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### **Pueblo library district awarded \$250,000 grant for digital archiving**

PUEBLO, Colo. — Pueblo City-County Library District was awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to go toward preserving the history and culture of communities throughout Southeastern Colorado through a digital archiving project.

Funds will go toward creating Regional Memory Labs, an archiving initiative that provides equipment and training free to users for do-it-yourself digitization of personal collections, allowing them to preserve recordings, documents, photos and video into a modern digital format.

A memory lab allows users to digitize:

- Photographs
- Photo and slide negatives
- Documents
- Outdated video media, including 16mm film, 8mm, Super 8mm, VHS, VHS-C, S-VHS and MiniDV
- Audio cassettes
- 3.5-inch floppy disks and more

Users will also have access to recording equipment to capture oral histories. Once collections are digitized, owners keep their physical items from their collections.

The five-year project will allow for the creation of six permanent Satellite Memory Labs and five Mobile Memory Labs. The labs will be shared with partnering organizations within 16 counties, including: Alamosa, Baca, Bent, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Custer, Fremont, Huerfano, Kiowa, Las Animas, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo, Rio Grande and Saguache.

“History is made locally by ordinary people living in a place. One of our goals is to raise awareness of the principles of archiving and to help people understand that their personal and community histories are an important part of the cultural and historical landscape of Southeastern Colorado,” Aaron Ramirez, PCCLD’s manager of Local History and Genealogy said.

A lack of equipment and training to digitize personal collections often results in the loss of history and culture of the persons living in historically underrepresented regions like southeastern Colorado. Recording the histories of marginalized communities like Hispanic/Latino/a, African American and rural residents fill in the historical record of these missing voices.

“The Southeastern region was settled long before Colorado became a state. The diversity of the region, of the land and of the people, has left its impact and it’s important to us, as archivists, to preserve this rich, diverse history before it disappears.

“The historic record does not show the full strata of life. The history that has happened in these smaller towns still happened, but may not be as well documented as it has been in larger communities. By preserving these documents as evidence of people’s lives allows us to learn more about their identities, as well as our own,” Ramirez continued.

Six permanent Satellite Memory Labs will be equipped to digitize photos, floppy disks, documents, film — including 16mm, 8mm and Super 8 — in addition to VHS video formats, as well as capture audio and visual. Users of the visiting Mobile Memory Labs will be able to scan photos, documents, capture audio and video. Organizations interested in applying to become a Regional Memory Lab can visit, [www.pueblolibrary.org/regionalmemorylab](http://www.pueblolibrary.org/regionalmemorylab).

On-site training will be provided by PCCLD staff at both the satellite and mobile labs. Additionally, public archiving events will be held throughout the 16 county region to allow users to digitize their personal histories. Participants will also be able to donate their digital collections to a shared public digital archive, housed by PCCLD that will allow for greater access to once hidden collections. This will be the first digital archive of its kind in Southeastern Colorado.

### **The Memory Lab at PCCLD**

In 2018, PCCLD was awarded a grant from the DC Public Library’s Memory Lab project to install a lab in the Local History and Genealogy Department at the Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library located at 100 E. Abriendo Ave.

The department also holds community scanning days, inviting members of organizations to digitize their memorabilia. A recent scanning day was held for the Southern Colorado Charro Association. This pop-up event allowed members to digitize their collections and share the content with PCCLD’s digital archive.

“Not only did the event provide access to the history of the Charro Association but the session also served as a social event for members and their families,” Ramirez said.

### **About the Mellon Foundation**

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation’s largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through our grants, we seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at [mellon.org](http://mellon.org).

### **About PCCLD**

PCCLD is dedicated to serving as a foundation for the Pueblo community by offering welcoming, well equipped and maintained facilities, outstanding collections, and well-trained employees who provide expert service encouraging the joy of reading, supporting lifelong learning and presenting access to information from around the world.

Stay up to date with PCCLD visit [www.pueblolibrary.org](http://www.pueblolibrary.org) and follow our social media pages.

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