

GETTING CRAFTY



ALEISHA HENDRY PHOTO

Jane Boden works on her puffball Christmas ornament masterpiece during Ugly Crafts for Adults at the Fort St. John Public Library on Nov. 17.

STUFFED ANIMAL SLEEPOVER

DEC 1, 2016



ALEISHA HENDRY PHOTO

Ashleigh Paizee and her two-year-old son Tristan drop Wags the big stuffed dog off at the Fort St. John Public Library for the annual Stuffed Animal Sleepover.



FEB 2 2016

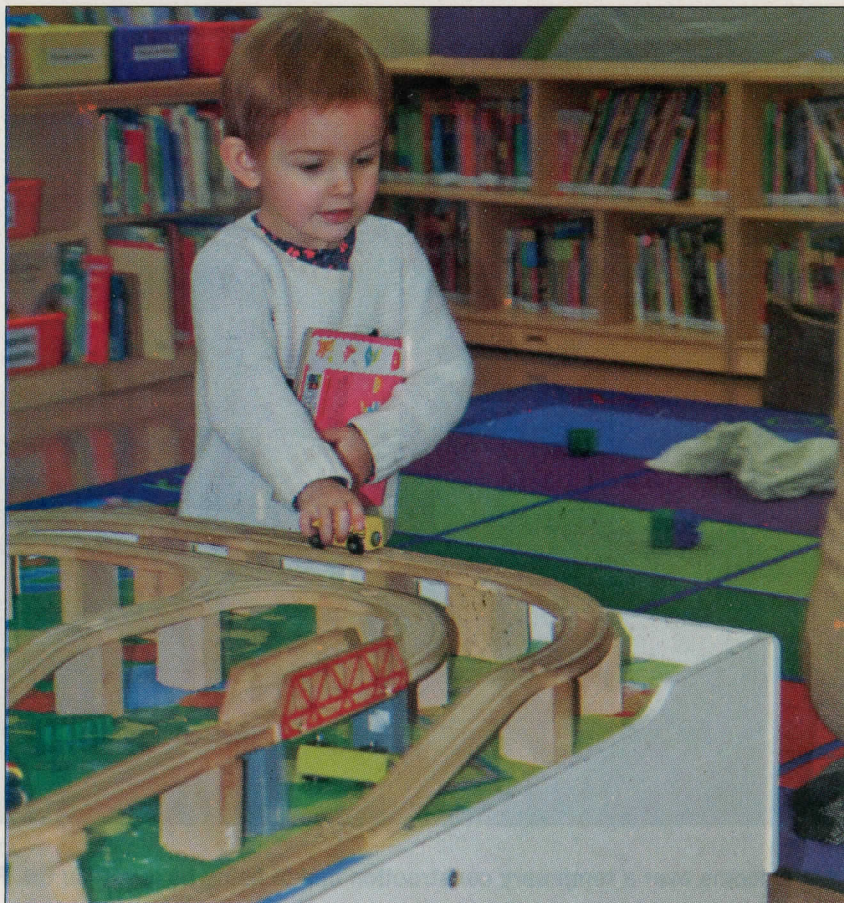
ALEISHA HENDRY PHOTO

BOOKS AND TENTS: Eight-year-old Aurora Jordan reads a book in her tent at the Fort St. John Public Library's annual Family Literacy Day Camp-In. **Turn to A8 for more camp-in photos.**

LOCAL NEWS

**KEEPING HER
BOOKS SAFE:** Faith
Fredlund, 2, keeps
a book tucked under
her arm as she
plays with a train
set on Wednesday
at the Fort St. John
Public Library.

BRONWYN SCOTT
PHOTO



Library feels 'disregarded' as council rejects extra funding



BRONWYN SCOTT PHOTO

Fort St. John Library Director Kerry France says she feels the library is being "disregarded" after council rejected its request for additional dollars to keep pace with the city's growth.

JAN 14, 2016

FORT ST. JOHN — The Fort St. John Public Library needs extra money for more staff, additional space and expanded programming, but it won't be getting a boost from the city.

Council voted at Monday's meeting to provide \$380,000 as a base budget grant to the library for 2016, short of its request for \$400,000.

The decision has library director Kerry France feeling the library is being "disregarded."

"It makes me worry for the value that the city places on library service for their community," she told the Alaska Highway News.

The library has been receiving \$380,000 each year from the city since 2008, France said, adding the library is the third-lowest local government-funded library per capita out of 71 public library systems in the province.

"We have traced our (funding) increases back to 1987, which were quite regular up until 2008... We received the last one in 2008," said France.

More than 80,000 people come through the library's doors each year, according to France. It's struggling to keep pace with the growth of the city, is short staffed, and has severe space limitations, France said.

"We are running at a third of (the) staffing (of) any library our size within the province," she said.

"We are also the lowest square footage per capita out of all libraries in the province."

The 21 employees who work at the library are unionized, "which makes a differ-

ence," she said, because each year there's an increase in wages.

"Everything goes up except for our funding from the city."

The library also receives funding from the provincial government, which is on par with what other libraries receive, and funding from Areas B and C of the Peace River Regional District.

In 2015, the library received \$119,999 from the province, \$30,800 from Area B, and \$65,000 from Area C, France said.

All told, the funding the library receives amounts to \$13 per resident per year. The next lowest funding per person in the region is Taylor, which receives \$39 per person. The Tumbler Ridge Public Library receives \$126 for each resident, which France calls "kind of an anomaly."

Council unanimously approved staff's recommendation not to provide the additional funding. There was no discussion on the subject.

Mayor Lori Ackerman could not be immediately reached for a follow-up interview.

However, when the library board presented to council in October requesting the extra funds, council responded with some hesitation.

Coun. Gord Klassen explained to France and library board Chair L.J. Lawson that the city has limited resources due to having a relatively small tax base.

Coun. Byron Stewart added that funding is a challenge, and that council would love to have "an endless pot" of money.



APR 7, 2016

ALEISHA HENDRY PHOTO

Sam Webb peruses through the many books available at the Friends of the Fort St. John Public Library's spring book sale on April 2. The Friends raise money through these book sales and other activities to provide items the library needs, such as new shelves or the iPads in the kids' section.

Arts & Commu



ALEISHA HENDRY PHOTO

Summer Reading Club organizers Shayla Faminow and Ted Sloan are ready to keep local kids engaged and learning this summer.

COMMUNITY

THERE'S A NEW LIBRARIAN IN TOWN



MATT PREPOST PHOTO

Miranda Polger, senior manager of retail solutions for North Peace Credit and Savings Union, tests out the new self checkout machine at the Fort St. John Library on Sept. 8. While the machine can't take phone calls or run library programs, it will take a load off staff who are working "at least a two person job at this point," Library Director Kerry France said. The library sees more than 80,000 visitors a year. The \$25,000 unit was funded by donations and sponsors, including NPCSU, the Peace River Regional District, ConocoPhillips and Community Futures. The library continues to be the third-lowest local government funded library per capita in B.C., France said, noting donors and sponsors are helping to fill budgetary gaps. "We're running on fumes and it's getting to be where we need to make some changes," she said. "Plus, we're always moving forward and looking at ways to make library use easier for everyone. And in doing that, we need staff, we need programs, we need technology."