
Press and Publicity Report

JULY 2020



The Pueblo Chieftain

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Pueblo West Library reopens for some opportunities



Tracy Harmon Pueblo West, Fremont, Custer counties @tracywumps

Thursday

Jul 2, 2020 at 10:00 AM

A counter overflowing with new novels is just waiting for someone to come by and page through them.

Heather Wilder, director of the Pueblo West Library, is hoping patrons will start trickling in again to give the books some attention. The library reopened after coronavirus restrictions loosened June 19.

For a week, patrons could only come in with a computer reservation, but the library has since added in-person 30-minute browsing opportunities.

"It has been kind of tepid," she said of the response to the reopening. "We've had only three to five appointments a day for computer users."

She is hopeful the browsing sessions, the availability of 16 computers and the library's huge expansive interior which can easily accommodate social distancing, will bring people back. Computer users need a reservation but browsing opportunities are offered on a first-come first-served basis during open hours of 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

A guard at the front door will ask a few health screening questions then patrons wait on the red X in the middle of the floor before being directed where they can go. Masks are required and bright yellow caution tape marks off the places that are forbidden for now.

Although it seems like the most lonely place in town, staff have been very busy filling orders for curbside pick up.

"We've had 20 to 50 curbside orders everyday so people are really taking advantage of that. Curbside pick up will continue for the foreseeable future," Wilder said.

For details, log onto www.pueblolibrary.org or call 719-562-5600.

Chieftain and Pueblo West View reporter Tracy Harmon can be reached by email at tharmon@chieftain.com or at <https://twitter.com/tracywumps>. Help support local journalism by subscribing to the Chieftain at <https://chieftain.com/subscribenow>

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The Pueblo Chieftain

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Rawlings Foundation OKs grants; new deadlines set

Saturday

Jul 11, 2020 at 9:57 AM

The Robert Hoag Rawlings Foundation Board of Directors recently approved 36 grants for a total of \$652,425 and awarded \$50,000 in college scholarships to various nonprofit organizations and higher education institutions throughout Southeastern Colorado.

Nonprofits that are in the following counties are eligible for funding: Pueblo, Mineral, Chaffee, Saguache, Rio Grande, Conejos, Fremont, Custer, Alamosa, Costilla, Huerfano, Las Animas, Crowley, Otero, Kiowa, Bent, Prowers and Baca. Grant requests for the fall cycle will be accepted on Aug. 1, with a deadline of Sept. 15. For more information, visit www.RHRfoundation.org.

In the most recent application process, the following entities were awarded grants:

Pueblo

- Palmer Land Trust to fund an economic impact analysis for water and land-use guidance in eastern Pueblo County;
- Pueblo Community College to expand its nursing education program;
- United Way of Pueblo County to assist with COVID-19 relief efforts throughout an 18-county service area;
- Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center to assist with several capital improvements;
- Pueblo City-County Library District to assist with reconfiguration of space for maximum efficiency and patron satisfaction;
- Pueblo Children's Chorale to bring the chorale into local schools and to recruit youth;
- Historic Pueblo for an economic development study of museums and historic districts, and support for Damon Runyon Days;
- Friends of Football (Pueblo) to help support the CHSSAA 2A/3A state football championships;
- Pueblo Poverty Foundation to support its Vocabulary Challenge program and Christmas celebration;
- EPIC (Executives Partnering to Invest in Children) for books for children and workshops for parents;
- Junior Achievement to bring financial literacy and workforce readiness skills to additional children in Pueblo County;
- Rocky Mountain Boy Scouts to provide after-schools programs to 100 at-risk youth in Pueblo School District 60;

Tuesday, July 21, 2020**Fire conditions brought to you by RFPD:**

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Pueblo Library to Distribute Chromebook Kits to Area Students

Press Release | Monday, July 20, 2020

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PUEBLO, Colo. — Thanks to a generous grant, 275 school kids throughout Pueblo County will have their own Google Chromebooks to keep them engaged during the summer and better prepared for the upcoming school year. Pueblo City-County Library District was awarded a grant from the Sperry S. and Ella Gruber Packard Fund for Colorado to purchase the devices and other materials.

