

---

# Press and Publicity Report

M A R C H 2 0 2 3

---



## Pueblo Rawlings library renovations wrap up

FILED IN: COMMUNITY, CULTURE, CIVICISM, NEWS BY FORT HARRIS

MARCH 20, 2020

12 COMMENTS

SHARE



THE PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT HAD WORKING AT THE START OF THE YEAR. PHOTO COURTESY OF PCCLD

### One floor left, grand opening week kicks off later this month

Four floors, a ballroom, an outdoor amphitheater and 12.5 million dollars later, the Rawlings library renovations will officially be complete by the end of March.

Pueblo City-County Library District will celebrate the completion of the revamping with a grand opening week filled with events. The week starts with self-guided tours on March 20, an open house from 3-8 p.m. on the 21st, the ribbon-cutting ceremony at 11 a.m. on the 22nd, a cornerstone and time capsule ceremony at 1 p.m. on the 23rd and a Pecha Kucha, a 20-slide presentation with 20 seconds of commentary per slide, from each department at 6:30 p.m. on 24th.

Renovations to the largest library in Pueblo started in August 2021. The library has stayed open throughout the entire 18-month-and-going timeline, navigating the obstacles of providing services around construction.

Sherri Baca, the newly-appointed executive director, said that this renovation is meant to last the public 20 years.

"The Rawlings Library is a key amenity in Pueblo, and I am pleased that after nearly two decades of heavy public use, we are revitalizing this library, so it remains a key community asset for many years to come," said retired executive director, Jon Walker, when PCCLD announced the start of renovations.

Nick Potter, the director of community relations and development for PCCLD, has been a part of the renovation project from its beginning when they hired the building development firms, Humphries Poli Architects and HBM Architects, in 2018, to arranging the ribbon-cutting ceremony, in which Colorado Gov. Jared Polis has been invited to attend.

Potter was the primary fundraiser for the Your Future Library capital campaign, which meant he oversaw raising \$2.5 million in private funding. A \$500,000 grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities makes up a fifth of those funds. But, as it had a matching-funds stipulation, Potter and the library had to raise at least \$1.5 million in addition to receive that one grant. From there, Potter worked on naming rights for the donors,

which means that donors could choose the name of rooms or areas in the library. For example, one of the study rooms is called the NAACP Study Room located in the teen section that corresponds with a collection on display near the space.

Focus groups for these renovations were chosen after hiring the architects, prompted by community feedback about the PCCLD facilities in 2019. Outreach was done through several methods: website announcements, social media campaigns, surveys, public forums and outreach to active community members who have participated in other library groups.

"It wasn't something that was just done in a vacuum, and that's not how we do anything here," Potter said. "We really go out to the community, we're very open, we're very transparent, we get that voice and then we come back and try to make plans before we present those plans back out to the community for feedback and then we start the project normally is kind of how we how we operate."

For Potter, open communication is key for the library to serve its patrons, and he is confident in the effort to ensure the community has been heard throughout this process. The key part, to him, is that the library district approaches these changes with transparency.

"It creates this great collaboration with us in the community," he said.

#### Completed so far

Frequent patrons of the library would be familiar with the current changes made to the Rawlings library, as the renovation timeline focused on working from the ground up. The first to change was the outside of the building. A loop was added for easier drop-off at the front entrance. An amphitheater now sits where a road sat, that served as a throughway bisecting the library campus. The water feature at the front entrance has been empty and will continue to be until construction is fully over to prevent debris from damaging the mechanism.

Work then started on the main floor. Potter said this was the hardest level to work on, as it affected the public the most. During the construction, in effort to mitigate interruptions to the services the library

provides, there was a game of "musical chairs," as he describes it. Whole sections of the library were displaced to continue public access and still accommodate for a safe user experience away from the construction. Temporary changes were made; such as special collections were moved to the old makerspace, strange areas were housing books that did not before, etc.

The main floor was re-opened in spring of last year, but to prevent complete closure, Potter explained that they created "tunnels" or access ways to allow passage through the incomplete parts of the floor.

"The real trick that we've had with this is making sure that for those that have mobility issues that the construction was it," Potter said. "So, what we've had is a phone number, for those that have mobility issues, to call and we bring them up through a staff entrance and then link to the collection, so that they can have access to the facility."

This floor now includes most notably the revamped InfoZone and PJ's; the New Orleans' themed coffee shop was originally located in Pueblo West. The coffee shop is available, but not exclusively, for catering throughout the meeting spaces in the building and other designated spaces where you can eat.

The second floor houses the children, teen and adult fiction sections.

"All the traditional library services have been brought up to this floor," Potter said.

He explained that this allows for families to be able to use the library independently and their guardians to still be able to confidently provide supervision due to the open layout.

