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On to the next chapter: library district executive director Jon Walker to retire in September



James Bartolo The Pueblo Chieftain

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Jon Walker, executive director of the Pueblo City-County Library District CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/ZACHARY ALLEN

After 18 years with the Pueblo City-County Library District, Executive Director Jon Walker is set to retire in September.

"It has been an honor to serve as executive director here since 2004 and upcoming is a good time for me to step away," Walker said. "PCCLD is in solid financial shape, its facilities are in fine condition, the institution's services are nationally acclaimed, and there are good plans in place to help ensure the library's future success."

Walker plans to retire on Sept. 1.

"Importantly, there is a great team of employees who will continue the vital work of public libraries," he said. "I first informed the Board of Trustees some time ago about my intention to retire in 2022 and I am sharing this now publicly with a mixture of emotions."

"I am proud of PCCLD and care deeply about the public library's mission, and I consider it my privilege to have worked over the years with many dedicated people in support of public libraries."

Walker was hired by PCCLD in 2004. The library board searched for a candidate to adapt to the rapidly changing function of public libraries in the 21st century.

"Public libraries went from being a quiet place of study with books ... to really having it be more of a connectivity piece — connecting your community to itself," said Nick Potter, PCCLD director of community relations and development.

With increasing demand for digital technology access, libraries have become havens for Puebloans to complete a wide range of tasks. Walker played an instrumental role in expanding computer and WiFi access at PCCLD locations, Potter said.

"That was really important during COVID," Potter said. "A lot of people were coming in their cars, parking in the parking lot for the free WiFi at the library."

In addition to increasing WiFi access at existing locations, Walker nearly doubled the size of the library district during his tenure.

Branches added during his time with PCCLD include the Greenhorn Valley Library in Colorado City, the Library at the Pueblo YMCA, the Patrick A. Lucero Library on Pueblo's East Side and the Tom L. & Anna Marie Giodone Library on the St. Charles Mesa.

"Jon really sees the library as that living room of our community," Potter said. "If you need to access a book, grab a computer or just sit down and have a quiet space ... that's really what we are providing for the community."

The library district has received several accolades during Walker's tenure. In 2018, it was recognized as the "Best Public Library in America" through an online contest conducted by Engaging Local Government Leaders.

America's Star Libraries also recognized PCCLD as a five-star library in 2020 and a four-star library in 2021.

PCCLD's board will meet in the coming weeks to determine the recruitment process for hiring a new executive director.

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City of Pueblo news briefs - Pueblo libraries ease COVID restrictions, offer free test kits, masks

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Pueblo City-County Library District has eased COVID-19 restrictions inside its buildings as cases of the illness continue to fall in the county. Members of the public are no longer required to wear face masks inside library buildings, and meeting rooms have been reopened to the public.

Social distancing capacity limits on meeting rooms have also been lifted. Rooms can be reserved online at [pueblolibrary.org](#), or by calling 719-562-5600. Rooms at the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library at 100 E. Abriendo Ave. are not available to the public as the building is undergoing renovation work.

As of this week, residents can pick up free COVID-19 rapid test kits at Pueblo libraries. Four test kits per person can be picked up when libraries are open. The kits provide results in 15 minutes.

The libraries are continuing to distribute free KN95 masks, with a limit of five per person.

No proof of ID or library card is needed to pick up kits and masks, but they must be picked up in person and are available at the following locations:

- Barkman Library, 1300 Jerry Murphy Road
- Tom L. and Anna Marie Giodone Library, 24655 U.S. Hwy 50 E.
- Greenhorn Valley Library, 4801 Cibola Drive, Colorado City
- Lamb Library, 2525 S. Pueblo Blvd.
- Library at the Y, 3200 E. Spaulding Ave.
- Patrick A. Lucero Library, 1315 E. 7th St.
- Pueblo West Library, 298 S. Joe Martinez Blvd., Pueblo West
- Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, 100 E. Abriendo Ave.