Starting Wednesday, July 22, recipients will begin picking up their Chromebook school kit at PCCLD locations through curbside pickup.

In addition to a Chromebook, each recipient will receive:

- An age appropriate book, donated by Junior League of Pueblo.
- Two craft kits provided by Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center.
- A computer bag.
- Automatic enrollment in Pueblo Arts Alliance and Boys and Girls Club virtual programs.
- Enrollment in PCCLD's Summer Reading program.

For selected households without internet service, more than 100 hotspots will also be given

Selection of the 275 students was made by community partners the Boys & Girls Club of Pueblo County, CASA of Pueblo, Posada of Pueblo and Pueblo Department of Social Services; selection was based on the level of need of the kids within each respective program.

"Posada families like many families struggle to navigate the complex and unfamiliar path of distance learning. Most lack access to internet in the home or appropriate hardware. The provision of these incredible tools will facilitate learning for children who otherwise have minimal access to online schooling. We are incredibly grateful to partner with the Pueblo City-County Library District to create important learning platforms for children in Pueblo," said Posada's Executive Director Kim Bowman.

With the shift to an at-home-learning model during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, students and families in need throughout Pueblo County were without the necessary tools to get the most out of the school year.

"The digital divide has significantly widened during the pandemic. Young people without access to the tools they need to succeed in the digital learning environment are at a significant disadvantage, unable to realize their full potential. That loss of potential has a devastating impact on our community. As an advocate for youth, the Sperry S. and Ella Gruber Packard Fund for Pueblo is proud to partner with the Pueblo City-County Library District to ensure that every young person, regardless of their current circumstances, has what they need to thrive in the digital learning environment—this summer and beyond," said Melanie Bravo, program director for the Sperry S. and Ella Gruber Packard Fund for Pueblo.

PCCLD and its community partners will also offer regular virtual programs to keep students engaged and participating in programs throughout the summer. Virtual programming is also funded by the Sperry S. and Ella Gruber Packard fund, an endowment created by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

In the upcoming months the library district will continue its efforts of filling the gaps families may experience with the current model of stay-at-home classrooms.

"The Packard Fund for Pueblo has provided such an impactful gift to Pueblo and as a community, we are extremely grateful. We are experiencing a time in history that is tumultuous and uncertain. The current pandemic has necessitated a need for additional support to our community and the Packard Fund provided. The library is proud to coordinate these initial resources for our community and will remain nimble to provide needed resources and services during these unprecedented times," said Nick Potter, director of PCCLD Community Relations and Development.

[Click for larger view](#)

Photo by Courtesy Image
Community partners pose in Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library with the 275 Chromebook school kits that are slated to be given to area students. Front row, from left: Courtney Seder, Posada; Becky Medina Boys and Girls Club of Pueblo County; Tammy Prutch, CASA. Middle row, from left: Dr. Velia Rincon, Advisory board, Sperry S. and Ella Gruber Packard Fund for Pueblo; Angela Giron, Boys and Girls Club of Pueblo County; Melanie Bravo, Program Director, Sperry S. and Ella Gruber Packard Fund for Pueblo. Back row, from left: Jon Walker, PCCLD; Nick Potter, PCCLD and Bree Pappan, PCCLD.

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Pueblo library district keeping students connected



Jon Pompia Education, health, Colorado State Fair @Jpompia

Wednesday

Jul 22, 2020 at 4:06 PM

When Pueblo County School District 70 instituted remote learning back in March, only the oldest of Julie Sanchez's four children had a computer.

Predictably, that device became an in-demand piece of equipment, with the children forced to complete coursework and assignments on a rotation basis.

"It was kind of tough," Sanchez admitted.

But now, thanks to a partnership between the Pueblo City-County Library District and the Sperry S. and Ella Gruber Packard Fund, the Sanchez household now has three brand-new Google Chromebooks.

