



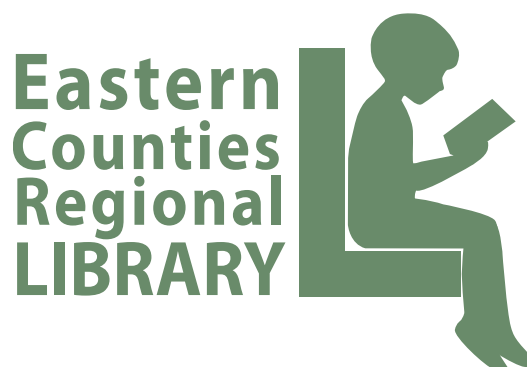
# **EASTERN COUNTIES REGIONAL LIBRARY**

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

# LIBRARY BOARD

## EASTERN COUNTIES REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD 2020-2021

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### **Ms. Shirley McNamara, Chair**

*Personnel Committee*

Appointed by the Board

### **Warden Betty Ann MacQuarrie, Vice Chair until October 2020**

*Personnel Committee*

Municipality of the County of Inverness  
(until October 2020)

### **Cllr. Alfred Poirier, Vice Chair as of March 2021**

Municipality of the County of Inverness  
(as of January 2021)

### **Cllr. Ronald A. Chisholm, Treasurer**

Town of Mulgrave  
(until October 2020)

### **Cllr. Crystal Durling, Treasurer**

*Personnel Committee*

Town of Mulgrave  
(as of January 2021)

### **Cllr. Everett Baker, Vice Chair January-February 2021**

*Personnel Committee*

Municipality of the District of Saint Mary's  
(until February 2021)

### **Cllr. Courtney Mailman**

Municipality of the District of Saint Mary's  
(as of March 2021)

### **Cllr. Miles MacDonald**

Municipality of the District of Guysborough  
(until October 2020)

### **Cllr. Mary Desmond**

Municipality of the District of Guysborough  
(as of January 2021)

### **Mr. Clair Rankin**

Municipality of the County of Richmond

### **Deputy Mayor Blaine MacQuarrie**

Town of Port Hawkesbury

### **Mr. Joseph Walsh**

Province of Nova Scotia

## A Message from the Chair:

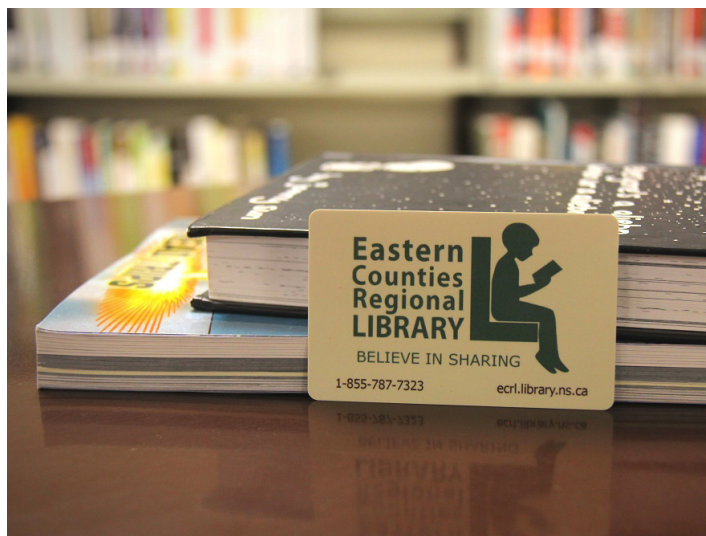
# SUSTAINABLE LIBRARY SERVICE

In my tenure as Eastern Counties Regional Library's Board Chair and my long involvement with ECRL this past year has been one of the most challenging I can recall. Who could have imagined that a global disaster, the COVID-19 pandemic, would so tangibly illustrate the critical role, as information and culture providers, that libraries fulfill? While everyone was in lockdown, ECRL staff were rapidly adapting library services to reach people in their homes with books, DVDs, and all the other collections, both virtual and physical, the library offers.

Fortunately, the implementation of new provincial funding in April 2020 meant that ECRL could afford to adapt services to COVID-19 pandemic conditions. Digital library services, comparable to those offered by Halifax Public Libraries, are expensive but are also services that residents of our region are entitled to have access to, particularly during a crisis. As well, after 14 years of stagnant funding this money also arrived in time to help deal with urgent facilities issues discovered at ECRL's Regional Office location. ECRL is the only library region in the province that owns and manages a building, which is difficult as the library funding formula has never provided monies for the related upkeep costs. This second issue meant that not only did ECRL's regional staff have to contend with navigating pandemic conditions and keeping everyone safe, they also had to plan and manage a significant facility upgrade project.

