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# Press and Publicity Report

JANUARY 2021

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NEWS

# Pueblo City-County Library District earns five star award from national publication

**Heather Willard** The Pueblo Chieftain

Published 8:00 a.m. MT Jan. 7, 2021



Although library buildings have remained closed due to health restrictions, the staff members have continued working hard to serve the community. *CHIEFTAIN PHOTO\STEVE HENSON*

Library lovers, there is another reason to continue supporting the Pueblo City-County Library District.

For the first time, the district has earned the title of Five Star Library for its work in 2020, a distinction awarded by the Library Journal. Although the library has been awarded distinctions in the star library program previously, this is the first time in five years of consecutive years of being in the program that the district has received a five star distinction.

Ann Boyden, marketing manager for the Pueblo City-County Library District, noted the library staff worked hard during 2020 to increase digital offerings to the community, especially by providing programming through virtual methods, such as livestreams on Facebook and YouTube. The library has also offered hotspots, allowing for community members to access the internet despite lack of internet access, and counted more connections to the Wi-Fi offered at all library locations.

“Because this was an odd year compared to how we normally do business, and due to health restrictions, we saw a huge increase in Wi-Fi connections,” Boyden said. “The hotspots played a huge part in that.”

The Library Journal changed the metrics for which it rates libraries this year, adding a seventh metric of successful retrievals of electronic information to the long-standing metrics of physical circulation, circulation of electronic materials, library visits, program attendance, public internet computer use and Wi-Fi sessions.

“We were still able to reach out to the community, even though they were unable to come into the buildings,” Boyden said, noting that craft programs, read-aloud events and other staples of library programming were successfully shifted to virtual formats.

“It is quite an honor to be ranked with other peer libraries — it just goes to show the strength of our staff and how much we are valued in the community,” Boyden said.

There are 11 libraries in Colorado that were given star library distinctions, and only 85 across the country were awarded five-star distinctions.

Moving forward, the library staff plans to retain the virtual programming methodology and implement a hybrid of in-person and virtual programming as COVID-19 health restrictions begin to lift.

**[MORE: COVID-19 tracker for Pueblo and Colorado: Cases and deaths for January 2021](#)**

“We are so grateful that the community continues to support us,” Boyden said. “Especially now that our buildings haven’t been opened, we’re just glad to still see support from Pueblo and the surrounding communities we serve.”