A much-needed boon as Pueblo County School District 70, where the Sanchez children are enrolled, will begin the school year with four weeks of remote instruction.

"I haven't told them yet," Sanchez said of her children. "But I know they're going to be excited."

With a sizable grant from the Packard Fund, and in recognition of the importance of distance learning during this pandemic, the library district purchased 275 Google Chromebooks and 150 WiFi hotspots for technologically deficient households.

On Wednesday, the first round of distribution began with curbside pickup at the Rawlings Public Library.

In addition to a Chromebook and carry case, each child received an age-appropriate book, donated by Junior League of Pueblo; two craft kits provided by Sangre de Cristo Arts and Conference Center; and automatic enrollment in Pueblo Arts Alliance and Boys and Girls Clubs of Pueblo County virtual programs, and the library district's summer reading program.

Based on the level of need, the 275 young recipients were nominated by library district partners Boys and Girls Club of Pueblo County, CASA of Pueblo, Posada of Pueblo and Pueblo Department of Social Services.

The objective of the giveaway, Nick Potter said, is to "bridge the digital divide."

"We're in a situation where our kitchen tables are turning into at-home learning centers," noted Potter, the library district's director of community relations and development. "The digital divide has significantly widened during the pandemic. Young people without access to the tools they need to succeed in the digital learning environment are at a significant disadvantage, unable to realize their full potential."

When Pueblo School District 60 implemented distance learning in the spring, Margarita Martinez's personal laptop became the learning center for her two grandchildren, ages 6 and 7.

"They shared it," Martinez said. "And it was difficult to teach them how to sign on and all that stuff, let alone do the schoolwork.

"So this gift of two Chromebooks will make my life a lot easier."

Kim Bowman, executive director of Posada, said a lack of internet access and technology is, unfortunately, commonplace.

"Posada families, like many families, struggle to navigate the complex and unfamiliar path of distance learning," Bowman said. "Most lack access to internet in the home or appropriate hardware."

"The provision of these incredible tools will facilitate learning for children who otherwise have minimal access to online schooling. We are incredibly grateful to partner with the library district to create important learning platforms for children in Pueblo."

After three months of use, families that received Chromebooks will be asked to return the items for a "checkup," after which time the devices may be signed out for another three months.

"The Packard Fund for Pueblo has provided such an impactful gift to Pueblo and as a community, we are extremely grateful," Potter added. "We are experiencing a time in history that is tumultuous and uncertain, and the current pandemic has necessitated a need for additional support to our community, which the Packard Fund provided."

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Rawlings Library to close Sundays amid ongoing Columbus statue protests



Police try to keep the peace as protesters and counterprotesters square off in front of Rawlings Library on July 6, 2020. The controversial Christopher Columbus statue is located directly outside the library. (KKTV)

By Lindsey Grew

Published: Jul. 23, 2020 at 10:40 AM MDT | Updated: 2 hours ago

[f](#) [m](#) [t](#) [p](#) [in](#)

PUEBLO, Colo. (KKTV) - Pueblo's Rawlings Public Library will be closed Sundays going forward due to the continuing protests over the Christopher Columbus statue outside.

Protesters calling for the statue to be removed have been gathering in front of the library every Sunday since mid-June. That group has frequently been met counterprotesters arguing in favor of keeping the statue where it is, and the ensuing tension has on many weekends [led to dangerous situations](#).

"The Rawlings Library will not open to the public on Sundays until further notice. This is due to the current threat to public safety in the immediate area of that library on Sundays. There have been vigilantes roaming the streets in the immediate vicinity of the Rawlings Library on Sunday afternoons. A number of these individuals are dressed in riot gear and openly brandishing firearms and weapons. This menacing behavior is associated with Sunday protests regarding the Columbus statue on Abriendo Avenue near the Rawlings Library. This alarming activity has occurred in the immediate neighborhood of the Rawlings Library on the last two Sundays, forcing the closure of that library each of these days out of concern for the welfare of library patrons and employees. The Rawlings Library will reopen on Sundays when there is better certainty this dangerous situation is controlled. The library district is collaborating on this matter with city authorities including the mayor and police chief," wrote PCCLD Executive Director Jon Walker in a statement released Thursday.