The third floor houses the Hispanic resource center, which includes English as a second language resources, Spanish-language materials and a familiar painting depicting the story of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The artwork is now safely hidden from the sun and is no longer at risk for fading. It was also revamped to add a more secure, more interactive special collections space. It includes a humidity-controlled space that is larger than the previous collections space, and a closed viewing

room. The library now has a digitization lab to help transfer analogue materials like family VHS tapes to digital files.

The fourth floor is all that is left to be finished before the grand opening. The Ryals Grand Event Space is wrapping up construction. This space is a ballroom with a cocktail area and a warming kitchen. Baca said that this space will have a fee to rent, but "will be affordable."

#### **InfoZone Revamp**

Transformed from the oft-overlooked InfoZone museum, the fourth floor has now become a dedicated event space.

Potter worked with CSU Pueblo's former mass communications director Jennifer Mullen to update the InfoZone museum, which had been strictly about the history of journalism. In the renovation, PCCLD took the opportunity to update the information being displayed. The new focus: media literacy and the history of communication. The museum explains the importance of understanding search engine optimization and vetting sources when researching or finding new information in the digital age. Not only does the museum discuss modern communication, it also offers interactive displays on early communication such as local art.

The linotype machine that had long been displayed was removed by crane from the fourth floor, through a window, and placed next to the Friends of the Library conference room. According to Potter, the library wants to bring more items out of the special collections vault and into the eye of the public. In addition to the typesetting machine, they are now displaying a pen used by 35th U.S. President John F. Kennedy.

#### **Pueblo Rawlings library children's section**

The Youth Section of the Pueblo Rawlings library was completed in fall. (Photo courtesy of PCCLD) Children's section

This area includes family study rooms with adult and children furniture to create a more blended space. This, for example, allows parents who need access to laptops or study to stay near their children and for the children to be occupied in a space meant for them.

According to Baca, the space implements a variety of skills children need to learn during development within the play space.

A sensory or quiet room is in the space for children and/or parents to utilize to calm down or be in a space with less stimulation.

"They put a sink in there because a lot of the kids that are having issues... find running water really helps them," Potter said.

#### **Tech**

The library no longer has traditional desktop computer stations. PCCLD added several laptop vending machines that allow patrons to check out a laptop for two hours and use it throughout the library. There are 72 laptops available throughout the Rawlings library. There are several wireless access points throughout the building, which has increased the internet speed.

Any of the rooms can be booked online and utilize a code to check in that will be sent to the patron. The code changes for each booking.

#### **Rebranding PCCLD & updating other libraries**

According to Baca, PCCLD intends to work on renovating the rest of the libraries over the next decade. It is to be decided which will be renovated first, but Barkman and Lucero libraries are on the roster to be renovated. The two buildings will have an additional third of the current floor plan added to the square footage post-renovation. Focus groups have already started for what these projects entail. Then afterward, Pueblo West would be up for consideration.

In the meantime, some major changes are already in the works, and not just for the Rawlings library. PCCLD has already implemented its updated logo and is launching the updated website early this month.

For more information about what is to come for Pueblo's libraries, check out the PCCLD Libraries Facility Master Vision plan, which is located at [pueblolibrary.org/about/reportsandplans](http://pueblolibrary.org/about/reportsandplans). If you are interested in participating in a focus group, contact Nick Potter by phone at (719) 562-5605 or by email at [nick.potter@pueblolibrary.org](mailto:nick.potter@pueblolibrary.org).

#### ENTERTAINMENT

## Things to do in Pueblo March 3-14: Legally Blonde, Harlem Globetrotters, home & garden show



Tracy Harmon The Pueblo Chieftain

Published 2:00 a.m. MT March 2, 2023 | Updated 10:46 a.m. MT March 8, 2023

### Thursday, March 9

#### Mary Shelley Chautauqua at Pueblo Community College

**Hoag Theater, 900 W. Orman Ave. | 6 p.m.** | Actor and scholar Susan Marie Frontczak will portray Mary Shelley, best known as the author of "Frankenstein." Learn about her other sides as a teenage mother, a behind-the-scenes supporter of social reform and more.

### Friday, March 10

#### Mountain Doctor program at Giodone and Pueblo West Libraries

**24655 U.S. Highway 50 E. | 1 p.m.** | Program also will be held at 11 a.m. **March 11 at Pueblo West Library, 298 S. Joe Martinez Blvd.** | Learn about "Doc" Susie Anderson, who moved to Frazier to heal herself of tuberculosis, and why she stayed there to work as a doctor for nearly a half-century.

# Pueblo library district's Barkman branch reopens after meth residue cleanup



**Josué Perez** The Pueblo Chieftain

Published 12:13 p.m. MT March 9, 2023



Debbie Payne restocks books at the Barkman Library on Wednesday. Zachary Allen/The Pueblo Chieftain

The Barkman branch of the Pueblo City-County Library District reopened Monday after a weeklong closure to remove methamphetamine residue from the branch's bathrooms.

