

Celebrating



Years

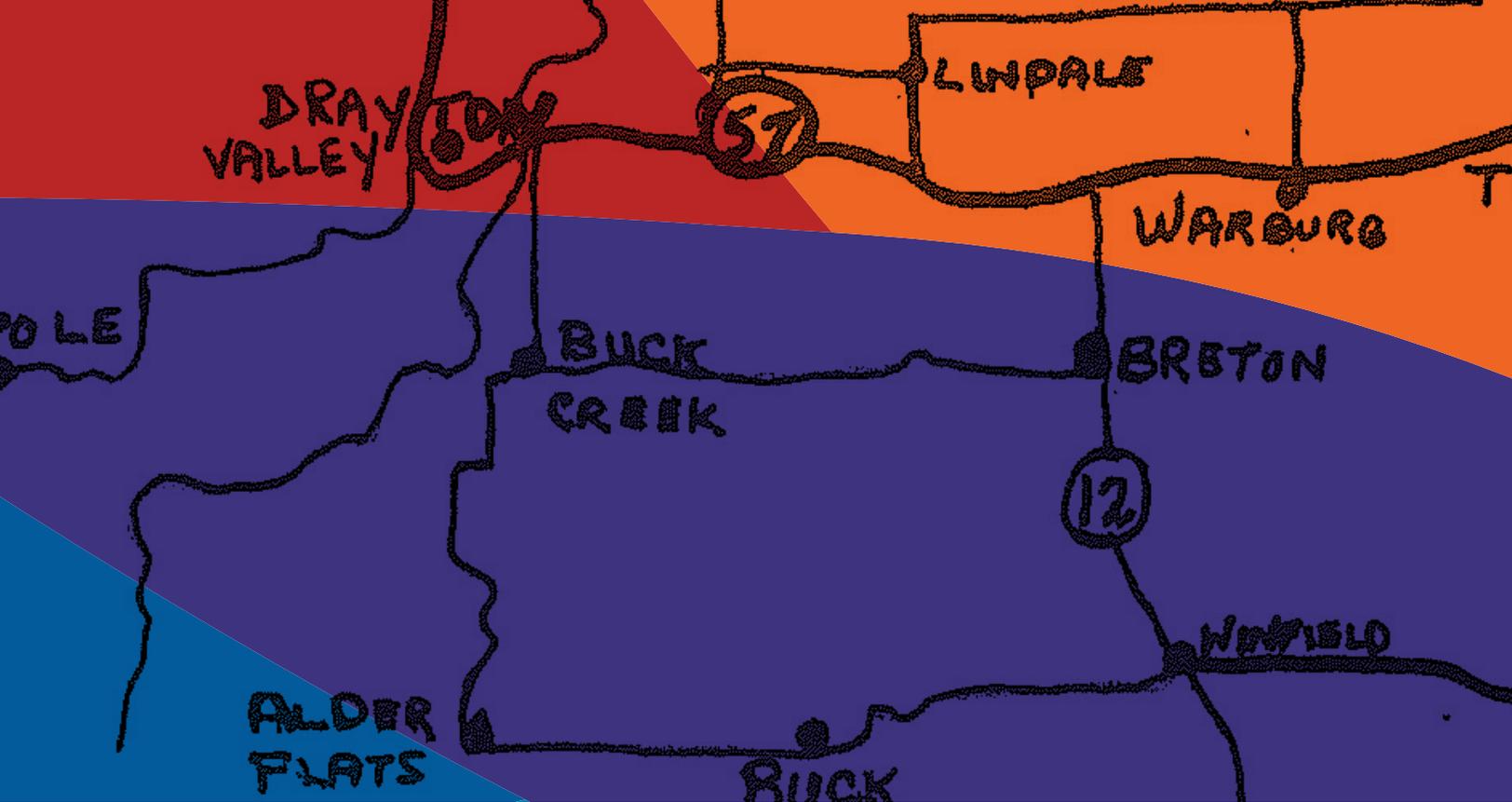
**2021 Annual
Report**





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Message from the Board Chair

Since 1971, Yellowhead Regional Library has been serving the people of this area. Although it now has 53 municipal and three school division members, YRL started out with just five: the counties of Barrhead, Lac Ste. Anne, Leduc, Parkland and Wetaskiwin.