Patrons wishing to visit the library on Sundays can go to the Barkman Library on 1300 Jerry Murphy Road and Lamb Library on 2525 S. Pueblo Blvd. Both locations will be open Sundays from 1 p.m.-5 p.m. going forward. Rawling Library had been the only library in Pueblo open seven days a week.

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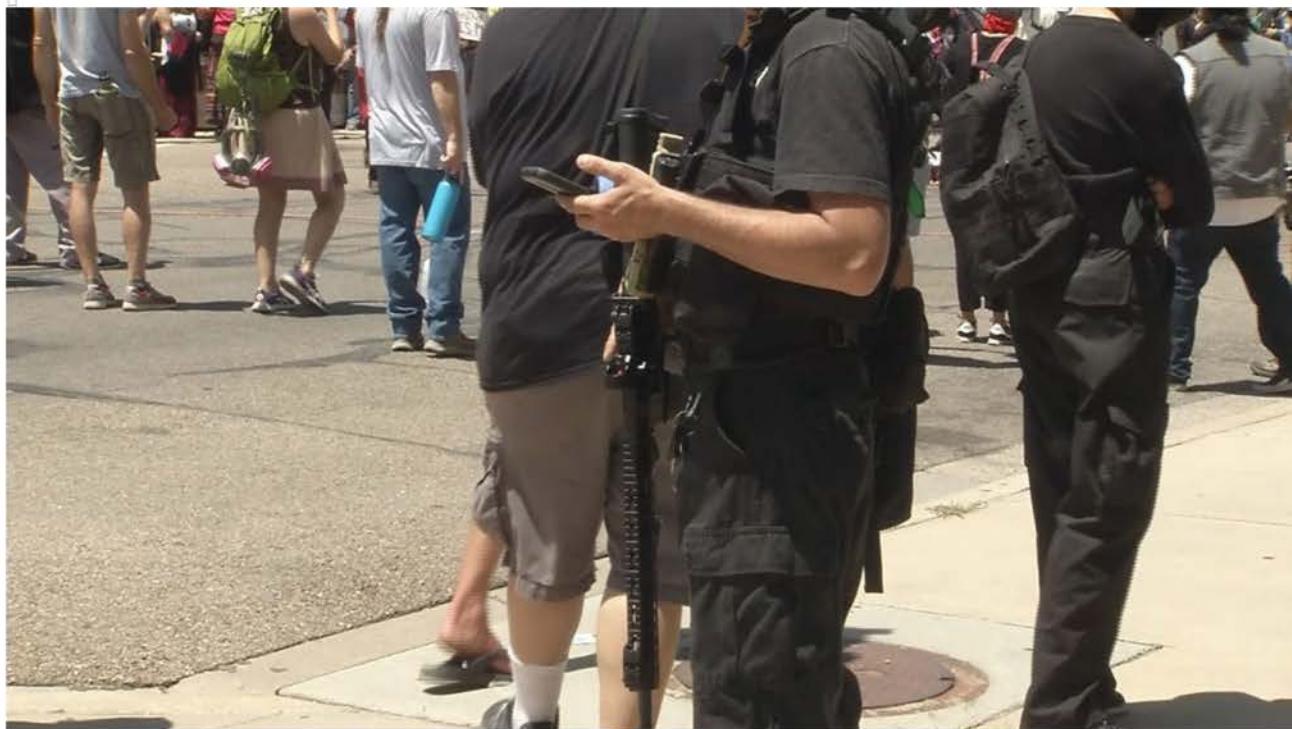
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Rawlings Library will remain open Monday-Saturday from 1 p.m.-6 p.m.

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Armed individuals at Pueblo protests prompt library closure



THE PUEBLO LIBRARY DISTRICT HAS CHANGED ITS HOURS IN RESPONSE TO WEEKLY PROTESTS AT THE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS MONUMENT.