Denver testing lab EMSL Analytical confirmed that the library district could reopen the branch after testing revealed that surfaces in the men's and women's bathrooms showed the meth residue level to be .06 and .07 micrograms in those areas, respectively, said Nick Potter, the library district's community relations director. The library's heating vents were also tested and the results showed meth residue at less than 0.1 micrograms, Potter added.

Those detected levels are below the 0.5-micrograms-per-15.5-square-inches threshold Colorado uses to determine whether a space is contaminated with meth residue.

No other items, such as drug paraphernalia, were found within the facility, said Potter, adding that the cleanup of the facility "went well" and "as expected."

The library district announced on Feb. 24 it was initiating those remediation efforts with Fresh Start Environmental after test samples revealed methamphetamine contamination in the Barkman branch's bathrooms had been above the standard set by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. It did its own testing in January before it brought on All-Phase Environmental Consultants for further testing.

Potter said the library district noticed an uptick in staff reports detailing drug use within both bathrooms at the Barkman branch and that staff could detect a "smoky, chemical smell" when they would monitor those areas.

## More: [Barkman library in Pueblo to close next week for meth remediation](#)

Sherri Baca, executive director for PCCLD, said in a news release that testing at the Barkman Library for methamphetamine contamination started "based on recent, elevated incidents of drug use at that location."

The library district at that time said there was "no indication that individuals who have been in the library and its restrooms in recent weeks face significant health risks." That remains the case, Potter said.

The Barkman branch became one of several public libraries along Colorado's Front Range, such as in Boulder, Englewood, Littleton, Arvada and Colorado Springs, to temporarily close in recent months due to methamphetamine contamination.

The Colorado Sun [reported](#) some libraries in those areas hoped the closures would alert the public as to what they encounter daily.

"Meth use in public spaces is an issue in our state and really throughout the country, so it's something we need to be aware of," Potter said. "We can take steps to try to mitigate these issues and keep our bathrooms as a safe place before we have to do any sort of testing or environmental mitigation."

PCCLD instituted a new policy at the Barkman branch last month requiring library staff at that location to request a library card or some form of identification for people who ask to use that facility's bathrooms. Potter called that policy "invasive" but said it is being done to closely monitor any potential incidents of drug use at the branch.

Potter said that policy will be active at the Barkman branch indefinitely. There are no plans at this time to install the requirement at any other PCCLD branch, but Potter said the library district may do so if reports of drug use were to increase at those locations.

"(Being proactive) is something that we'll do from here on out — looking at the data and see if there is any other need that we have where we have to do some (testing)," Potter said. "That will stay very front and center and at the beginning of this (so we don't have to be) reactive."

The Barkman branch is one of multiple libraries under the umbrella of PCCLD, which hosts up to 200 events per month and offers different types of programming across all of its branches.

PCCLD this month has events planned to celebrate Women's History Month and offers a summer reading program to Pueblo youths.

"It's really important for the library district to continue to create that safe and community hub space so that everyone in our community feels not only welcome in library facilities, but also safe," Potter said. "Our goal is to ensure that each branch (can be used) as a place for visitors to have a vital resource or a good respite for whatever they may be facing."



News

By KRDO News

UPDATED

today at 3:00 PM

Published March 13, 2022 2:55 PM



## 40 Pueblo women to be honored during annual Outstanding Women Awards



PCCLD

PUEBLO, Colo. (KRDO) -- This year, the Pueblo City-County Library District will be honoring 40 local women during the Outstanding Women Awards.

Honorees will be celebrated and given awards for their contributions to the community during a luncheon at the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library.

According to the PCCLD, the Outstanding Women Awards has been celebrating local women who've made contributions, in roles both big and small, for nearly 40 years.

This year marks the return of the in-person award ceremony since 2019. Due to the pandemic and then renovations to the Rawlings Library, the awards were handed out online for the last three years.

Below are the Outstanding Women Award honorees and who they were nominated by:

- Brandi Adakai, nominated by Colorado Arts & Artists Associates
- Remy Andrada, nominated by Racheal Morris
- Janis Arlow, nominated by CASA of Pueblo
- Mary Bailey, nominated by Pueblo West Women's League
- Terry Baughman, nominated by the Pueblo City-County Library District Board of Trustees
- Kryste Brown, nominated by the Junior League of Pueblo
- Velma Campbell, nominated by Mothers Out Front
- Joan Chun, nominated by the League of Women Voters of Pueblo
- Barb Clementi, nominated by Pueblo School District 60
- Roe Ann Collette, nominated by Delta Kappa Gamma Beta
- Maria de la Cruz, nominated by the Pueblo Community College
- Sara Funk Martinez, nominated by Jeff Chostner, District Attorney
- Elizabeth Gallegos, nominated by Pueblo Library Foundation
- Jackie Galli, nominated by the Pueblo City-County Library District Board of Trustees
- Megan Gordon, nominated by Haven School of Dance
- Renee Graham, nominated by Ed Perry
- Jeanne Graves, nominated by Lori Unruh and Ellyn Reynolds
- Stacey Harner, nominated by the Pueblo City-County Library District Board of Trustees
- Katie Harshman, nominated by Pueblo School District 60
- Abbey Hartless, nominated by Pueblo Library Foundation
- Aubrey Holland, nominated by the Junior League of Pueblo
- Kimberly Kane, nominated by CASA of Pueblo
- Cindy Lau, nominated by the League of Women Voters of Pueblo
- Katie Ledbetter, nominated by Health Solutions
- Carma Loontjer, nominated by Julie Rodriguez
- Sandy Lundahl, nominated by Colorado State University-Pueblo Foundation