“ **Our frontline staff, library assistants working at branches, deserve a special thank you for handling all the safety procedures to keep themselves and the public safe.** ”

People don't fully appreciate how the regional staff and the services they provide are the backbone of local branch service. You would not have books on your library shelf if they had not been purchased, catalogued, and shipped by regional staff. These people are working to help everyone, regardless of where they live in ECRL's region. Renewing regional infrastructure was critical for everyone and I commend staff who managed both this and our return to service after the lockdown. I would also like to a special note of thanks to Board members who served on the building committee and Port Hawkesbury's CAO, Terry Doyle for his invaluable advice.



I was also incredibly proud of how staff managed the safe return to service at library branches, with the roll out of curbside pickup, library by appointment and then with capacity limits at sites. Our frontline staff, library assistants working at branches, deserve a special thank you for handling all the safety procedures to keep themselves and the public safe. As well, I would like to acknowledge and celebrate them for their caring and calm response to the stress the pandemic has caused the public. They were and are the masked face of ECRL's in-person service and community connection throughout this global crisis.

Reflecting on how ECRL handled the constantly changing conditions over the past year I am so proud that as ECRL's Pandemic Response plan made clear, the library's number one priority was always the safety of people, both those we employ and those we serve. Times of crisis show us our values. They also teach us. ECRL has learned resilience and made necessary adaptations to positively navigate a future uncertain with further environmental and socio-economic challenges.

**Ms. Shirley McNamara, Board Chair**

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## REVENUES

Provincial	\$957,892
Municipal	\$233,724
Other sources	\$14,920
	<hr/>
	\$1,206,536

## EXPENSES

Salaries and wages - general	\$813,609
Headquarter accommodations	\$64,323
Library projects, grants and programming	\$8,754
Amortization	\$133,370
Other	\$90,014
	<hr/>
	\$1,110,070

<b>Excess of revenues over expenses</b>	<b>\$96,466</b>
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Note: Complete audited financial statements are available at Library Headquarters.

**\$122,171 was spent on enhancing  
library collections and digital library services**



## A Message from the Chief Librarian/CEO:

# POSITIVE ADAPTATION

The COVID-19 pandemic reminded us all that the library is both a service and a place. It showed us that while the place was closed, the service was badly needed. It gave us the opportunity to be proud of the excellent service ECRL provides getting people books and other materials they need and enjoy.

Historically, the only thing ECRL has ever had plenty of, more than other library regions, is geography to serve. This environmental reality, pandemic safety protocols and an influx of new provincial funding all converged to enable positive adaptation. Ideally, everyone should be able to get library service even if they can't get to a library branch.

ECRL's first response to the crisis was to add a suite of digital services and enhance our current digital collections. Then, to ensure everyone could get library service, regardless of having an internet connection, ECRL promoted its toll-free number and offered Borrow by Mail service to all residents of our service area. This two-pronged approach, this umbrella level of regional library service, along with already having eliminated fines and old bills, effectively eliminated barriers to reading. Despite lockdowns, or whatever health concerns, travel difficulties, or economic reasons people may have, they now no longer have to get to a library space to use the library service.



Responding to adversity with this kind of positive adaptation required a tremendous effort from ECRL's regional staff. I applaud their willingness to learn quickly, to think of solutions, and most importantly to prioritize safety. Having created this umbrella of regional at home library service, covering everyone, they then immediately turned their focus on how to plan the safe, careful return to service at library branches when pandemic conditions allowed.

**“ Despite lockdowns, or whatever health concerns, travel difficulties, or economic reasons people may have, they now no longer have to get to a library space to use the library service. ”**

ECRL's frontline staff deserve a standing ovation, not only for returning to work in uncertain times or for doing their jobs, which they do wonderfully, but for having the courage to explain and enforce the pandemic safety protocols to the public visiting library branches. I know there were members of the public who didn't agree or understand the library's obligation to maintain the highest level of public safety for the vulnerable populations ECRL serves and this kind of communication couldn't have been easy for ECRL's branch library assistants. However, I also know there were many people who greatly appreciated ECRL's careful attention to safety, who were relieved to feel safe when they visited the library, and I hope that their support was felt by these staff. I want to commend them for helping to support their communities during our collective transition to the 'new normal'.