By: [Andy Koen](#)

Posted at 5:40 PM, Jul 29, 2020
and last updated 2020-07-29 19:40:37-04

PUEBLO, Colorado — The Pueblo City-County Library District canceled its Sunday hours at the Rawlings Library in response to people showing up at the weekly protests at the Christopher Columbus monument carrying rifles and other weapons.

Executive Director Jon Walker said the armed individuals did not appear to be associated with either the police department or a private security company.

"Those that are most concerning to us are the ones that appear to be carrying automatic weapons and long guns and a variety of types," Walker said. "I've actually had individuals who were in tears, they were very concerned."

Library patrons are asked to visit either the Lamb or Barkman branch libraries which are traditionally closed on Sundays. Walker said both the mayor and police chief support his decision to close the facility. He is closely monitoring events taking place around the library during the protests and said he will reopen when it feels safe again.

"We're not happy about this situation, we don't really want it to be the permanent situation," Walker said.

The library has not been vandalized or damaged during the protests and no-one has been injured. Nevertheless, Walker feels responsible for the safety of everyone coming to use the facility.

"We're a family place, we have lots of children, we have lots of mothers and fathers who frequent our library, people of all ages," he said.

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Local News

By [Chase Golightly](#)Published [July 29, 2020](#) 10:44 pm

Pueblo hires mediator to help with Columbus statue protests

PUEBLO, Colo. (KRDO) -- Weeks of protests at Pueblo's controversial Christopher Columbus statue has led the city to hire a mediator to help those who want the statue removed and those who want it to stay, find common ground on how to move forward.

For six Sundays in a row, dozens of protestors and counter-protestors have gathered on Abriendo Avenue. Some of the protests turning violent with people on both sides being placed in handcuffs by Pueblo Police officers.

Pueblo City-County Library District across the street from the statue started closing its doors on Sundays due to safety concerns and reports of people carrying guns outside.

To stop these protests from getting worse, Mayor Nick Gradisar hired a mediator to meet with both groups.

"The mediator will try to bring these sides together and see whether or not there's any common ground," Gradisar said.

A solution can't come soon enough. Gradisar says since the protests started, it's cost the city a total of \$65,000 for extra officers and equipment.

"Every Sunday, 20 to 25 police officers are there at the scene to make sure that things remain peaceful," Gradisar says.

While the mayor says both parties have agreed to meet, Rita Martinez with one of the groups asking for the statue's removal says her side won't be swayed.

"We don't really need to go into mediation," Martinez said. "We need the city to act on it."

However, Martinez does believe these meetings could be a good thing to prevent extreme protestors from taking down the statue themselves.

"We don't want one person or a small group of people to be charged with anything," she said. "We want to do it, I guess what you would consider the best way possible."

KRDO reached out to the counter-protester group asking for the statue to stay. They have no comment at this time but we will hear from them once these meetings set to start in the middle of August get underway.

News / Pueblo



Chase Golightly

The Pueblo Chieftain

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Pueblo library closing on Sundays because of Columbus demonstrations



Anthony A. Mestas @mestas3517

Thursday

Jul 30, 2020 at 1:53 PM

Concerned over demonstrations that have been happening for more than a month at the Christopher Columbus Piazza, administrators at the Pueblo City-County Library District have decided to close the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library on Sundays until further notice.

Built in 1905 by members of the local Italian community, the monument, capped by a large bronze bust of Columbus, has been the site of demonstrations on each Sunday since June 21.

The demonstrations now are directly in front of the library, 100 E. Abriendo Ave., after being moved from the other side of the street three weeks ago.

Library administrators said they have concerns for public and library staff safety because of increased presence of individuals, who are not readily identifiable as members of law enforcement, some of which are openly carrying assault weapons.

"There have been vigilantes roaming the streets in the immediate vicinity of the Rawlings Library on Sunday afternoons. A number of these individuals are dressed in riot gear and openly brandishing firearms and weapons," said Executive Director Jon Walker in a statement.