- Destin Mehess, nominated by Heather Huffman
- Robin Moritz, nominated by Iris Clark
- Michelle Musso, nominated by Pueblo Water
- Amy Nelson, nominated by Jill Kleven and Nick Potter
- Ray Packard, nominated by Southern Colorado Equality Alliance
- Torri Shafer, nominated by Circle of Friends
- Nancy Smith, nominated by First Presbyterian Church
- Laura Solano, nominated by the City of Pueblo
- Michelle Swerdfeger, nominated by Marina Jones
- Teresa Therriault, nominated by Friends of Pueblo City-County Library District
- Aubrey Michelle Vialpando, nominated by Kennedy Pugh
- Jenn White, nominated by Pueblo Makes
- Kristyn White Davis, nominated by Life's Journey Family Chiropractic
- Peggy Wolf, nominated by Friends of Pueblo City-County Library District

The luncheon happens Friday, March 31, 2023, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Ryals Grand Event Space on the fourth floor of the Rawlings Library.

To attend in person, reservations are required. They can be made online here by [March 24](#). The cost for the lunch is \$30 per person.



Money

By [Jaileesia Fobes](#)

Published March 14, 2023 6:42 PM



## 'Reading Pays' to award \$100 to students who completed Pueblo's reading challenge

PUEBLO, Colo. (KRDO-- Students at Chavez-Huerta K-12 Preparatory Academy and Swallows Charter Academy will be rewarded for reading their way to earning \$100.

'Reading Pays,' is a summer reading program that pledges a \$1 Million Reading Challenge to help encourage students to foster a love for reading.

The program offers Pueblo County youth the chance to earn \$100 by checking out ten items from any Pueblo City-County Library (PCCLD) location.

Students are required to then submit a response to what they read, listened to, or watched.

More than 445 students at Chavez-Huerta successfully completed the challenge, each earning \$100.

Swallows Charter Academy saw 493 students complete the challenge.

Completion certificates and the \$100 vouchers will be handed out during each of the school's assemblies:

- Swallows Charter Academy -- Wednesday, March 15, 7:45 a.m.
- Chavez-Huerta K-12 Preparatory Academy -- Thursday, March 16, 9:30 a.m.

BUSINESS



Tracy Harmon The Pueblo Chieftain

Published 5:51 a.m. MT March 18, 2023

## Pueblo City-County Library District to honor 40 outstanding women

The Outstanding Women Awards, hosted by Pueblo City-County Library District, is set to honor 40 local women during a March 31 luncheon at Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, 100 E. Abriendo Ave.

The luncheon is set to run from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the newly renovated Ryals Grand Event Space on the fourth floor of the Rawlings Library. The event celebrates Women's History Month and is the first to be held in-person since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Honorees include Brandi Adakai, Remy Andrada, Janis Arlow, Mary Bailey, Terry Baughman, Kryste Brown, Velma Campbell, Joan Chum, Barb Clementi, Roe Ann Collette, Maria de la Cruz, Sara Funk Martinez, Elizabeth Gallegos, Jackie Galli, Megan Gordon, Renee Graham, Jeanne Graves, Stacey Harner, Katie Harshman, Abbey Hartless, Aubrey Holland, Kimberly Kane, Cindy Lau, Katie Ledbetter, Carma Loontjer, Sandy Lundahl, Destin Mehess, Robin Moritz, Michelle Musso, Amy Nelson, Ray Packard, Torri Shafer, Nancy Smith, Laura Solano, Michelle Swerdfeger, Teresa Therriault, Aubrey Michelle Vialpando, Jenn White, Kristyn White Davis and Peggy Wolf.

Reservations are required and can be made online at [pueblolibrary.org/outstandingwomen](http://pueblolibrary.org/outstandingwomen) on or before March 24. Cost for the lunch is \$30 per person.

[Top Stories](#)

By KRDO News

Published March 17, 2023 11:48 AM



## Week of celebrations planned for grand reopening of Pueblo's main library



KRDO

PUEBLO, Colo. (KRDO) – The public is invited to a week of grand reopening events for the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library.