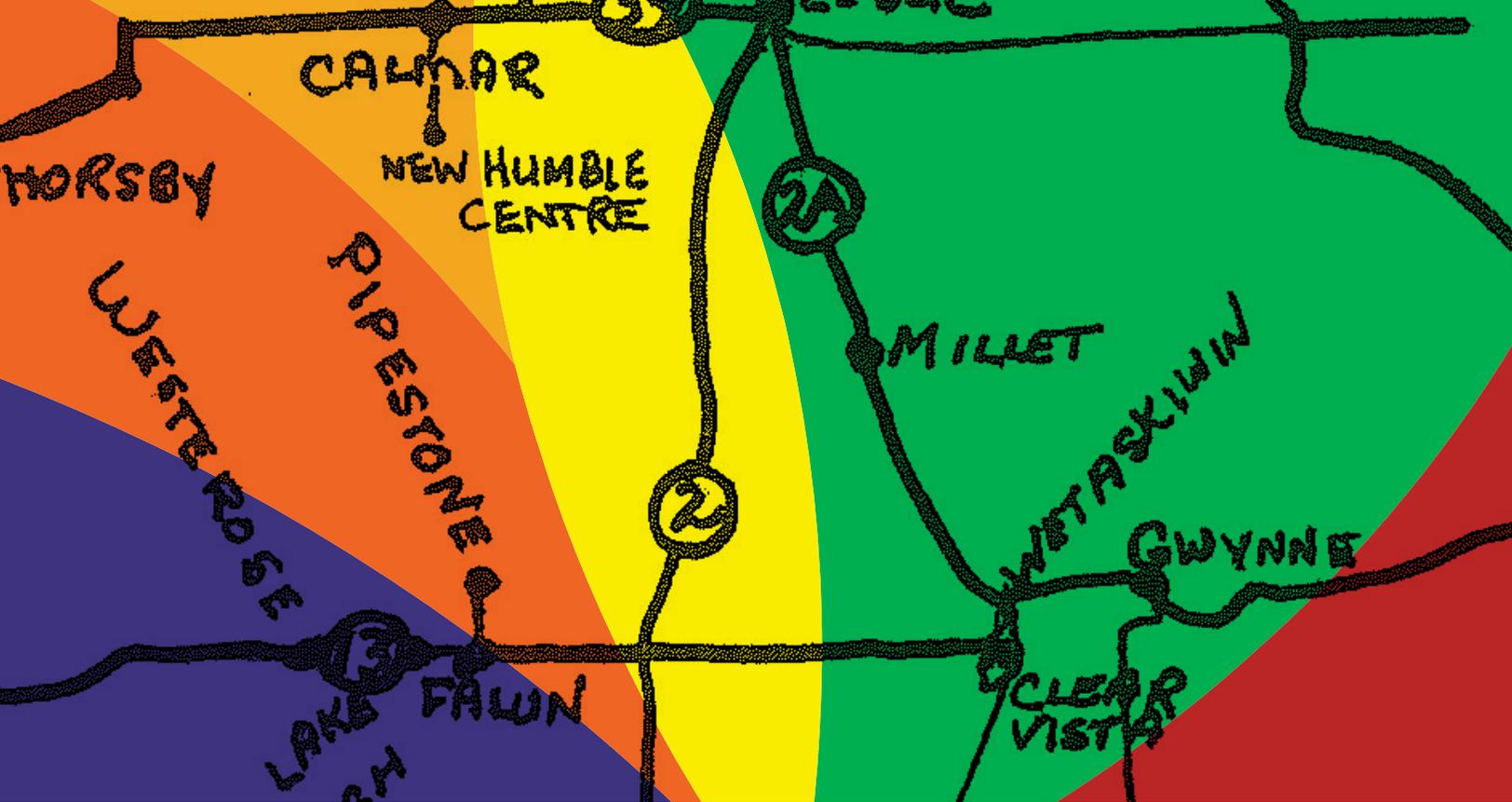
In this time we've seen many changes in library expectations and demands, technology and resources. Through it all, YRL has been at the forefront of emerging opportunities, strongly supporting its member libraries to keep pace with the times.

YRL's 50th anniversary reminded us of our humble beginnings and demonstrated the strength of the regional library system in supporting rural communities over the years. Yes, we still facilitate interlibrary loans, transporting materials from place to place. But we have also opened the world to Yellowhead region residents via a staggering number of online and digital resources.