"This menacing behavior is associated with Sunday protests regarding the Columbus statue on Abriendo Avenue nearby the Rawlings Library. This alarming activity has occurred in the immediate neighborhood of the Rawlings Library."

Walker said the demonstrations forced the closure of the library each of these days out of concern for the welfare of library patrons and employees.

The Rawlings Library had been opening at 1 p.m. --as scheduled--on both Sunday, July 12, and Sunday, July 19, only to close within about one hour after opening because of public safety concerns.

Walker said the library district is collaborating on this matter with city authorities including Mayor Nick Gradisar and Police Chief Troy Davenport.

"The library trustees, city mayor, and city police chief were consulted following the second Sunday and there was general agreement to not open the Rawlings Library on Sundays beginning July 26 and moving forward until there is better certainty the heavily armed individuals are not a problem in the area," Walker said.

Prior to this closure, Rawlings Library was the only library location open on Sundays. Rawlings will continue to be open to the public 1 to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

Walker said Sunday library service has shifted Barkman Library, 1300 Jerry Murphy Road, and Lamb Library, 2525 S. Pueblo Blvd. Both locations will be open from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sundays.

For more than 100 years, the Christopher Columbus Piazza has served as the hub for celebrations of the federal holiday dedicated to the Italian explorer.

Chieftain reporter Anthony A. Mestas can be reached by email at amestas@chieftain.com or at twitter.com/mestas3517. Help support local journalism with a subscription to the Chieftain at [chieftain.com/subscribenow](https://www.chieftain.com/subscribenow).

[Colorado Springs Independent](#)

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

Pueblo library closing on Sundays due to armed counter-protesters

Posted By [LJ Dawson](#) on Wed, Jul 29, 2020 at 1:00 AM



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Starting July 26, the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library in Pueblo will be closed Sundays due to the administration's concerns for safety.

The action is in response to "increased presence of individuals who are not readily identifiable as members of law enforcement who are openly carrying assault weapons in the immediate area," according to a news release. The individuals are counter-protesters to the ongoing Sunday protests calling for the removal of the Christopher Columbus statue in the city. The library referred to the counter-protesters as "armed vigilantes" and claimed a number of them are "dressed in riot gear and openly brandishing firearms and weapons."

Service will shift to the Barkman Library on Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m. The protest group, For the People - Pueblo is committed to protesting every weekend until Columbus' statue is removed. Police have removed multiple protesters in past weekends and separated the protesters and counter-protesters with caution tape.

Tags: [Pueblo County Library](#), [Christopher Columbus](#), [protest](#), [activism](#), [racism](#), [Image](#)

*** Note: The above article was later corrected to remove the phrase "armed counter-protesters" in both the headline and in the body of the story.**

Updated version appears on the next page of the press report.

- AB

[Colorado Springs Independent](#)

Thursday, July 30, 2020

Pueblo Library to close on Sundays as Columbus statue protests continue

Posted By [LJ Dawson](#) on Thu, Jul 30, 2020 at 3:52 PM



Starting July 26, the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library in Pueblo will be closed Sundays due to the administration's concerns for safety. The action is in response to "increased presence of individuals who are not readily identifiable as members of law enforcement who are openly carrying assault weapons in the immediate area," according to a news release.

The individuals have been regularly seen at ongoing protests calling for the removal of the Christopher Columbus statue in the city. The library does not say if the armed individuals are protesters or counter-protesters, but refers to these individuals as "armed vigilantes" and claims a number of them are "dressed in riot gear and openly brandishing firearms and weapons."

Service will shift to the Barkman Library on Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m. The protest group, For the People - Pueblo is committed to protesting every weekend until Columbus' statue is removed. Police have removed multiple protesters in past weekends and separated the protesters and counter-protesters with caution tape.

Editor's note: This story originally misstated the affiliation of the armed individuals. We regret the error.

Tags: [Pueblo Library District](#), [pueblo](#), [Christopher columbus](#), [protests](#), [Image](#)