



**PINES &  
PLAINS**  
LIBRARIES

# **2018 Annual Report**

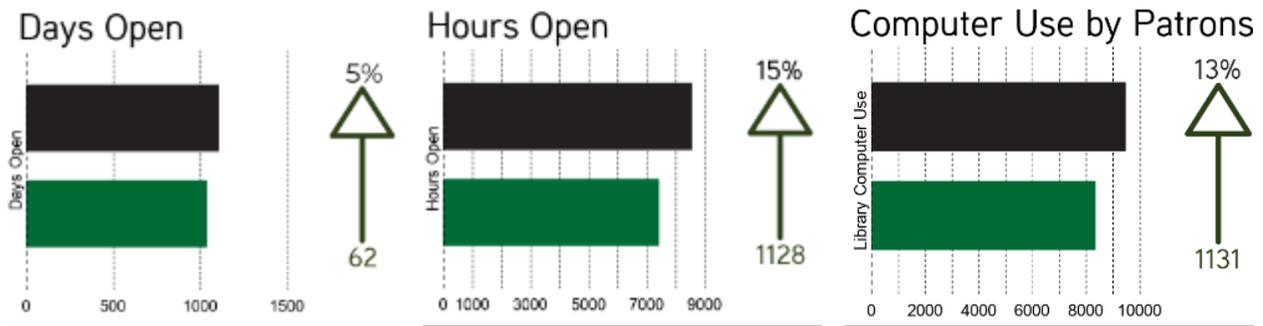


## Executive Summary

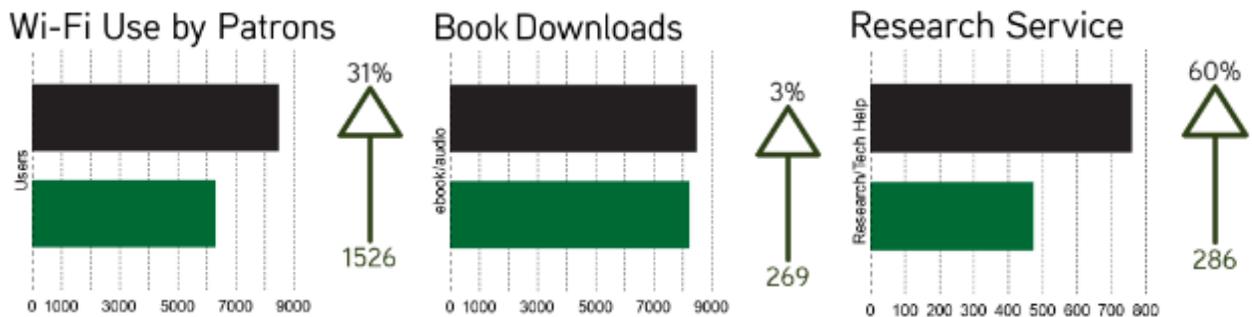
### People are Using Our Libraries a Lot, in Many Different Ways

- Pines & Plains Libraries increased hours, full-time positions, computer capabilities, and broadband access in 2018.

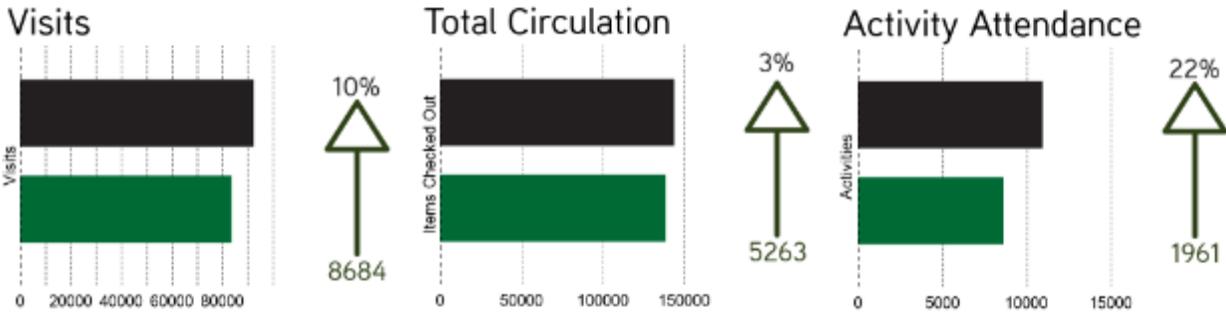
Graph Key: Black=2018, Green=2017



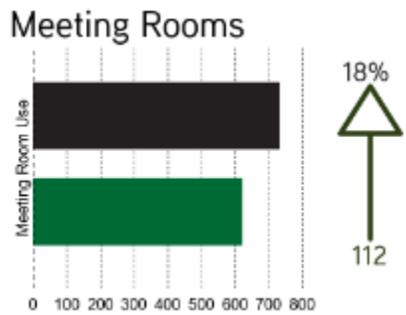
- Patrons relied on us more for Wi-Fi, ebooks, and research services.