The \$12.5 million renovations on the main library branch began in August of 2021. Improvements to the library include new furniture, flooring, and fixtures; replacement of the building's HVAC systems and equipment, and creation of a terraced amphitheater and mobility plaza.

According to the Pueblo City-County Library District, funding came from Certificates of Participation bonds, library funds, the National Endowment of the Humanities, and private donations.

"These re-invigorated public library spaces are inviting and comfortable. We want to thank all of our partners and community supporters who made this renovation project a reality and we warmly welcome people of all ages to the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library to enjoy the newly renovated facility," Sherri Baca, PCCLD executive director, said in a press release.

The events begin March 20 and run through March 24. Grand opening week events:

- All day, Monday 20
  - Rediscover the Rawlings Library, self-guided tours, and activities for all ages. Pick up a library passport and tour each floor and get it stamped along the way. Get a free PJ's Coffee \$5 gift card when you collect all four stamps. One gift card per person, per day while supplies last. Passports are valid March 20-26.
- 3-8 p.m. Tuesday, March 21, open house.
  - Get a free PJ's Coffee small hot or iced drink during open house hours, while supplies last. Frozen drinks are excluded.
- 11 a.m. Wednesday, March 22, Rawlings Library ribbon cutting.
  - Will take place outside in the mobility plaza, weather permitting. Refreshments provided.
- 1 p.m. Thursday, March 23, library cornerstone and time capsule ceremony.
  - Will take place outside in the mobility plaza, weather permitting. Refreshments provided.
- 6:30 p.m. Friday, March 24, Pecha Kucha Night, featuring the Rawlings Library departments.
  - Doors open at 6 p.m. Get a free PJ's Coffee small hot or iced drink, while supplies last. Exclusions apply.

In addition to the free events, the public can also get a free small hot or iced drink from PJ's Coffee, Tuesday and Friday during select hours, located on the library's first floor, while supplies last. Frozen drinks are excluded.

[Click here for more information on the grand opening.](#)

Article Topic Follows: [Top Stories](#)

## Massive renovation of Rawlings Library is almost done. Here's what's new at the library



Josue Perez The Pueblo Chieftain

Published 5:45 a.m. MT March 30, 2023



Exterior renovations at the Rawlings Library include a loop for buses picked up and dropped off at the front of the building.   
Zachary Allen/The Pueblo Chieftain

The Pueblo City-County Library District is nearing an official end to years of renovations at the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, its main branch.

The library district expects to hit that official mark at some point next week, said Nick Potter, its community relations director, though minor updates such as adding signage will last into April. The library district plans to commemorate the completion of renovations at that time with a [weeklong set of activities](#), including self-guided tours on Monday and a ribbon cutting ceremony on Wednesday.

Renovations to Rawlings Library, which opened in 2003, started in August 2021 to keep the facility "up to date" and viable for the next 20 years, said Jon Walker, the executive director for PCCLD at that time.

The library district kicked off a fundraising campaign before it started renovations to help supplement the \$12.5 million cost of the project. It had [raised](#) about \$10 million through public and private funding before the launch of that campaign.

The four-phase renovation led to an overhaul in each of the branch's four floors with a focus to provide accessibility, information and flexibility for library patrons.

"Our plan is to create a library that meets people's needs now and into the future," Potter said.

Most of the renovations centered on the interior of the facility, but some of the exterior was reworked, in part to address ADA needs.

The Mobility Plaza near the branch's entrance now allows vehicles to drive straight up to the library's entrance in a roundabout-like area where people with mobility limitations can be dropped off and picked up.

There had previously been a wall in that area, adjacent to which was Bates Lane, which ran under the library. But that lane was also removed. That space now has an outdoor amphitheater, additional handicap parking spots and provides a safer opportunity for people with ADA needs to access the entrance, Potter said.

The facility also has loop systems that are present in meeting rooms to assist patrons who have hearing impairments, Potter said, and the library district is trying to identify other areas where it can make the branch more ADA accessible.

The fourth floor, which is expected to be accessible to the public next week, is now a grand event space.

### Info and community zones on revamped first floor

Previously home to the Youth Services Area, the first floor now has multiple meeting rooms, an "Infozone" that taps into media literacy with a bevy of information on newspapers and other forms of media and a community zone where people can complete their work or relax after grabbing a beverage from P.E.s Coffee, which is a few feet away.

Next to that area is the first of multiple laptop vending machines, which were installed to reduce waiting lines that were prevalent when people tried to access computers. Patrons can check out those laptops with their library card and take them anywhere within the facility and access the Wi-Fi.

The Makerspace area, previously known as the Idea Factory, is also part of the first floor and is now much larger than before. It will be host to community classes and programming such as crafting or learning methods that help with gardening, among other skills.

The Friends of the Library and technology training rooms next to the Makerspace area and Infozone are free to reserve by community organizations or groups seeking a quiet and sufficient space for meetings or classes.

