PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY

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Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

For the year ended December 31, 2011

Pueblo City-County Library District Finance Office 100 E. Abriendo Avenue Pueblo, CO 81004

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Home

Raising the Bar for Job Seekers in the Pueblo City-County Library District

Deborah S. Krauth, Kathaleen Murray, and DeAnna L. Yee Libraries around the state, the country and the world are raising the bar in numerous ways to better serve library patrons in the current economic environment. The focus of many librarians at Pueblo City–County Library District (PCCLD) is to provide more and varied resources for those in the job market. While this is an issue throughout the US and around the world, for that matter, the economic downturn has been particularly harsh on residents of Pueblo County. The current unemployment rate in the US is 8.2 percent¹, in Colorado 7.8 percent² and Pueblo stands at a whopping 10.6 percent. These numbers make it clear that providing access to resources to aid those

An effect of the downturn in the economy has been increased library patronage. District-wide, PCCLD door count has increased over 18 percent since 2009. Nearly 70 percent of the population of Pueblo County hold library cards, and many of the daytime customers at the library are seeking employment. Librarians are called on daily to provide information and assistance with resume construction, interview preparation, assistance posting resumes on line and direction to job listings.

seeking employment is a major mission of libraries everywhere and especially here in Pueblo.

At PCCLD, the business librarian, head reference and reader's advisory librarian and adult literacy librarian collaborate to make the most of the library's tools to help job seekers. Job listings are posted weekly from the local Workforce Center at all branches. PCCLD offers classes on resume preparation in the libraries and at other facilities in the community for groups including parolees and women in shelters. Programs are regularly hosted about issues facing job seekers, covering topics such as "Older Workers in the Job Market," "The Hidden Job Market" and "Online Job Searches." These classes are presented by a librarian, an HR director or a career coach. The library also produces and distributes handouts, many with screen shots, to assist job seekers using online tools for job searching and resume preparation. By offering classes to improve adult reading and writing skills, the adult literacy program helps to make participants more employable in the Pueblo community.

These sorts of efforts are being made in libraries across the state. The Pueblo West Library branch of PCCLD, however, is making a giant leap into virtual programming for job seekers. A pilot program is being implemented with the Rural Workforce Consortium offering remote access at the Pueblo West Library to training classes held at the Workforce Center in downtown Pueblo. This is, at this time, a unique offering from the Consortium.

Virtual Workforce @ the Library

Virtual Workforce @ the Library is a program developed by the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium (CRWC), a partnership among the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, the Colorado State Library and the Colorado Workforce Centers. This consortium serves 54 rural counties in Colorado and was formed to meet the collective needs of Colorado's rural communities relating to workforce vitality. The mission of the Consortium is to foster business–focused workforce partnerships, effectively preparing rural Coloradans for the jobs of today and tomorrow. The intent is to keep the effort locally driven by partnering with rural libraries to provide remote access to Workforce Centers (WFCs).

The consortium has developed a Virtual Onestop website to aid Colorado job seekers at http://www.yourworkforcecenter.com/. This website lets those needing WFC programs search and apply for jobs (http://www.connectingcolorado.com/), apply for and monitor their unemployment benefits, get help preparing a resume and learn about the Colorado Program Eligibility and Application Kit (PEAK) (social assistance services). The website also links to sites providing special assistance for veterans and for those with disabilities. In addition, a skills-training page provides links to libraries offering Universal Class at no cost to their cardholders. Universal Class offers training courses in a wide variety of fields that help job seekers continue their education and training.

The CRWC has been constructing this website and the Virtual Workforce @ the Library program for about a year. DeAnna Yee, the Virtual Workforce Center Manager for CRWC, hosts weekly meetings for Workforce and library personnel who are working with the programs to collect and share information as the program develops. The website is still evolving as are the services provided in the rural libraries.

The CRWC has provided thirty rural libraries with funding to secure equipment and software to establish a virtual connection to the nearest Workforce Center. These Dedicated Workforce Stations have a computer, webcam, printer/scanner/fax machine and a signature pad in place making Virtual Case Management a reality for patrons of these libraries. Because most public libraries find it necessary to limit patron access to public computers to 30 to 60 minute sessions, these dedicated stations provide library patrons the ability to use the computer for the

time needed to complete job applications, prepare resumes and consult with Workforce counselors. Placement of these dedicated stations and the virtual connection to the nearest Workforce Center in these rural libraries greatly enhances access to Workforce programs for the patrons of those libraries.