Our past is a strong foundation. Our future is a bold vision.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank the YRL team, and all our member partners, for the vital services they provide to the community.

Hendrik (Hank) Smit, *Chair*



Message from the Director

Even though the COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt lives and organizations through 2021, libraries found ways to continue delivering a world of information and resources to residents of the Yellowhead region.

Businesses and organizations slowly reopened in 2021, happy to welcome back their patrons to in-person experiences. For libraries, YRL was there to support its members with an array of services fit for the times. This meant more online interactions between YRL staff and libraries, online training opportunities and consultations. And, while we all became well and truly “zoomed” out, we are grateful that technology enabled us to keep working together. Many of the supports YRL provides were shifted online seamlessly. The overarching goal, of course, was to keep our patrons connected to the information and materials they wanted.

Our numbers tell the story: more than 1.8 million visits were made to our online catalogue, and we made nearly 2,500 deliveries to member libraries.

I’m proud of the strong collaboration that occurs between YRL staff and member libraries; proud that, together, we deliver excellence for the people of the Yellowhead region. This strength is our greatest advantage.

Karla Palichuk, *Director*



Board of Trustees As of December 2021

Executive Committee

YRL Chair

Hendrik (Hank) Smit

Library Board Chair
Town of Hinton

YRL Vice Chair

Bill Elliot

Councillor
City of Wetaskiwin

Barb Maddigan

Board Chair
Northern Gateway School Division

Kathy Rooyackers

Councillor
County of Wetaskiwin No. 10

Bob Robinson

Library Board Member
City of Beaumont

Sally Kucher-Johnson

Councillor
Parkland County

Carla Frybort

Library Director
City of Leduc

Tara Elwood

Councillor
Village of Alberta Beach

Eric Meyer

Councillor
Town of Stony Plain

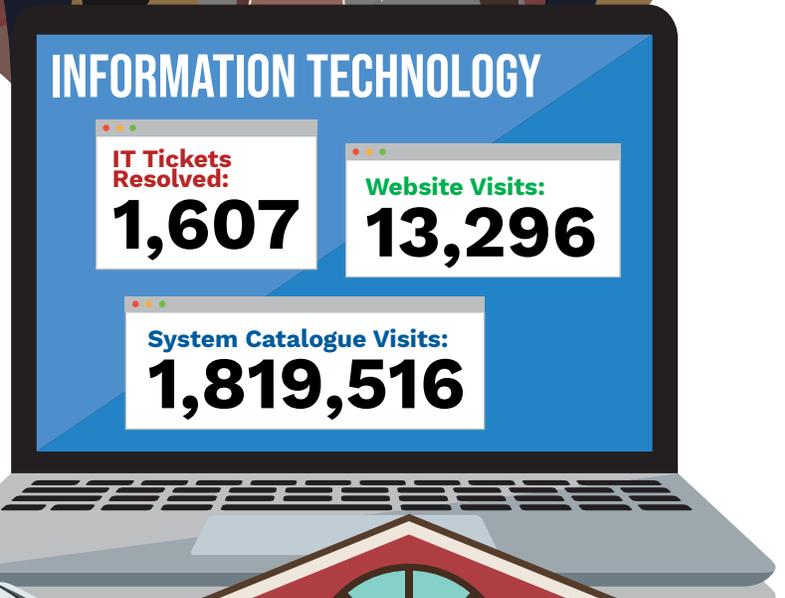
Wayne Rothe

Community Member
City of Spruce Grove

For the complete list of trustees, please visit yrl.ab.ca.

A Year in Review

By the Numbers



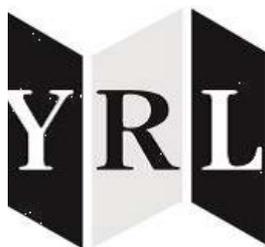
2021 Accomplishments

Celebrating 50 Years

- ➔ **Re-branded to reflect the inter-relationships between YRL and its members**
- ➔ **Created history and services videos**
- ➔ **Created a learning lab**
- ➔ **Purchased additional eResources**

During 2021, YRL marked its 50th year of service. The COVID-19 pandemic precluded in-person celebrations, but the organization found meaningful ways to both honour its past and advance its future. As a visible way to celebrate, YRL decided to rebrand the organization. A brand is much more than just a logo. It's a visual representation of the organization to its customers: what it stands for, how it operates, what it values. After research and focus groups, the new brand was created to represent the many inter-relationships that exist between YRL and its member libraries. Indeed, the points of the graphic are intended to illustrate the service locations with which YRL deals. The new look is fresh, bold and colourful – just like YRL itself!