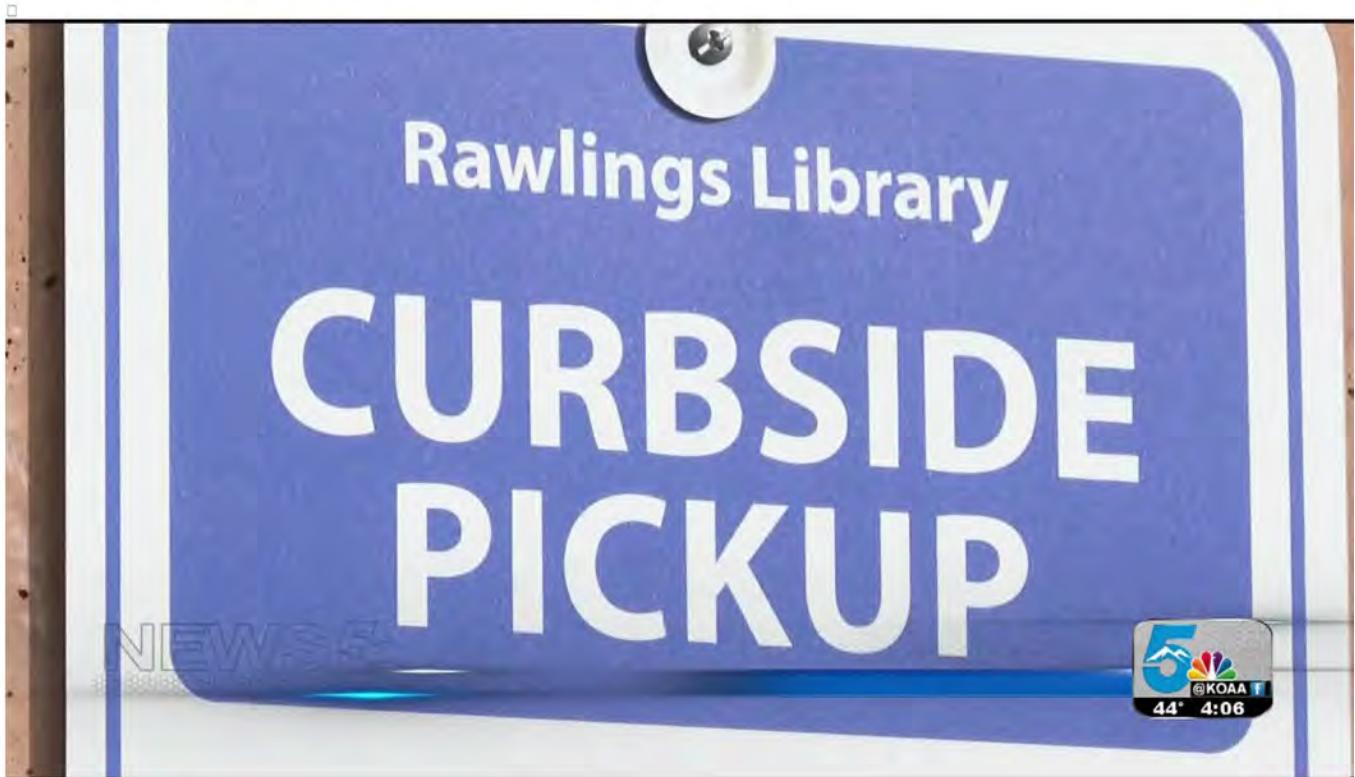
Across the seven measured metrics, PCCLD rated highest in program attendance and Wi-Fi usage.

To receive an index score, a library must have a legal service area population of at least 1,000, spend at least \$10,000 annually and report all of the data required to calculate its score. PCCLD is placed in a nationwide category of libraries that have an annual budget ranging from \$10 mill to \$29.9 million.

*Chieftain reporter Heather Willard can be reached at [hwillard@chieftain.com](mailto:hwillard@chieftain.com).*



Pueblo's Rawlings Library recognized as one of the best in the country



By: [Tyler Dumas](#)

Posted at 4:21 PM, Jan 07, 2021  
and last updated 2021-01-07 18:21:15-05

PUEBLO — Southern Colorado has one of the best libraries in the entire country.

The Library Journal gave the Pueblo City-County Library District a five-star review, its highest rating.

The system is based on seven categories including number of visitors, circulation of new books, and how often the public uses its computers.

The library said this is a real honor.

"It was really exciting because it showed all the hard work that we had done in that year to try and meet everyone's needs as best as we could. It really happened so we can provide the best public library service for our community," Nick Potter said.

The Pueblo District is one of just a handful of libraries across the country to receive this distinction.

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# Pueblo libraries to resume in-person services starting Jan. 19



Pueblo City-County Library District is resuming in-person services in late January 2021. (KKTV)

By [Lindsey Grewe](#)

*Published: Jan. 11, 2021 at 12:18 PM MST | Updated: 22 hours ago*

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PUEBLO, Colo. (KKTV) - Good news for anyone who loves spending time in libraries!

The Pueblo City-County Library District (PCCLD) has announced it is resuming in-person services on a limited basis starting next week.

The move follows Pueblo County's recent downgrade from level red to orange on the state's COVID-19 dial. The move to level red during the fall is what prompted the library district to close all of its buildings to the public in November.

PCCLD says effective Jan. 19, a limited number of patrons will be allowed inside the library for 60 minutes during normal business hours. Visitors can use that time to browse library materials, use computers, make copies and check out.