The Virtual Workforce Center is preparing to deploy the Virtual Case Management at the thirty rural libraries by mid–Summer 2012. The site expansion will allow customers to meet with their Workforce Case Managers virtually, store job–seeking documents such as resumes, applications, training program documents, etc. in their "My File Cabinet" within their Virtual Workforce Center account. The Virtual Workforce Center customer will also be able to access more tools with guidance from their Workforce Center Case Manager, enjoying much of the same services received in the physical office without the need of traveling long distances costing them valuable resources that can be better utilized in their job search activities. Contact information for Workforce Center staff will be at their fingertips on logging into their account and selecting the link to the Workforce Center nearest them.

This is a major effort by CRWC and will benefit scores of job seekers throughout rural Colorado. The program now in place at Pueblo West Library, however, provides another layer of assistance for job seekers.

Workforce Training at Pueblo West Library

Early in 2011, the CRWC asked PCCLD to participate in a pilot program offering remote training access for Workforce enrollees. This opportunity to provide additional help for the large number of unemployed residents in Pueblo County was eagerly welcomed.

Placement of this pilot program at Pueblo West Library came following the development of a close working relationship between that library and the local Workforce Center. In 2009, PCCLD created a position for a business librarian after receiving a grant from the R.M. Watts Foundation to create a business center at the renovated Pueblo West Library. The PCCLD Business Librarian and the library liaison with Pueblo Workforce Center saw a similarity of mission and worked to develop joint programming. They worked to find ways to offer workforce training and connections at the Pueblo West Library, but because of budgetary and staffing constraints, were successful only in placing a single workshop at the library once a month. When the meeting between PCCLD and CRWC was held, the collaboration began to offer a real time connection to training classes held at the Pueblo Workforce Center's classroom in the Pueblo West library.

Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium, and the Workforce Center and the library secured the equipment enabling this virtual connection. Both locations acquired the hardware and software for Cisco TelePresence providing what Cisco terms "pervasive video." The hardware includes largescreen televisions anchored to carts housing a camera, microphones and speakers and the software to allow a virtual connection at the touch of a button. Placement of all the equipment on a cart makes use of this tool flexible at both locations, and the ability to access its use at various locations throughout each facility has been a valuable tool at

Funding for the project was provided by the

A "soft launch" of the program began with one weekly class offered at the Pueblo West Library. The class is titled "Getting Hired in Pueblo" and provides

both the library and the Workforce Center.



Figure 1. Cisco TelePresence in use during Getting Hired in Pueblo class at Pueblo West Library on May 17, 2012.

information about available jobs in Pueblo and localized information about the job market as well as basic information about necessary steps to prepare to apply for jobs in Pueblo. With minimal publicity, students have participated at the library in numbers equal to or exceeding those present in the Workforce classroom. As the Workforce Center and the Pueblo West Library gain comfort with this connection, which has been remarkably without major incident or use of staff time, a monthly series of classes will be offered with a different class accessed at the Library each week of the month. These classes will be scheduled and selected from the classes offered at the Workforce Center (see Appendix).

Those attending the class must be preregistered with the Workforce Center. To date, the persons attending the classes have been library patrons enrolled with the Workforce Center who have not previously attended Workforce classes. The benefits are significant for Pueblo West residents, as well as residents of the nearby communities of Penrose, Canon City, and Florence, including saving the time and expense of the more than twenty-mile round trip to the Workforce Center, free parking at the library and access to the host of business resources at Pueblo West Library.

Other Tech Tools for Job Seekers and Beyond

Recently, a job seeker was observed taking pictures of the job listings and other information on our Workforce bulletin board with a smartphone. Library staff had previously begun to place QR codes in displays throughout the library, and this act illustrated the need for a QR code linking the Workforce website.

