

MUCH MORE THAN BOOKS

Get to know your libraries

Mackenzie County Library Consortium | Mackenzie County

The Mackenzie County Library Board (MCLB) serves Alberta’s Far Northwest. Its mission—to enrich lives and communities with universal access to knowledge, lifelong learning and literacy.

With the help of their amazing team and beautiful facilities, they are helping to do just that.

“The MCLB is a pleasure to serve on. We are like-minded individuals who have a passion for providing outstanding library services,” said Lorraine Peters, MCLB Treasurer.

The MCLB was jointly created by the province and Mackenzie County in November 1998. They oversee libraries in La Crete, Fort Vermilion and Zama City.

In 2013, MCLB formed the Mackenzie County Library Consortium. Their mission—to enhance service for all patrons.

The consortium expanded access to digital resources and inter-library systems.

“We also introduced more regional events, programs and partnerships. Our library services in the Mackenzie Region have become exceptional,” said MCLB member Lisa Wardley. “With the help of the consortium, they have become dynamic community destinations for knowledge, inspiration and cultural awareness.”

Learn more about the MCLB at www.mclboard.com

La Crete Library

The La Crete Library has served the community since 1962 thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Martha Nafziger. Originally located across from the La Crete Public School, the library moved into the school in 1977 before relocating to its current home—donated by the Alberta Treasury Branch—in 2016.

“It’s a busy place. We checked out 140,729 items in 2024,” said

Head Librarian Tammy Schellenberg. “It’s exciting to see how often community members from all walks of life use our library—from children to teens to adults to seniors!”

The La Crete Community Library Society oversees operations with six part-time staff members—Anna Martens, Susan Bueckert, Kathy Friesen, Caitlyn Wiebe, Lena Driedger and Tammy Schellenberg.

“We truly have the best staff,”



said Schellenberg. “We have one person on our team who runs our weekly Senior’s Outreach Program. They deliver and pick up books to those living in various senior facilities.”

The La Crete Library features weekly and seasonal book displays to highlight their vast collection. The former bank vault now houses a popular selection

of graphic novels and a cozy children’s area offers a welcoming space for families to read together.

“Libraries are fantastic places! They are a vital part of any community, and we believe our library plays a big part in encouraging literacy,” said Schellenberg. “I have always loved to read, even from an early age, so working in a library is a natural fit for me. I enjoy seeing people excited about books, especially the children.”



Fort Vermilion Library

The saga of the Fort Vermilion Library begins in the 1930s when Jessie Slade McGrew started a travelling library. After several relocations, it found a permanent home in 1994 when the community-built library opened its doors.

Located along River Road with beautiful views of the Peace River, the library provides 30 hours of service each week.

Library Manager Debbie Bueckert started as the library’s janitor in 1997. She soon realized she wanted to work with in the day-to-day operations, so she began to volunteer. In 2000, she was hired as the assistant librarian—starting with just a three-month contract.

“Eventually, I became the library manager,” said Bueckert. “In January, I celebrated 25 years.”

Bueckert works alongside Hope Warner who manages the bulletin board displays for each season. Hope is one of the many reasons why the library

has such a welcoming atmosphere.

“Hope greets everyone with a smile and a cheerful ‘hello,’” said Bueckert. “We are here for the people. We want everyone to feel welcome and relaxed when they come in.”

Often seen as the hub of the community, it’s a quiet, restful and safe space for people of all ages.

“Parents spend quality time here with their children. Seniors love quiet reading time. Teens enjoy the events we host,” said Bueckert. “It’s a great meeting spot for friends and home-school groups. It’s frequently used by local craft clubs. And, we also provide printing, copying, scanning, faxing, emailing and laminating.”



Zama City Library

Founded in 1974, the Zama City Library has had a few homes over the years—from the Community Hall to the school. There was even a brief period when it was “between homes.” Today, it is in the beautiful Cornerstone Building.

Run by a small but dedicated library society, their members are proud to offer an inviting space, an up-to-date collection and creative, non-traditional services.

“Libraries are welcoming spaces where people in the community can connect and interact with each other over common interests,” said Librarian Krista Patriquin. “They encourage social interaction between community members and foster that sense of community.”

Patriquin has loved public libraries since she was child, so when she moved to Zama, she wasted no time.

“The library was the first place I came to, and the first people I met in town were there,” said Patriquin. “In true Zama fashion, if you make a

habit of visiting a place too often you will end up working there.”

The Zama City Library staff is made up of Patriquin and Lou Heraid, who helps work with the day-to-day details. In addition, Lisa Wardley assists with the library’s collection procurement and handles many behind the scenes details.

Local libraries are often full of diverse programs, resources and opportunities to learn—and the Zama City Library is no exception.

“I wish people knew our library offers so much more than books—from wellness resources and creative kits to cake pans, microscopes and even canning equipment. There’s something for everyone, in-person and online,” said Patriquin. “Libraries are an amazing resource that not enough people take the time to explore.”