The following safety measures will be in place while patrons visit the library:

- All patrons are required to submit to a health screening upon entering the library.
- All visitors and employees are required to wear a face mask while inside the library. Children under the age of 3 are exempt. Anyone who cannot tolerate wearing a facemask due to a medical condition will be offered accommodations but are not permitted to enter any library building without a face mask.
- Employees and visitors are required to continue following social distancing measures while inside the library.
- Frequent cleaning and sanitization of high touch surfaces.
- Returned library materials are quarantined for 72 hours.
- Bathrooms are locked but can be opened by staff upon request. Drinking fountains remain turned off.
- No outside food and or drinks are allowed in the library.
- All in-person programs and meeting room use is still suspended at this time.
- Visitors are asked to provide contact information, if needed, for tracing purposes and are encouraged to stay home if they are sick.

For those preferring a more socially-distant visit to the library, curbside, mail, online and virtual services will remain available.

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# Pueblo library district set to reopen with limited in-person services

Chieftain staff

Published 10:28 a.m. MT Jan. 13, 2021

All Pueblo City-County Library District locations will reopen to the public beginning Tuesday.

There will be limited in-person services offered during regular business hours, and a limited number of patrons will be permitted to browse the library, check out materials and use public computers and printers for one hour.

Those entering the library will be subject to a temperature screening and will be asked if they're experiencing COVID symptoms.

COVID-19 protocols, such as social distancing and wearing a mask, will be required to enter each facility. Children younger than 3 are exempt from wearing a mask.

Those with medical conditions that prevent them from wearing a mask will be offered accommodations, but will not be permitted to enter without a mask.

Each location will practice stringent cleaning and sanitation policies and all material returned to the library will be quarantined for 72 hours.

Bathrooms will be locked, but can be opened by a staff member upon request. Drinking fountains will be turned off. Outside food and drink will not be permitted.

In-person programs and meeting room use is still suspended.

For contact tracing purposes, visitors will be asked to provide contact information. Those who are sick are encouraged to stay home.

The library district will continue curbside services, mail delivery and online activities. Such services at the Rawlings Library, 100 E. Abriendo Ave., are available from 1-5 p.m.

## **MORE: Get a favorite book drive through style**

The library's decision to reopen comes after Pueblo County moved from Level Red on the state's COVID-19 dial to Level Orange last week.

While restrictions have lessened, PCCLD will continue to follow mandates and guidelines presented by Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment.

Visit [pueblolibrary.org](http://pueblolibrary.org), or search the [Pueblo City-County Library District](#) on Facebook for further updates and more information.



## Pueblo library district drops overdue fines for some items



By: [Brenda Argueta](#)

Posted at 8:24 AM, Jan 15, 2021  
and last updated 2021-01-15 10:26:19-05

PUEBLO — It's been nearly two weeks since the Pueblo library district dropped overdue fines for some items to remove financial barriers and help give equal access to residents.

Instead of overdue fines, the library will declare the item lost at 30 days and bill the borrower the replacement cost plus a \$5 processing fee. Notifications will be sent out at seven, 14 and 28 days regarding the item.

The following items fall under the fine-free materials list at the library:

- Books
- Audiobooks
- Magazines
- DVDs
- Music CDs

The library district's tablets, Chromebooks, internet hotspots, community passes and Interlibrary Loan materials do not fall under the fine-free materials list.

"Many public libraries across the United States have gone fine free over the past few years. We recognized that in Pueblo, overdue fines were preventing equitable access to all customers especially in certain service areas. By eliminating overdue fines, we are aiming to reduce barriers for our customers who need our library services the most, especially during this difficult time," PCCLD Director of User Services Jill Kleven said in a release.

If an item that has been declared lost but is returned afterward, the library district said the replacement cost will be removed from the account.

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# Pueblo library district eliminates overdue fines

By [Jenna Middaugh](#)

Published: Jan. 15, 2021 at 9:44 AM MST | Updated: 5 hours ago

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PUEBLO, Colo. (KKTV) - The Pueblo City-County Library District announced Friday it will no longer charge late fees for most items.

According to a news release, library administration decided to do away with overdue fines as a way to remove financial barriers and provide equal library access.

