rent.
- F.A.25.** The library provides books and services for students as well as the public, making it a mutually beneficial relationship.
- F.A.26.** Computer services are provided without an appointment.

Doris Foley Library of Historical Research

- F.A.27.** The library is located at 211 North Pine Street, Nevada City.
- F.A.28.** The library hours are 10 am-4 pm, Wednesday through Saturday. It is closed Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday.
- F.A.29.** The historical research branch is not a circulating library but carries items such as census indices, genealogy records, maps, past newspapers, vital statistics, assessor's maps, and extensive information on local history.
- F.A.30.** This historical reference library provides a microfilm reader so patrons can look up genealogy information, early deeds, marriage licenses, plat maps, and other historical data.

Grass Valley-Royce Branch

- F.A.31.** The library is located at 207 Mill Street, Grass Valley.
- F.A.32.** The library hours are 10 am-6 pm, Tuesday; 10 am-5 pm, Wednesday through Friday, 10 am-4 pm, Saturday. It is closed Sunday and Monday.

- F.A.33.** The library is a 6,000 square foot branch which has a circulation in excess of 193,000 materials.
- F.A.34.** The library has two floors: an upper floor dedicated to adult reading and computer access and a lower floor dedicated to children and young adult literature.
- F.A.35.** Popular children’s programs include Mother Goose Time for babies and toddlers every Wednesday at 10:30 am.
- F.A.36.** Summertime programs are held outside on a grassy area.
- F.A.37.** Although space is limited and there are challenges due to the building’s age, this library is used regularly by a dedicated patron base.

Madelyn Helling Library

- F.A.38.** The library is located at 980 Helling Way, Nevada City.
- F.A.39.** The library hours are 11 am-7 pm, Monday and Thursday; 11 am-6 pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday; 11 am-5 pm on Saturday. It is closed on Sunday.
- F.A.40.** This 15,000 square foot library has a circulation in excess of 360,000 materials.
- F.A.41.** The access road is being widened, and 17 parking spots will be added.
- F.A.42.** Two new tech rooms will be added which were donated by Nevada Union High School.
- F.A.43.** The library offers innovative programs for every age group, including:
- Preschool Story Time every Tuesday at 10:30 am
 - PAWS to Read, with George the Dog, every Wednesday from 3 pm-4 pm
 - Sing-along Time for the whole family every Thursday at 4 pm
 - The Teen Advisory Group on second Saturday of the month from 10 am-11 am to advise the library staff on programs for young adults
 - The movie in the afternoon for families first Monday of the month at 4 pm
 - The Book vs. Movie group first Tuesday of the month at 4 pm
- F.A.44.** The library children’s room includes extensive folklore and picture book collections.
- F.A.45.** The library offers eight public-use computers or laptops available to check-out.
- F.A.46.** The library offers a reading room where patrons can read in comfort.

F.A.47. The library provides instruction to assist the public in literacy skills and computer usage, including English as a Second Language (ESL).

F.A.48. The Madelyn Helling Library offers the Gene Albaugh Community Room for rental at \$10.00 per hour.

Penn Valley Library

F.A.49. The library is located at 11336 Pleasant Valley Road, Penn Valley.

F.A.50. The library hours are 2 pm-6 pm, Tuesday and Thursday; 10 am-2 pm, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. It is closed on Sunday and Monday.

F.A.51. The 1,365 square foot station has a circulation in excess of 33,000 materials.

F.A.52. Books, tapes, and other materials are selected according to the patrons' interests.

F.A.53. The books are arranged spine-up on low-level shelves to accommodate senior usage.

F.A.54. The library has two computers which are internet accessible.

Truckee Library

F.A.55. The library is located at 10031 Levon Avenue, Truckee.

F.A.56. The library hours are 10:30 am-6 pm, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday; 11 am-7 pm, Thursday; 10 am-2 pm, Saturday. It is closed on Sunday.

F.A.57. The 5,000 square foot branch has a circulation in excess of 86,000 materials.

F.A.58. This library has three Story Times which are all well-attended:

- Babes in Book Land (ages 6-24 months)
- Toddler Time (ages 18 months-3 years)
- Storytelling with Mrs. Fix (3-6 years)

F.A.59. This library carries a large inventory of Spanish language books as it has a large Hispanic patronage.

F.A.60. The library offers ESL and bi-lingual programs.

General Observations

F.A.61. The Jury interviewed representative staff at all library sites.

F.A.62. Members of the staff commended the County Librarian for her leadership and enthusiasm.

Findings

- F.I.1.** Nevada County citizens have access to a variety of materials, programs, and trainings at the six county library branches.
- F.I.2.** The floating library system makes it easier for patrons to locate, check out, and return materials from the circulating library branches.
- F.I.3.** FOL provide extensive and valuable logistical, financial, and educational assistance and support to the library branches.
- F.I.4.** Nevada County library patrons come from a variety of ages and backgrounds. The library materials and programs are designed and provided to accommodate this diverse patron base.
- F.I.5.** Computer training and access to computers are integral parts of the libraries' services.
- F.I.6.** FOL and the library staff are professional and well informed.
- F.I.7.** The County Librarian is recognized by her staff as being an outstanding leader.

Recommendations

- R.1.** The public should recognize the outstanding leadership and enthusiasm of the County Librarian.
- R.2.** The public should continue to use the excellent resources and free programs provided by the Nevada County libraries.
- R.3.** The public should recognize the contributions of FOL and the library staff.

Responses

None required