From this:



to this:





New branding was just the beginning of new assets added to YRL to celebrate its 50 years. Two videos were created: one to reflect the rich [history](#) of the organization, and the other to explain the many [services](#) YRL offers. These videos are used to introduce YRL to new stakeholders and audiences who are unfamiliar with it.

In 2021, another initiative helps to keep YRL and its member libraries current and fresh. YRL created a learning lab, where 10 sessions were held to spark creativity and innovation as part of planning or problem solving. The lab features a large whiteboard, lots of natural light and a selection of facilitation tools to help staff and member libraries collaborate on new ideas for the communities they serve.

Lastly, YRL purchased an additional \$50,000 of digital content to share with its member public and school library communities. As of October, the following were available:

- ➔ YRL expanded its offerings in hoopla to include ‘flex’ access for popular eBooks and audiobooks, cutting wait times.
- ➔ YRL purchased more requests from patrons, adding more licenses to high hold items and popular content to OverDrive.
- ➔ Gale in Context databases for Elementary, Middle and High Schools were added for use by educators and students until December 2022.

Library Development Services Highlights

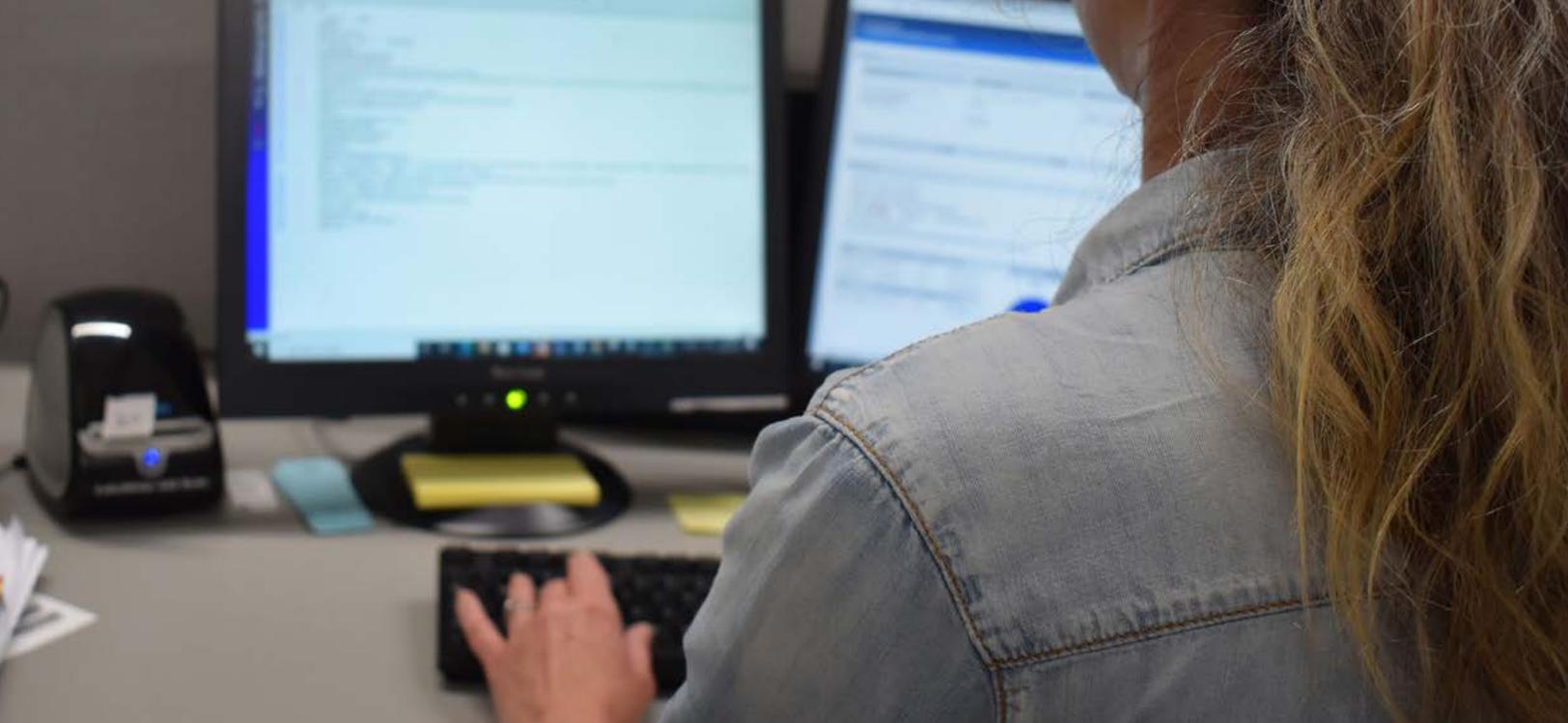
Makerspace and Programming Kits

In 2021, YRL added 10 new kits to its circulating collection of kits, providing more programming opportunities to member libraries. New kits included a Cree Syllabics Kit, a Cricut Maker Kit, a Fibrecraft Kit and an Electronics Teardown Kit.



On-Reserve/On-Settlement (OROS) Grant

YRL's 2021 Alberta Government Public Library Services Branch OROS Grant was awarded to Spruce Grove Public Library, who used it to fund Knowledge Keeper services that benefit the entire YRL system. The Knowledge Keeper provides in-person programs and services to our neighbouring First Nations. Activities include Conversational Cree, MMIWG2S activities, community pop-up Talking/Listening Circles and Indigenous Story Telling and Puppet Theatre.



Intranet