The library district said of the 155,200 Pueblo library card holders in 2020, 19,388 patrons were blocked from checking out library materials until they paid late fees.

"Many public libraries across the United States have gone fine free over the past few years," said Jill Kleven, the library system's director of user services. "We recognized that in Pueblo, overdue fines were preventing equitable access to all customers especially in certain service areas. By eliminating overdue fines, we are aiming to reduce barriers for our customers who need our library services the most, especially during this difficult time."

People will no longer be charged late fees for books, audiobooks, magazines, DVDs and CDs. However, fines will still accrue for tablets, Chromebooks, internet hotspots, community passes and Interlibrary Loan materials that are overdue.

If an item is overdue, the library said it will send borrowers a notification 7, 14 and 28 days after the due date. At 30 days, the item will be considered lost, and the borrower will be charged the replacement cost. If that item is later returned, the replacement cost will be dropped.

According to the library district, revenue generated from overdue fines has steadily dropped over the past decade. In 2010, the library collected nearly \$120,000 in late fees. In 2019, that amount dropped to just under \$20,000.

"This decline is due in part to a change in lending policies, such as increasing the loan limits of DVDs, lowering daily fine amounts and the addition of auto renewal in which an item can be renewed up to six times," PCCLD said in a news release.

The library system said more people are also using digital materials, which return automatically on their due date.

People with questions can find more information on the [Pueblo City-County Library District's website](#).

[The Pikes Peak Library District eliminated fines in February 2019.](#)

**OPINION** *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

## We applaud CHSAA, the Pueblo library district and RMSER

**Luke Lyons** The Pueblo Chieftain

Published 6:30 a.m. MT Jan. 17, 2021

It was recently announced that Colorado high school sports will start back up later this month for the winter season, and in response we have seen some complaints about guidelines and restrictions being imposed.

Examples of restrictions include: spectators will, of course, be limited, there are face cover guidelines (basketball and hockey player will wear masks even while playing), there will be fewer games (basketball slates will be 14 games), roster sizes are limited, postseason competition is scaled back, etc.

And those who are unhappy about these guidelines are missing the point ... the kids get to play again.

Is it perfect? No. Is asking basketball players to wear a mask while they play ideal? No.

But we are also still fighting to get out of this pandemic. Cases have been trending down, yet without sensible measures that trend can still reverse in a flash. CHSAA and the state have worked together to establish circumstances under which these sports can be played while keeping everyone reasonably safe. Following the plan beats waiting and cancelling another season.

We applaud the effort and look forward to seeing our local athletes back in action in the coming weeks.

It was announced this week that Pueblo City-County Library District locations will reopen to the public next week. Excellent. Another sign that we are making progress in this fight against the virus while we work through the vaccination process.

Like with high school sports, of course, there are going to be guidelines and restrictions. In-person services will be limited, as will the number of patrons allowed in at any given time, there will be a one-hour time limit for patrons, mask requirements remain as do temperature screenings, etc.

The openings can happen because Pueblo County moved from Level Red on the state's COVID-19 dial to Level Orange last week.

Pueblo has an amazing library system, and we are elated to see it opening back up. This is a resource our community cherishes. And we have it available to us again. Hooray.

Of course, keeping the libraries open is up to us. We need to follow the guidelines and restrictions. Not just at the library, but in general. The more we do so, the more we will see open like the libraries are.

Neighbors helping neighbors ... during this pandemic, with everyone who is struggling, all the businesses that are suffering, that is more important than ever.

We saw a great example of this in Pueblo this past week. Rocky Mountain Service Employment and Redevelopment staff distributed close to 20,000 pounds of food to people in need Wednesday, filling neighbor's pantries with enough food to feed a family for a week or two.

Not only that, but RMSER sourced much of the food provided from local businesses who could, no doubt, use the business.

That's a two-fer, and we applaud RMSER for the fine effort. They are not alone in helping Puebloans help Puebloans during these difficult times, of course. They are just a great example we saw this week.