ECRL is entering year two of the pandemic well prepared to respond to conditions but also to find opportunities in our response to enhance public service whenever possible. The library's twofold identity as a both a service and a place gives ECRL a greater flexibility to keep people reading, learning, enjoying culture and information as they need to, when and how they want.

Finally, to reach more people ECRL must focus its efforts on what it does well and by celebrating and sharing that work as widely as possible. The future will offer public library service.

**Laura Emery, CEO**

# A YEAR IN REVIEW 2020-2021

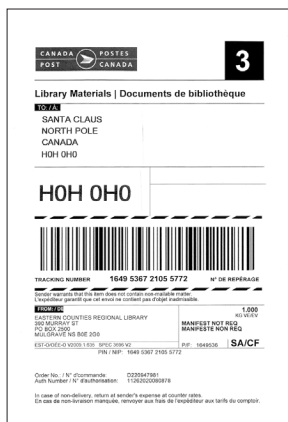
## APRIL

- All library branches closed due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Launched Lynda.com online access for ECRL patrons.
- Staff training about COVID-19.
- Contacted insurance provider about sharing physical items.
- Began planning the logistics of safely bringing staff back to Regional Office to provide Borrow by Mail service.
- Launched PressReader online access for ECRL patrons.
- Began checking library locations for insurance.
- Confirmed insurance coverage for Borrow by Mail service.
- Launched Consumer Reports online access for ECRL patrons.



## MAY

- Borrow by Mail service launched.



## JUNE

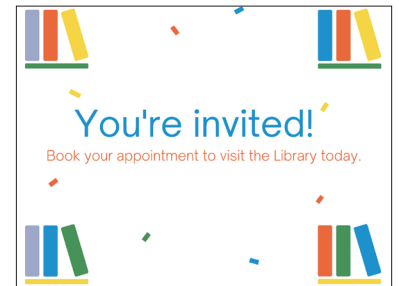
- ECRL Pandemic Response plan released.
- Amanda Campbell appointed as Branch Manager.
- TD Summer Reading Club launches online.

## JULY

- Curbside pickup rolls out at library branches.
- Library branches prepare for reopening for Library by Appointment.
- A.H. Roy & Associates, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Consultants, were retained to complete design work, produce tender documents (i.e. plans and specifications), and complete construction inspections for the HVAC upgrade and associated electrical work at ECRL Headquarters.

## AUGUST

- Library by appointment begins rolling out at library branches.
- Inter-library loan resumes across the province.
- HVAC and Electrical Upgrade at ECRL Headquarters project put out for tender.



## SEPTEMBER

- Board approves the contractor for a HVAC and Electrical upgrade at ECRL Headquarters.
- ECRL's Port Hood location is permanently closed.

## OCTOBER

- Work commences on the facility upgrade at ECRL Headquarters.

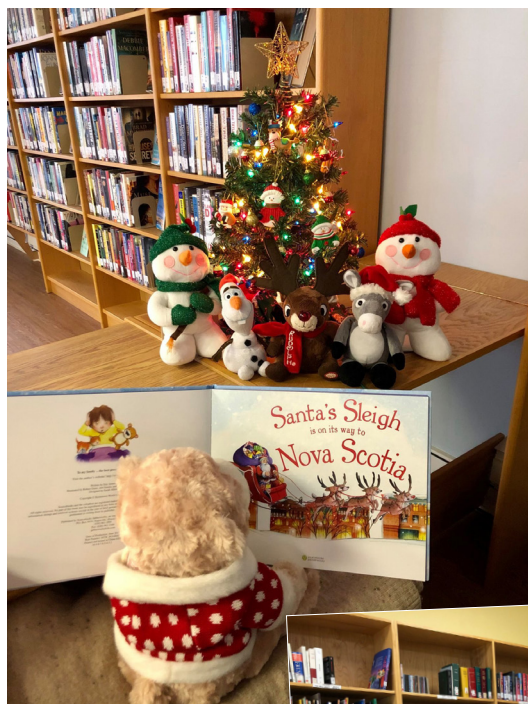


## NOVEMBER

- Heat pumps were installed and turned on at Headquarters.

## DECEMBER

- ECRL presented an online video series of local authors reading holiday stories.
- A new furnace was installed and turned on at Headquarters.
- Library branch collection rotation to refresh collections begins. Sherbrooke Library is the first location to be completed.