"Libraries are all about access to information and information literacy," Potter said. "The meeting rooms are a community hub to share ideas and the Makerspace is great to train people on new ways to create things. The training (community) rooms provide digital and technical literacy."

That literacy meshes with media through a virtual exhibit within the Infozone that shows the history of Pueblo newspapers, some of which are in Spanish and German, among other languages.

### Youth service, teen areas part of updated offerings on second floor

HRM Architects, an interior design and architecture firm based in Cleveland, overhauled the branch's second floor with larger windows and higher ceilings. That design allowed the library district to move the children's area to that floor and create a "bright, colorful and voluminous space," Potter said.

There was a bank of computers on the second floor, but those were relocated to make way for the Sandy Graham Rawlings Youth Services Area, which features a youth installation that's interactive and gives kids an opportunity to creatively craft separate stories and hear them back. There are other interactive islands within the youth space for different age groups that offer other activities.

Not too far from that area is a "story time circle" that's a dedicated space for children to read books or engage in crafts. Next to that is a sensory room for kids with special needs who require a space that's less noisy or better fits their needs. That room was designed after parents within the library district's focus and outreach groups expressed a desire during the master planning process for a space that could accommodate kids with those needs, Potter said.

The adult study rooms that were in this area of the library were converted to family study rooms that can serve as a place where a parent or child can complete their homework, Potter said. The rooms can conceivably benefit some Pueblo families who lack access to Wi-Fi in their homes.

Across from the youth services area is a teen area with space for teenagers to complete group projects or play board games. Next to that are the Pueblo NAACP, Arc of Pueblo and Jeff and Paula Chostner study rooms. Those two organizations and the Chostners secured naming rights for those rooms, and the library district worked with those organizations to develop book collections for each that can be found next to those rooms.

The Pueblo NAACP collection has books that highlight African American history and the Arc of Pueblo collection has materials on people and children with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

[More: PJ's Coffee starting a new chapter at Pueblo's Rawlings Library](#)

"We worked with those groups to make sure that we have library materials that people can use as a resource to learn (more about each topic)," Potter said.

The adult nonfiction and fiction collection is now on the southeast portion of the floor, next to a seed library that also offers patrons an opportunity to check out gardening tools.

### **Hispanic Resource Center, genealogy intertwine**

To capitalize on the wealth of some of Pueblo's Hispanic roots, the library district dedicated a space for the Hispanic Resource Center that offers Spanish reading and viewing materials. Previously, the center was on the second floor and without a designated home, Potter said.

The center also contains a mural that "tells the history of the Chicano movement and Spanish culture" in Pueblo, Potter said, and that mural is paired with a legend that can help patrons understand that movement and culture.

"The important thing is that we connected the (Hispanic Resource Center) to genealogy and local history," Potter said. "That makes it a better fit for the layout of the building and what people use it for."

Genealogy resources and collections are on the same floor, which also features a digitization lab that patrons can rent to convert older items into a digital format.

"We can't guess where we're going to be 20 years from now, but that's why you'll experience such a flexible space at (Rawlings Library)," Potter said. "It could be easier for us to add new technology and bring in new (additions)."

*Chieftain reporter Josue Perez can be reached at [JHPerez@gannett.com](mailto:JHPerez@gannett.com). Follow him on Twitter @josuepWrites.*

NEWS

## Pueblo library district reveals renovation plans for Barkman and Lucero libraries



Josue Perez, The Pueblo Chieftain

Published 5:35 a.m. MT March 21, 2023 | Updated 10:29 a.m. MT March 21, 2023

Pueblo City-County Library District recently revealed renovation plans for Barkman and Lucero libraries to make them more spacious and accessible.

At Barkman, renovation ideas include expanding the parking lot, installing an ADA-compliant ramp and building a pedestrian bridge that would connect an access point of the library to Belmont Park.

The bridge would be built over a drainage ditch that's adjacent to the facility and limits accessibility to the library from the park and vice versa, and the ramp would be located near the end of that bridge on the site of the facility.

The interior of Barkman, located at 1300 Jerry Murphy Road, would also be renovated with new furniture and a refresh to its security system. It would also include the addition of a meeting room, two small study rooms and a "Makerspace" area, the latter of which would be the first time the facility has included that type of space.

A similar area at Rawlings library was completely revamped and expanded so it can be host to community classes and programming.

**More:** Massive renovation of Rawlings Library is almost done. Here's what's new at the library

"The Barkman branch will have a bit more versatility to it," said Sherri Baca, executive director of PCCLD.

Lucero library, located at the corner of Monument Avenue and East Seventh Street, would also receive a new meeting room under its renovation plan alongside a redesign and shift in direction of the entrance to the facility.

After the renovation, that entrance would face Pueblo Community Health Center and the branch's parking lot rather than Risley middle school. That orientation could help library staff better manage crowd control of that space, said Nick Potter, community relations director for PCCLD.