## Jon Walker, the Board of Trustees and the phenomenal staff

January 17, 2021 Pueblo Chieftain, The (CO)

Page: B1 Section: Test

171 Words Readability: Lexile: 1350, grade level(s): >12

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Jon Walker, the Board of Trustees and the phenomenal staff at the libraries had the foresight and strategic planning to prepare for a possible second shut down in 2020. When the building was closed again, the libraries started providing tablets, Chromebooks, and Wi-Fi for checkout. The increase in digital access gave the community a lifeline to stay connected.

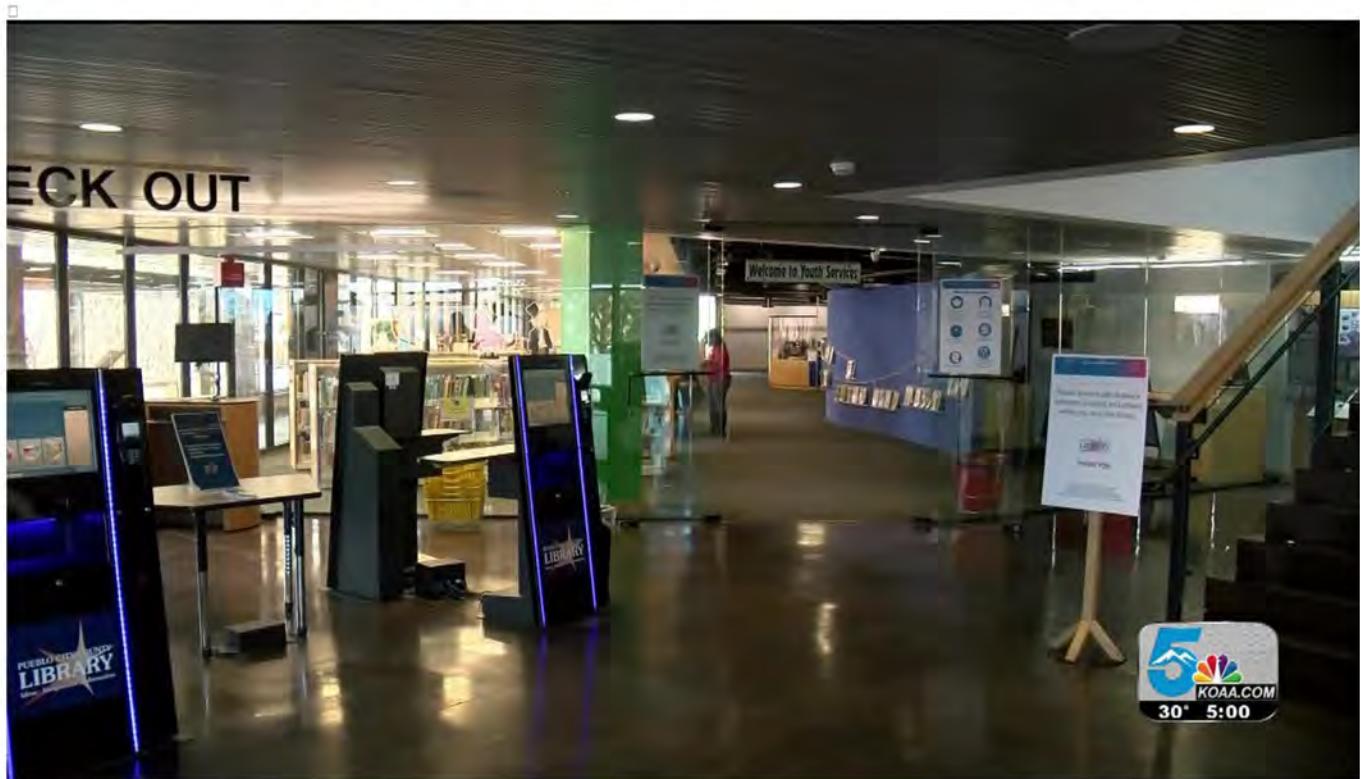
The outreach, services, and resources the library continues to provide made it possible for some sort of “normalcy.” The Pueblo City-County Library District serves every population from the young to the elderly; so providing the opportunity to checkout the technology had a huge impact. The library is also offering curb side pick-up, craft projects, and other programs offered through virtual methods to support the community despite not having access to the building.