## JANUARY

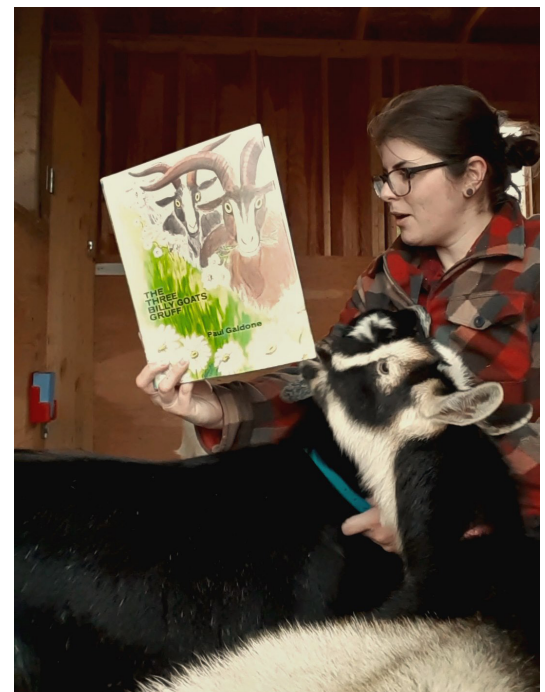
- ECRL featured in Guysborough Journal article headlined "Regional library stays relevant in tough times."
- Ventilation system components were installed and turned on at Headquarters.

## FEBRUARY

- Work was in the final stages for the facilities upgrade project at Headquarters

## MARCH

- St. Peter's Library and Port Hawkesbury Library offered Curbside Seed Pick-up to encourage gardening.
- Launched access to the NoveList platform to ECRL users.
- Work was substantially complete for the facilities upgrade project at Regional office.
- Funding alignment for the 2021-2022 budget year announced to the public to begin in April 2021.



# CIRCULATION STATISTICS

## 2020-2021

CIRCULATION - PHYSICAL CHECKOUTS	AT LIBRARY BRANCHES	VIA BORROW BY MAIL	OUTGOING INTERLIBRARY LOANS	TOTAL
April 2020	5	0	0	5
May 2020	21	296	0	317
June 2020	239	672	3	914
July 2020	1,189	451	110	1,750
August 2020	1,672	352	174	2,198
September 2020	2,121	381	266	2,768
October 2020	2,613	340	302	3,255
November 2020	1,769	328	287	2,384
December 2020	1,952	367	232	2,551
January 2021	2,842	416	276	3,534
February 2021	2,463	488	279	3,230
March 2021	2,975	531	340	3,846
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,861</b>	<b>4,622</b>	<b>2,269</b>	<b>26,752</b>

CIRCULATION - DIGITAL CHECKOUTS	OVERDRIVE	HOOPLA	TOTAL
April 2020	1,148	200	1,348
May 2020	1,347	198	1,545
June 2020	1,242	149	1,391
July 2020	1,361	127	1,488
August 2020	1,335	117	1,452
September 2020	1,202	129	1,331
October 2020	1,259	137	1,396
November 2020	1,163	231	1,394
December 2020	2,603	348	2,951
January 2021	3,120	430	3,550
February 2021	3,353	543	3,896
March 2021	3,573	480	4,053
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,706</b>	<b>3,089</b>	<b>25,795</b>



# DIGITAL LIBRARY SERVICES 2020-2021

	PRESSREADER		RB DIGITAL/ OVERDRIVE MAGAZINES	TOTAL DIGITAL MAGAZINES
	ARTICLES	ISSUES	ARTICLES	ISSUES
April 2020	14,979	888	113	1,001
May 2020	23,997	903	93	996
June 2020	19,128	547	84	631
July 2020	19,154	456	73	529
August 2020	17,298	534	80	614
September 2020	18,184	648	79	727
October 2020	24,606	573	101	674
November 2020	18,015	564	108	672
December 2020	21,980	781	66	847
January 2021	32,518	1,204	73	1,277
February 2021	24,334	765	161	926
<b>UNIQUE VIEWERS</b>				
February 2021				
March 2021	24,795	892	99	991
<b>Total</b>	<b>258,988</b>	<b>8,755</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>9,885</b>

LINKEDIN LEARNING	NEW USERS	ACTIVE USERS	HOURS VIEWED	ROCKET LANGUAGES	NEW USERS	ACTIVE USERS	SESSIONS
April 2020	37	37	31	April 2020	2	0	0
May 2020	6	43	45	May 2020	1	3	4
June 2020	0	43	2	June 2020	1	1	1
July 2020	3	46	3	July 2020	0	0	0
August 2020	0	46	0	August 2020	0	0	0
September 2020	1	47	0	September 2020	0	0	0
October 2020	2	49	4	October 2020	0	0	0
November 2020	0	49	5	November 2020	0	1	1
December 2020	1	50	3	December 2020	0	2	2
January 2021	4	54	3	January 2021	2	1	2
February 2021	2	56	0	February 2021	1	1	1
<b>UNIQUE VIEWERS</b>							
February 2021	5		2	February 2021			
March 2021	5		2	March 2021	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>

**ITEMS OF NOTE:** • Increase in monthly circulation of physical materials as the year progressed.



- Over 25,000 digital ebooks and audio borrowed.
- 100 hours of online learning (LinkedIn Learning)
- Almost 10,000 digital issues read.