Other interior updates to the Lucero branch would include a larger children's area and a designated Makerspace, among other smaller changes. The renovation would increase the branch's square footage by a third, Baca said.

The Lucero library was built in 2014 but needs an update to help meet the demand, Baca said. The branch has nearly 150,000 visits per year and offers afterschool programming and other services for Pueblo youths in an area that qualifies as a census tract where the majority of households have an income of less than 60% of the area median income.

"Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lucero and Barkman (libraries) were our busiest libraries," Baca said. "There's a huge amount of sense to increase the square footage. If you've ever been to the Lucero library after school, it's overrun with youngsters and there's a lot of things going on."

Both projects will cost nearly \$3.8 million, but PCCLD has, out of its general fund, allocated \$3.3 million and \$3.2 million for the Barkman and Lucero renovations, respectively.

The library district needs to raise about \$1 million to cover the rest of the cost. It will launch a public fundraiser to help close that gap, Potter said, similar to the campaign it launched in spring 2021 for renovations at Rawlings library.

PCCLD in 2019 commissioned a master facility plan to renovate all seven of its branches, the first being Rawlings Library. It expects to completely wrap minor details involved with that renovation in April and move its attention to Barkman in August.

Construction work at Barkman is expected to start at that time and should take about a year, Potter said. Once that is finalized, construction at Lucero is expected to begin.

*Chieftain reporter Josue Perez can be reached at JHPerez@gannett.com. Follow him on Twitter @josuepWrites.*



Southern Colorado

By Jaleesia Hobbs

Published March 21, 2023 4:10 PM



## Pueblo City-County Library District unveils renovation plans for Barkman and Lucero libraries



KRDO

PUEBLO, Colo. (KRDO) – The Pueblo City-County Library District (PCCLD) revealed its renovation plans for the Barkman and Lucero libraries to make them more spacious and accessible.

The Barkman has renovation plans that include expanding the parking lot, installing an ADA-compliant ramp, and building a pedestrian bridge to connect the library to Belmont Park.

The Lucero Library will include a new meeting room and larger children's area, alongside a redesign and shift in direction of the entrance to the facility to better manage crowd control.

*For the full story, head to our news partners at [The Pueblo Chieftain](#).*



Things to do in Pueblo this weekend include food, - [Pueblo Chieftain](#), The (CO) - March 24, 2023 - Page A6  
March 24, 2023 | [Pueblo Chieftain](#), The (CO) | Page A6

### Mountain Doctor program at Barkman Library

1300 Jerry Murphy Road | 3 p.m. | Learn about "Doc" Susie Anderson, who moved to Frazier to heal herself of tuberculosis, and why she stayed there to work as a doctor for nearly a half-century.

Saturday, March 25

### Writers Workshop at Rawlings Library

100 E. Abriendo Ave. | 2-4 p.m. | Local authors Bryan Abbury and Mark Baldwin will discuss their latest work, how to get published and the highs and lows of getting creative work into the market. A question and answer session will follow the presentation. Refreshments will be provided.

Friday, March 31

### Outstanding Women Awards at Rawlings Public Library

100 E. Abriendo Ave. | 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. | Forty honorees will be celebrated during the luncheon in the Ryals-Grand Event Space on the fourth floor. Cost is \$30 per person. Deadline for reservations is March 24 at [pueblolibrary.org](#).



## Barkman Library recently closed over meth contamination

2 weeks ago □ Local News, Politics



Barkman Library was cleaned and reopened to the public after the meth residue removal.

Photo by Madison Lira.

By Cidonia Ponce & Madison Lira

The Barkman Library branch of the Pueblo City-County Library District recently closed on Feb. 24 due to methamphetamine contamination. Barkman is one of the latest libraries closed across Colo. due to unsafe levels of methamphetamine residue. The library tested the levels of meth residue within the bathrooms after a recent uptick in drug usage.

The library worked closely with the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment (PDPHE) to address the contamination and clean up the bathrooms and vents from the residue. According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), there are no methamphetamine regulations that apply to commercial buildings, only residential areas.

Chad Wolgram of PDPHE discussed the levels at which residential areas are tested for residue, "When they do the preliminary assessment of a property, they take a couple of

samples, and if the levels are above 0.2 micrograms per 100 cm/2, then that area of the building as long as it's a confined room can be deemed meth infected."

Wolgram also provided what the levels of meth residue were at Barkman. "The Men's restroom was 0.14 micrograms, the women's restroom 0.53 micrograms, and the heating vents were 1.9 micrograms per 100cm/2."

As mentioned, Barkman wasn't the only library shut down over meth residue contamination. One library in Englewood, Colo., had also been shut down back in Jan. of this year. The Director of Parks, Recreation, Library & Golf, Christina Underhill, discussed similar troubles all libraries across the state, including Barkman, have faced when shutting down the library.