The staff provides patrons of the libraries their dedication and commitment to promoting lifelong learning experiences in a positive productive way. The Pueblo City-County Library District is supported and continues to be a source of pride to the community it serves!

Theresa Kosak, Pueblo



## Pueblo City-County Library District returns to indoor service



THE LIBRARIES HAVE OPENED THEIR DOORS ONCE AGAIN



By: [Tyler Dumas](#)

Posted at 5:20 PM, Jan 19, 2021  
and last updated 2021-01-19 19:20:40-05

PUEBLO — A major, in-person public service has returned in Pueblo.

The libraries are once again offering indoor service.

The Pueblo City-County Library District opened its doors to the public again Tuesday.

Mask-wearing and medical screenings are required and people are only allowed to stay in the library for an hour.

"We're providing library services outside of the building but nothing can really replicate having people back in the building using our computers, browsing our books, you know using the library," Nick Potter said.

The district is still offering curbside service as well.

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### Library district goes fine free

The Pueblo City-County Library District will no longer charge fees on library accounts for overdue materials.

Fine-free materials include: books, audiobooks, magazines, DVDs and CDs.

Tablets, Chromebooks, internet hotspots, community passes and Interlibrary Loan materials are still items in which you can be fined for if overdue. The decision to eliminate fines was made in hopes that it will remove financial barriers and provide equal library access to all. The policy took effect Jan. 2.

In 2020, of the 155,200 Pueblo library card holders, 19,388 patrons were blocked from checking out library materials until their fines were paid. Borrowers will now receive notifications at seven, 14 and 28 days overdue; and on day 30 the item will be declared lost. At that time, the borrower will be billed for

the replacement cost of the item. There is a \$5 processing fee that will be tacked on to that cost.

Should I lost item be returned, the replacement cost will be removed from the borrower's account. For more information, visit [pueblolibrary.org](http://pueblolibrary.org).

## 7 stories making headlines this week

Indy Staff Jan 20, 2021

Ryan Zobbeck

**Colorado Springs City Council** approved Jan. 12 annexing nearly **900 acres** north of the 18,500-acre **Banning Lewis Ranch** on the city's east side, at the request of owner **Norwood Development Group**. The subdivision will include houses and some commercial development.

Three **El Paso County commissioners** took the oath of office on Jan. 12: **Carrie Geitner**, eastern District 2; **Stan VanderWerf**, western District 3; and **Longinos Gonzalez Jr.**, southern District 4. VanderWerf was elected **chairman**.

**Klete Keller**, Colorado Springs real estate agent and former **Olympic swimmer**, is facing **federal charges** due to his participation in the **insurrection** at the **U.S. Capitol**. He faces three criminal counts: obstructing law enforcement, knowingly entering a restricted building without lawful authority, and violent entry and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds.

**Former Teller County Commissioner Norm Steen** has been hired as **Rep. Doug Lamborn**'s 5th Congressional District director, replacing **Joshua Hosler**, former El Paso County GOP chair.

A **COVID-19** outbreak has been reported at **The Place**, a shelter for youths experiencing homelessness. Those with symptoms or positive tests have been relocated off-site in **safe-stay locations**, according to a news release.

Celebrations for the **50th anniversary of El Paso County Parks** will start with the **"50K for 50 Years"** hiking series. Participants are invited to hike 50 kilometers of trails at seven different parks throughout the county. Photograph your adventures and share on social media using the hashtag #EPCParks50Years. More at [communityservices.elpasoco.com/50k-50-years](http://communityservices.elpasoco.com/50k-50-years).

**Pueblo Library District** has done away with **late fees** for most of its materials. Fine-free materials include: books, audiobooks, magazines, DVDs and music CDs. Exclusions include: tablets, Chrome books, internet hotspots, community passes and interlibrary loan materials.