# REGIONAL STATISTICS 2020-2021

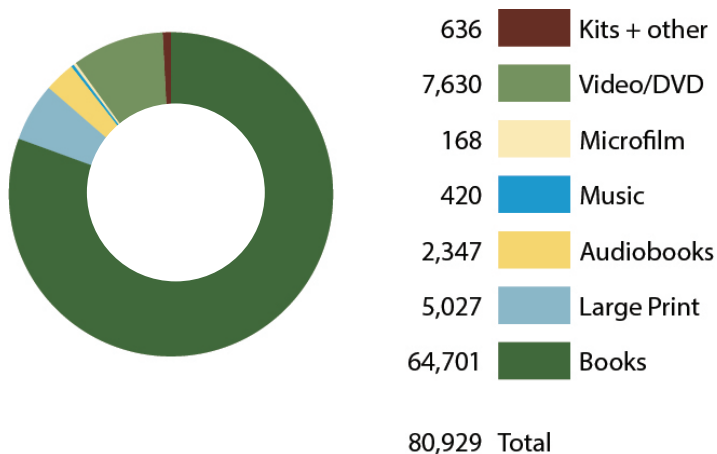
## REGIONAL LIBRARY ACTIVITY

	2018/19	2019/20	2020-21
Active registered users *	5,916	5,488	5,192
Library visits **	51,805	44,173	1,446
Open hours	12,488	12,804	2,033
Total Physical Circulation (ILS)	73,079	61,919	26,752
Programs	771	510	0
Program attendance	6,676	4,488	0
No. of Public Access Computers	34	29	11
Internet sessions (1/2 hour)	17,629	15,199	473
WiFi connections	45,106	89,277	21,187
ECRL website visits	26,088	26,903	28,687
Interlibrary loan (items lent)	4,475	4,041	2,269
Interlibrary loan (items rec'd)	2,895	2,574	1,453

\*Users that have used the library in the last three years

\*\*Based on manual gate count

## PHYSICAL COLLECTION



# LOCATIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

## HEADQUARTERS

390 Murray Street  
Mulgrave  
Tel: 902-747-2597  
Fax: 902-747-2500  
info@ecrl.ca  
membership@ecrl.ca

## ALEXANDER DOYLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

11156 Route 19 (*inside Dalbrae Academy*)  
Mabou  
Tel: 902-945-2257  
mabou@ecrl.ca

## CANSO LIBRARY

169 Main Street  
Canso  
Tel: 902-366-2955  
canso@ecrl.ca

## CYRIL WARD MEMORIAL LIBRARY

27 Pleasant Street  
Guysborough  
Tel: 902-533-3586  
guysborough@ecrl.ca

## DRS. COADY & TOMPKINS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

7972 Cabot Trail  
Margaree Forks  
Tel/Fax: 902-248-2821  
margaree@ecrl.ca

## MULGRAVE LIBRARY

390 Murray Street  
Mulgrave  
Tel: 902-747-2588  
mulgrave@ecrl.ca

## PETIT DE GRAT LIBRARY

3435 Highway 206 (*inside La Picasse*)  
Petit de Grat  
Tel/Fax: 902-226-3534  
petitdegat@ecrl.ca

## PORT HAWKESBURY LIBRARY

304 Pitt Street (*inside SAERC*)  
Port Hawkesbury  
Tel/Fax: 902-625-2729  
porthawkesbury@ecrl.ca

## SHERBROOKE LIBRARY

11 Main Street  
Sherbrooke  
Tel: 902-522-2180  
Fax: 902-522-2580  
sherbrooke@ecrl.ca

## ST. PETER'S LIBRARY

10036 Grenville St., Unit C  
St. Peter's  
Tel: 902-535-2465  
stpeters@ecrl.ca

## MAILING ADDRESS FOR ALL LOCATIONS:

c/o ECRL Headquarters  
PO Box 2500  
Mulgrave, NS  
B0E 2G0

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