"The biggest challenges were a change in how we offered our library services while the library was closed. We had all of our staff start to move our programs to different locations so we can carry on with those programs," Underhill stated.

Underhill also shared similar sentiments when discussing the cleaning processes that come with removing the meth residue, which presents its challenges.

"Through that process, the cleaning contractor used hot steam and

a commercial grade dish soap to clean everything. After that, the library floors, library materials," she said.

Rounding back to Barkman, the Director of Community Relations and Development of the Pueblo City-County Library District, Nick Potter, discussed the precautionary measures that will be happening at that specific branch from now on.

"They will be operating under a little bit more of a restrictive piece for the bathrooms. So, what we're going to be doing is locking the bathrooms; they have to request access to the bathrooms. Then if they're going to use the restrooms, they also need to provide a piece of identification just so that we know who's coming in and out of those restrooms. If there is a bad actor, we can identify who that is," said Potter.

Other libraries within Pueblo limits decide only to do testing when and if there are increased drug usage reports within the facilities. Potter discussed that they're only limiting testing through the data they receive from the libraries that report more incidences of drug usage. Since the libraries are publicly funded, it's hard to test all the libraries unnecessarily unless there is probable cause and data to back up the reasoning in which to test for methamphetamine exposure.

Potter also further explained how the houseless community in Pueblo, specifically around Barkman, made it more susceptible to contamination.

"We're getting folks coming up from the Fountain Creek that are experiencing homelessness; there are a few transitional housing areas around us. With Barkman being connected to a lot of displaced or unhoused folks that are maybe dealing with some substance issues, it's really more of a location thing. It's not really that facility; it's just that neighborhood is experiencing a higher level of unhoused folks and drug use," said Potter.

Some directors, including Potter, have expressed concerns that this could negatively impact the houseless communities surrounding the libraries that have closed due to contamination. With some individuals within the houseless community abusing drugs and can only turn to public facilities for basic needs (including libraries), the directors expressed fears of how the public would react towards them.

Barkman has reopened to its patrons after a week of cleaning and will have the new precautionary procedures set for the bathrooms and a security guard in place to help prevent another contamination.

Half page ad ran in the Sunday, March 19 edition of *The Pueblo Chieftain*



**OUTSTANDING Women AWARD HONOREES**

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE HONOREES!

PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY Library District  
[www.pueblolibrary.org](http://www.pueblolibrary.org)  
(719) 562-5600

Brandi Adakal, Remy Andrade, Janis Arlow, Mary Bailey, Terry Baughman, Kryste Brown, Velma Campbell, Joan Chun, Barb Clementi, Roe Ann Collette, Maria de la Cruz, Sara Funk Martinez, Elizabeth Gallegos, Jackie Galli, Megan Gordon, Renee Graham, Jeanne Gravers, Stacey Harner, Katie Harshman, Abby Hartless, Aubrey Holland, Kimberly Kame, Cindy Lau, Katie Ledbetter, Carma Loontjer, Sandy Lundahl, Destin Mehess, Robin Moritz, Michelle Musso, Amy Nelson, Ray Packard, Terri Shafer, Nancy Smith, Laura Solano, Michelle Swerdfeger, Teresa Therriault, Aubrey Michelle Vilpando, Jenn White, Kristyn White Davis, Peggy Wolf

Luncheon: March 31, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. ■ RSVP by March 24 at [www.pueblolibrary.org/outstandingwomen](http://www.pueblolibrary.org/outstandingwomen)

The luncheon takes place at the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, 100 E. Abriendo Ave. Cost to attend is \$30.

Half page ad ran in the March 19, 20 and 22 edition of *The Pueblo Chieftain*



Half page ad ran in the March 19, 20 and 22 edition of *The Pueblo Chieftain*

**Rediscover the Rawlings Library!**

**GRAND OPENING WEEK MARCH 20-24**

**3/20** ALL DAY Self-guided Tours  
Get a FREE PJ's Coffee \$5 gift card when you collect all four spots on your library passport.

**3/21** 3-8 p.m. Open House  
Get a FREE PJ's Coffee small hot or iced drink during open house hours.

**3/22** 11 a.m. Ribbon Cutting

**3/23** 1 p.m. Cornerstone & Time Capsule Ceremony

**3/24** 6:30 p.m. Pecha Kucha Night  
Featuring the Rawlings Library departments. Get a FREE PJ's Coffee small hot or iced drink.

**PJ's COFFEE of colorado**  
Enjoy a free drink from PJ's Coffee during grand opening week!  
\$5 gift card passports are good March 20-26. One gift card per person, per day, while supplies last. Get a free small hot or cold drink, Tuesday and Friday. Frozen drinks included.  
PJ's Coffee is located on the first floor at Rawlings Library.

www.pueblolibrary.org (719) 562-5600  
Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, 100 E. Abriendo Ave.

PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY Library District