Short for *quick response code*, a QR code is a type of two –dimensional barcode that can be read using a QR reader or camera–enabled smartphone with QR reader software. These codes are now placed throughout the library to provide ready links to external information supporting the topic of the library display, job seeking or otherwise. Codes have been used at the Pueblo West Library



Figure 2. This QR code was created by PCCLD and placed on the bulletin board where the Workforce job listings are posted.

providing to author sites, series sites, museum websites, Overdrive, and library databases, e.g., a QR code on the Earth Day display linked to Earthday.com; Women's History Month display linked to the National Women's Museum, and in the automotive section of the library, a QR code takes patrons to the library's Chilton database.

These codes are easily built by use of a QR building website and can be read by smartphones with QR or bar code app. They can be seen everywhere today, including in ads in your favorite magazine. Use of these codes in the library effectively links even more information for ready access by library patrons.

Another tool library personnel have found very helpful is the social media site, Pinterest (http://pinterest.com/). In a time when all librarians must work smart to work together and there is little time to communicate creative ideas with coworkers whose shifts may not overlap, Pinterest provides a vehicle for sharing ideas among coworkers. It is a virtual pin board allowing the users to pin, organize and share images uploaded by the user or found on the web.

Conclusion

The patrons of the Pueblo West Library have been the fortunate beneficiaries of an important tool aiding job seekers that was put in place with the direction and assistance of the Rural Workforce Consortium and in collaboration with the Pueblo Workforce Center. This program is in its early days, but uses are already foreseen that will expand the benefits beyond those currently in place. The equipment can be made available to businesses to conduct interviews, business meetings or other interstate or international meetings utilizing the technology now available at their local library. The placement of this equipment in the library motivates all library staff to continue to think outside the box and highlights the importance of partnerships to fulfilling the library's mission.

Notes

- 1. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Employment Situation May 2012," U.S. Department of Labor, accessed April 17, 2012, http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf.
- 2. "Colorado Unemployment Rate Holds at 7.8 percent," Denverpost.com, accessed April 17, 2012, http://www.denverpost.com/ci_20292248/colorado-unemployment-rate-holds-at-7-8-percent.
- <u>3</u>. "Pueblo, Colorado: Economy at a Glance," Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed April 17, 2012, http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.co_pueblo_msa.htm.
- <u>4</u>. Cisco TelePresence website, accessed June 1, 2012, http://www.cisco.com/en/US/products/ps7060/index.html.

Appendix

Figure 3. Success for Employment Schedule used by the Pueblo Workforce Center.



Success for Employment

Schedule

Sign Up Now

Come in or call to sign up 212 W 3rd Street ~ (719) 562-3731



Veterans Orientation

1st, 2nd and 3rd Tuesday of each month at the Pueblo Workforce Center 4th Tuesday of the month at the Pueblo West Library 9.30 am to 11.30 am

Find out how to use your military experience in job seeking and employment Understand your rights and benefits. Learn about local Veteran resources.

Workforce Center Orientation

Wednesday 2 30 pm to 4 00 pm

Learn about job search, training and educational services available through the Workforce Investment Act

Links to Success Session 1°

Thursday

9 30 am to 11 30 am

State of the art techniques for applications, resumes, job search, including education and awareness resources.

Links to Success Session 2°

Thursday

1 30 pm to 3 30 pm

Successful interviewing, employer's on the job expectations and a vast array of free resources. "We recommend you afterid both, however you may attend Session 1 or Session 2.

Getting Hired in Pueblo

Inursday

10 00 am to 11 00 am

Steps to getting hired in Pueblo, required job search tools, labor market information, realistic employment goals, employer expectations and career development.

YouthWorks Orientation

I very other Friday 2 00 pm to 4 30 pm

Learn about the YouthWorks Program and how it can help you advance your education get a job or learn about military careers.

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The Pueblo Workforce Center and the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

About the Author(s):

Deborah S. Krauth obtained her MLS from Emporia State University in 2010 following her retirement from the practice of law in Iowa. She has been Business Librarian at Pueblo City-County Library District since January 2011. She is a member of the American Library Association and the Colorado Association of Libraries.

Kathaleen Murray earned her AAS in Library Technician from Pueblo Community College and a BS in Business Information Systems from Bellevue University. She has 13 years of Library experience in school, academic, and public libraries with 6 years at Pueblo City County Library District.

DeAnna L. Yee received her M.A. from University of Colorado at Denver. DeAnna has 19 years experience in Workforce Development. She has been with the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium in Denver and is currently Virtual Workforce Center Manager and Compliance Monitor.