In December 2021, YRL launched its own intranet for member libraries. The result of a year-long project to organize, update and revise YRL's key training and procedural documentation, the intranet is more than a repository – it also houses YRL's new Kit Booking app, a Puppet Inventory, Incident Reporting Tool, onboarding resources for staff and managers, various contact lists and a place for YRL member libraries to interact and engage with one another.

Did you know?

Ancestry Home Access

During 2021 YRL and Ancestry Library Edition provided home access to Ancestry search databases. YRL patrons accessed this resource **1,671 times.**





Core Competencies Project

Library work encompasses a wide range of knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) across a variety of domains. Core competencies help support effective library work by identifying behaviours that are associated with the mastery of these KSAs in the workplace. In 2021, YRL worked with member libraries to develop a shared set of core competencies to reflect the operational experiences of staff working within the region supported by YRL. Organized into six thematic domains, these competencies are used to guide hiring and recruitment, inform performance management, identify professional development opportunities and more.

Learning Opportunities

Stronger Together Annual Virtual Conference

On September 22-24, 2021, Parkland Regional Library System, Peace Library System, The Alberta Library and Yellowhead Regional Library hosted the second Stronger Together Virtual Conference. The conference consisted of 23 learning sessions, two wellness sessions, two keynotes and a pre-conference keynote. There were 1,126 registrants from six different countries.



Homelessness Academy

YRL licensed a series of training tutorials called a “Librarian’s Guide to Homelessness.” The course, developed by Ryan Dowd, offers library staff the tools they need to work with customers experiencing homelessness, as well as tools on how to compassionately solve problem behaviours from troubled individuals.

Collections and Resource Sharing Highlights

Purchasing Catalogue Records

YRL purchased more catalogue records from United Library Services to help member public and school libraries receive their new items more efficiently, and allow more staff time on project support for collection development in libraries.

Collections Reporting

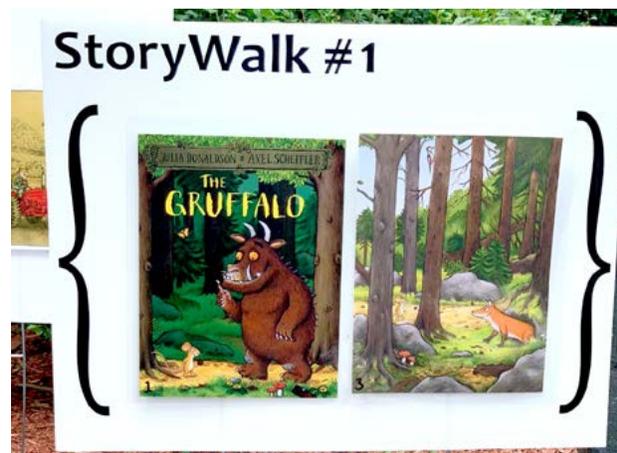
YRL developed its knowledge of collections reporting, allowing staff to support member public libraries to complete these projects:

- Evaluation of the current diversity, equity and inclusion in a member library's collection to help them in establishing a collection development plan.
- Diversity audit on a member library's children's collections to help guide them in their future collection development, specifically looking at expanding the languages featured in their children's collections to include Cree, German, Spanish and French.
- Classification of a library's adult fiction section by genre to help staff and patrons navigate their collection easier and find books that interest them.

Deakin Kits Collection

YRL accepted a gracious donation of a selection of titles from Dr. Andrea Deakin's personal collection. The titles have been sorted into nine different collections and

cover a range of themes and subjects including animals, Christmas, juvenile fiction, poetry and more.



YRL created a StoryWalk Kit based on large-scale drawings that were donated from the stories and illustrations of Maurice Sendak.

Each kit contains wonderful books chosen by Dr. Deakin herself. The entirety of a kit, or individual books within, can be checked out by YRL members.

Did you know?

Top five OverDrive trending books and formats for 2021



#1

The Aviator's Wife
ebook



#2

Throne of Glass Book 1
ebook



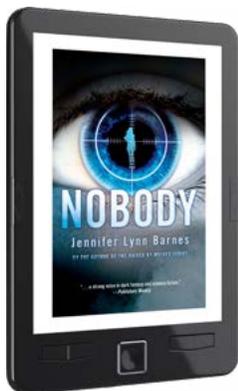
#3

The Drowning House
ebook



#4

Firefly Beach:
Hubbard's Point
Series, Book 1
eaudiobook



#5

Nobody
ebook

There were
225,552
checkouts in 2021.



Technology Services Highlights

Websites Training and Enhancements

YRL created a Website Training Course, a series of video modules for public library staff covering all aspects of website development. Videos are broken down into short, manageable topics that allow users to find what they need quickly.

YRL made it possible for member public libraries to put record sets on pages other than the homepage, and created custom colour options for special notice banners.

Password Manager

In an effort to reduce the cybersecurity risk posed by weak and reused passwords, and increase the convenience of creating and remembering strong passwords, YRL rolled out Keeper Security Password Manager to YRL staff and member public library managers.

“I totally didn’t understand or see the need for Keeper. Once I got the help, I feel so much safer now. That is my takeaway, I FEEL SAFER! In a world that can mess you up online that is a great feeling.”

Member Public Library Manager

Click & Collect via the TRACpac App

YRL implemented Click & Collect, a socially distanced way to provide curbside service to library patrons. YRL provided training and support to libraries that chose to implement the service.

Cybersecurity Training

YRL provided cybersecurity training to staff and member libraries in an effort to help protect our community and members from malicious cyber threats.

Did you know?



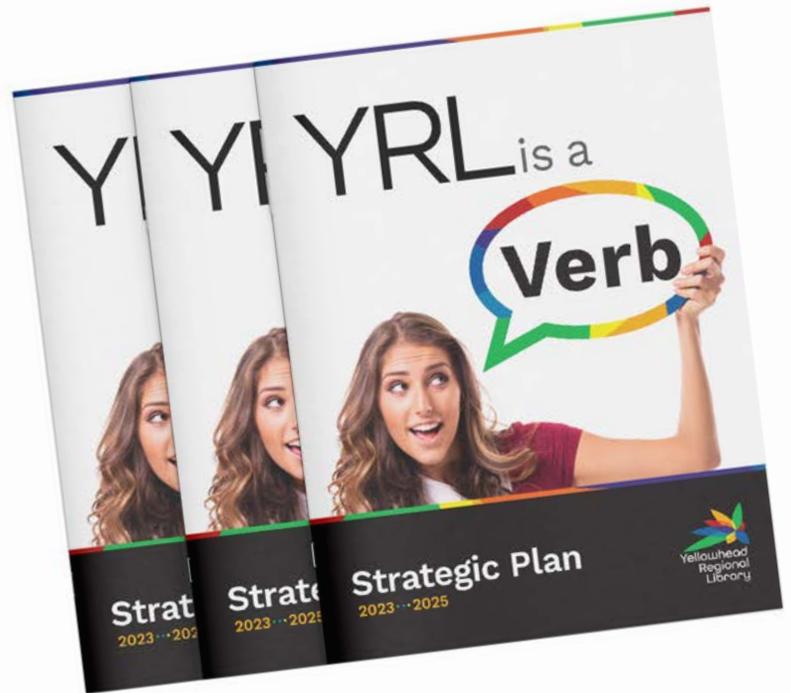
YRL made LinkedIn Learning available, and in 2021:

- ➔ **566** hours of training were reviewed
- ➔ **Most popular video:**
Excel Essential Training for Office 365
- ➔ **13,383** patrons viewed LinkedIn Learning

2023-25 Strategic Plan

- ➔ Focus groups were held to determine future requirements
- ➔ Plan of Service draft started

Every three years, library systems in Alberta must create and submit a Plan of Service to the Alberta Government. As the current Plan was coming to the end of its term, YRL began to create its 2023-25 Strategic Plan. Several focus groups were held, facilitated by a third-party consultant, to gather robust information and ideas for YRL's next Plan. Work continued into early 2022 and will be submitted in accordance with the required deadlines.



Advocacy

- ➔ Supported the Board with resources to inform Councillors and candidates for municipal election
- ➔ Participated in the Advocacy Committee, jointly with Parkland Regional Library System

An ongoing role for YRL, advocacy efforts serve to educate and inform decision makers about the importance of libraries in their communities. During the 2021 municipal election, YRL supported member libraries to provide information to candidates and newly-elected Councillors. Support from decision-makers is critical to ensure the continuing availability of essential library services in communities.

Corporate Stewardship

- ➔ **Continued work in support of a psychologically safe workplace**
- ➔ **Completed a compensation philosophy policy**
- ➔ **Began work to update several internal policies**
- ➔ **Found staffing efficiencies and streamlined practices**
- ➔ **Hosted practicum students and interns**



Good corporate stewardship of YRL was a key priority for members of the leadership team. Several initiatives were undertaken to improve working conditions by updating and creating new policies to support staff. In 2021, YRL continued its efforts in support of psychological safety in the workplace. YRL's leadership works to ensure co-workers, suppliers or stakeholders will not embarrass or punish staff for speaking up. Further, YRL believes in the power of individual identity, and the right to a discrimination-free workplace.

YRL's Executive Committee completed a compensation philosophy policy, facilitated by a third-party consultant, which outlines the elements of total compensation for employees. It's important to understand how YRL approaches compensation, what's included and how it benefits employees.

With a view to continuous improvement, several staffing efficiencies were introduced and various practices were streamlined. YRL is committed to being a prudent steward of its resources in order to deliver the highest value to its members. As an example, YRL hosted practicum students and two interns (funded in part by grants from the Government of Canada) to provide YRL with support. These two librarians, new to the profession, both went on to get full-time positions at other Alberta library system regions once they had finished their contracts here. It was a valuable learning opportunity for YRL staff and the interns alike.



Financial Summary

YRL's external auditors completed the 2021 audit and prepared the Audited Financial Statements. These documents were approved by the YRL Board in the first quarter of 2022 and are posted on the YRL [website](#).

Return on Investment

With YRL membership, member municipal residents gain:

- ➔ Access to more than three million items in the TRAC collection.
- ➔ Free access to digital content, including more than 600,000 eBooks, 111,000 eAudiobooks, 300,000 music albums, 13,000 movies, 4,000 eMagazine subscriptions and 21,000 eComics, as well as additional shared eBooks with Parkland Regional Library System.
- ➔ Free access to 30 subscription online resources, including:
 - Ancestry Library Edition, a popular genealogical research resource.
 - Consumer Reports, for thorough consumer product information.
 - Grant Connect, linking Canadian charities with funding programs.
 - LinkedIn Learning, a preeminent source for video courses in business, computer technology, software and creative skills.
 - PressReader, offering access to local and international newspapers and magazines.
 - Solaro, a study and exam prep resource based on the Alberta curriculum for grades 3-12.
- ➔ Access to library collections across Alberta and Canada.
- ➔ Free broadband Internet connection via SuperNet and WiFi.

Yellowhead Regional Library

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