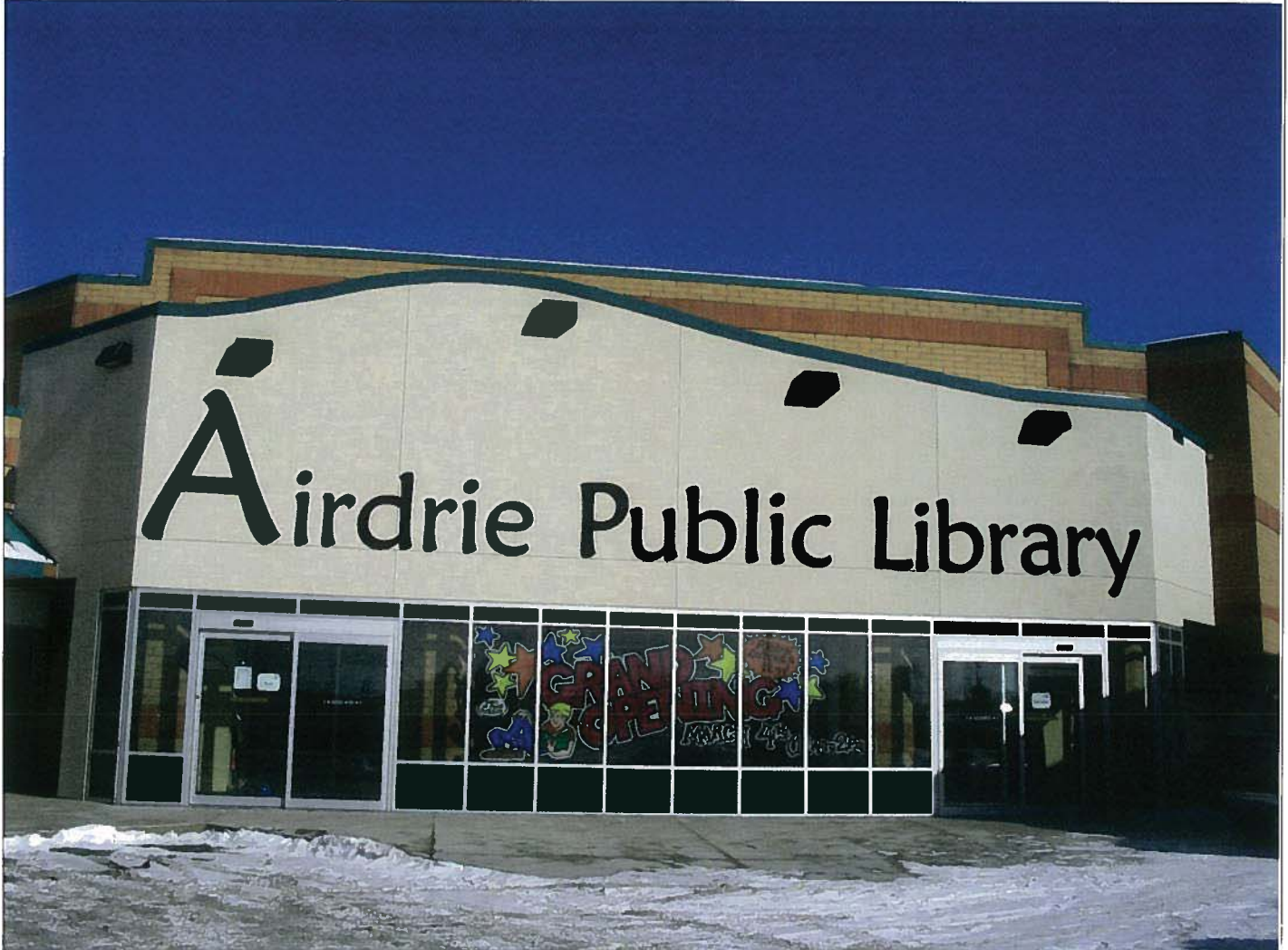


LETTER OF THE LAA

Issue Number 150
Spring 2006

Airdrie Celebrates New Public Library
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Plus:

Boys Like Funny, Action-Packed, Scary, Gross Stories

One Book One Community in Medicine Hat

**Home Sweet Home -- a New Web Resource About
Landlord and Tenant Law in Alberta**

**Enhancing the Capacity of Libraries to Serve
Patrons with Disabilities**

Airdrie Public Library Opens the Doors of Its New Facility

*Vivyan Oneil
Public Services Coordinator
Airdrie Public Library*

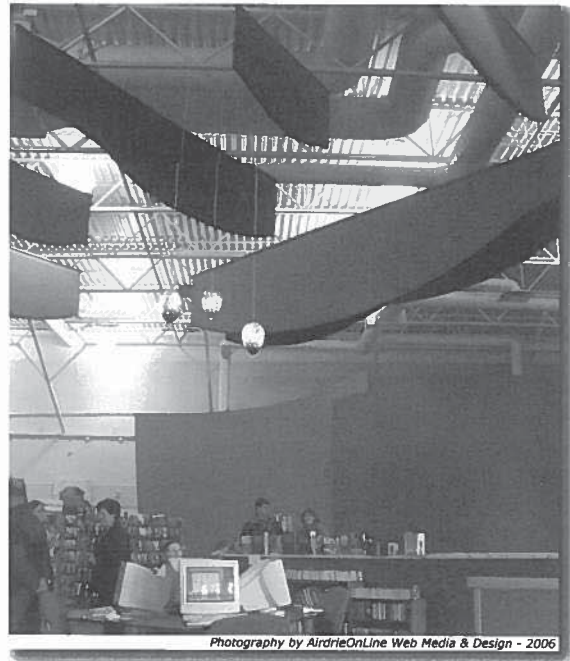
On January 3rd, 2006, Airdrie Public Library opened the doors of its new facility to the public. As we began to enjoy our new home, we thought it important to remember how far we've come. Our new building will actually be the fourth home of the Airdrie Public Library.

A look into the past...

- APL first opened its doors in 1972 in a 13 x 15 sq. ft. windowless room in the RCMP building. Marg Jensen was the first volunteer librarian, and patrons could come visit during any of the seven hours a week the library was open! Later that same year, the Library expanded to its own free-standing building located across from the Airdrie water tower.
- In 1977, the Library grew again, and moved into 1,500 sq. ft. at the Town and Country Centre, where Nellie Jackson was the first paid librarian. The collection now consisted of over 14,000 books and was open to the public 19 hours a week.
- The 80's and 90's were growing years for APL, with librarian Pat Evans handing the reigns over to Charles Ottosen, and with hours increasing to 48 per week by 1989. In 1991, City Council approved a library facility, which was a big jump in space, to 6,800 sq. ft. Library Director Mary Westcott replaced Charles Ottosen in 1993. The library then held nearly 40,000 items in its collection, and was open to the public 52 hours per week.

Our move this winter to the new facility included a host of new features, and added 40% more public space. Staff and patrons have been eagerly anticipating the new facility, and the Airdrie community has been extremely supportive of the Library's plan for a much-needed larger facility. A recent Needs Assessment demonstrated that the Library has garnered high praise from its patrons, and that Airdrie's sense of community was of utmost importance.

The new facility, designed by Calgary architects Sahuri, Hutchinson, Brzezinski featured:



Photography by AirdrieOnLine Web Media & Design - 2006

- A large and spacious entry vestibule designed to minimize the effects of inclement weather and allowing users to enter and exit the library with ease;
- A stroller coral and pack-up area;
- A high open ceiling designed to epitomize natural light sources and create a feeling of spaciousness;
- A quiet study area with connections for laptop computers;
- A warm and inviting reading lounge with fireplace;
- A designated teen/youth area;
- A larger and more inviting children's area with Storytime nook and colorful design elements;
- A bigger programming room with plenty of storage space;
- A streamlined circulation desk with two-tiered counters and pack up space; and,
- Of course, more room for books!

Our Grand Opening Event on March 4 was a huge success. Approximately 150 patrons, representatives of the Business Community, members of the Library Community, corporate sponsors and government representatives attended the event. Children enjoyed face painting and candy floss and temporary tattoos and popcorn were also available for the teens. An "Official Ribbon Cutting" Ceremony took place with greetings from all levels of government. Lunch was available and a great opportunity for visiting, networking and tours of this wonderful new facility.

Into the future...

The Airdrie Public Library continues to be an integral part of our community. The new facility will allow technology to continue to be in the forefront of the Library's focus. The arrival of the SuperNet provides the Library with an opportunity to expand programs and services to the community. We are already able to

- Provide access to government departments, forms and services;
- Allow patrons access to 'Ask A Question', which allows library users to submit a question at any time and receive an answer from the nearest major library within 48 hours.
- Provide training opportunities for patrons either individually or in groups.

In addition to a focus on technology, the Library has also expanded its collection, particularly in the areas of large print books, and junior non-fiction.

The Library's vision as it looks forward, is to continue to be the hub of the community, a public gathering place that fosters social interaction and intellectual discourse, and offers a full range of electronic resources that will be essential to the success of Airdronians in the future.



Photography by AirdrieOnLine Web Media & Design - 2006

The official ribbon cutting was done by, l to r, Alan Tennant, member of our Honorary Fund Development Committee, Richard Siemens, Alderman and Library Board member, and Marilyn McCall, member of our Honorary Fund Development Committee and former Board member

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