- Material use, visits, and activity attendance have gone up significantly.



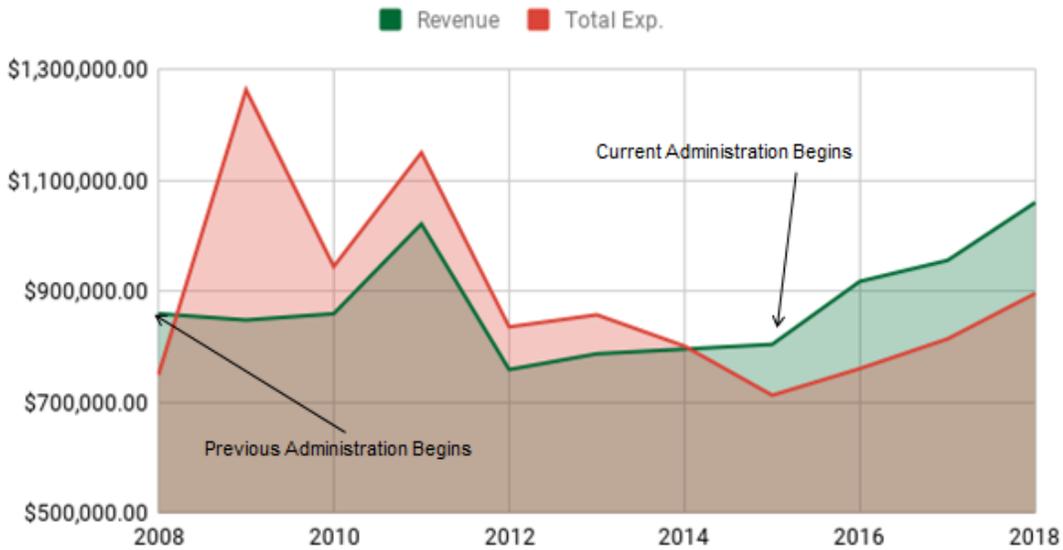
- Our libraries are used, increasingly, as places for conversation, learning, and community, as evidenced by Elizabeth meeting room use.



### Our Libraries are Good Stewards of Taxpayer Funds

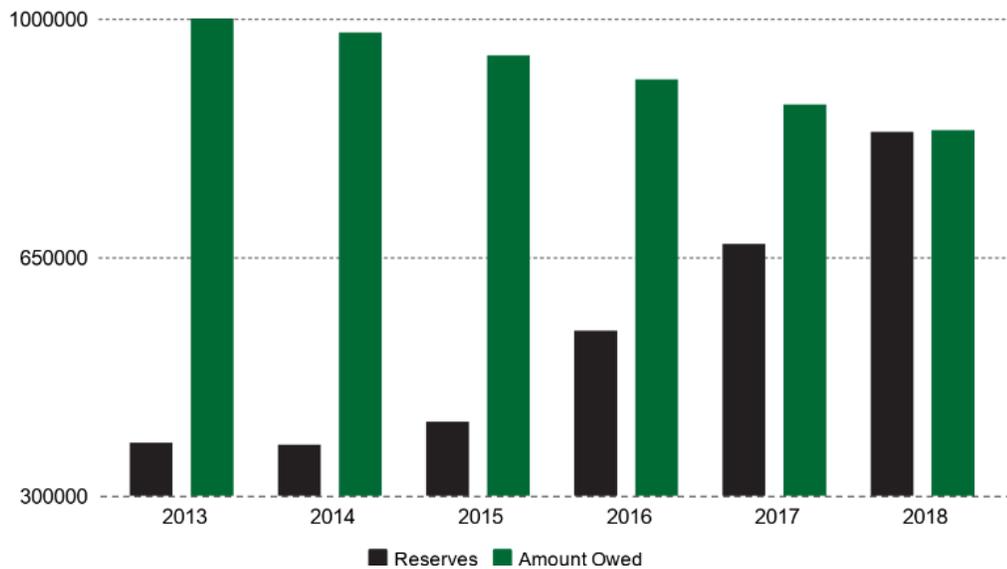
- Since this administration and board of trustees took the helm of the district in 2015, we have cut unnecessary costs, increased funding for in-demand services, and built reserves. Audits and budgets submitted to the state for the past few years indicate strong fiscal health. This trend continued in 2018.

## Revenue vs Operations and Capital Expenditures



- P&PL's reserves balance is functionally equal to the amount owed for the Elizabeth facility. Payoff of the lease purchase option (LPO) should be possible before 2021.**

## Elizabeth Library Pay-Off Progress



## **Our Libraries Strategically Respond to Community Needs**

- **The district successfully executed and fulfilled the goals associated with the 2016 to 2018 strategic plan.**
- **P&PL has met and exceeded 2016 Needs Assessment goals, including all immediate and five year goals, as well as many ten-year objectives.**
- **The Board of Trustees and administration established new strategic goals for 2019 through 2023.**

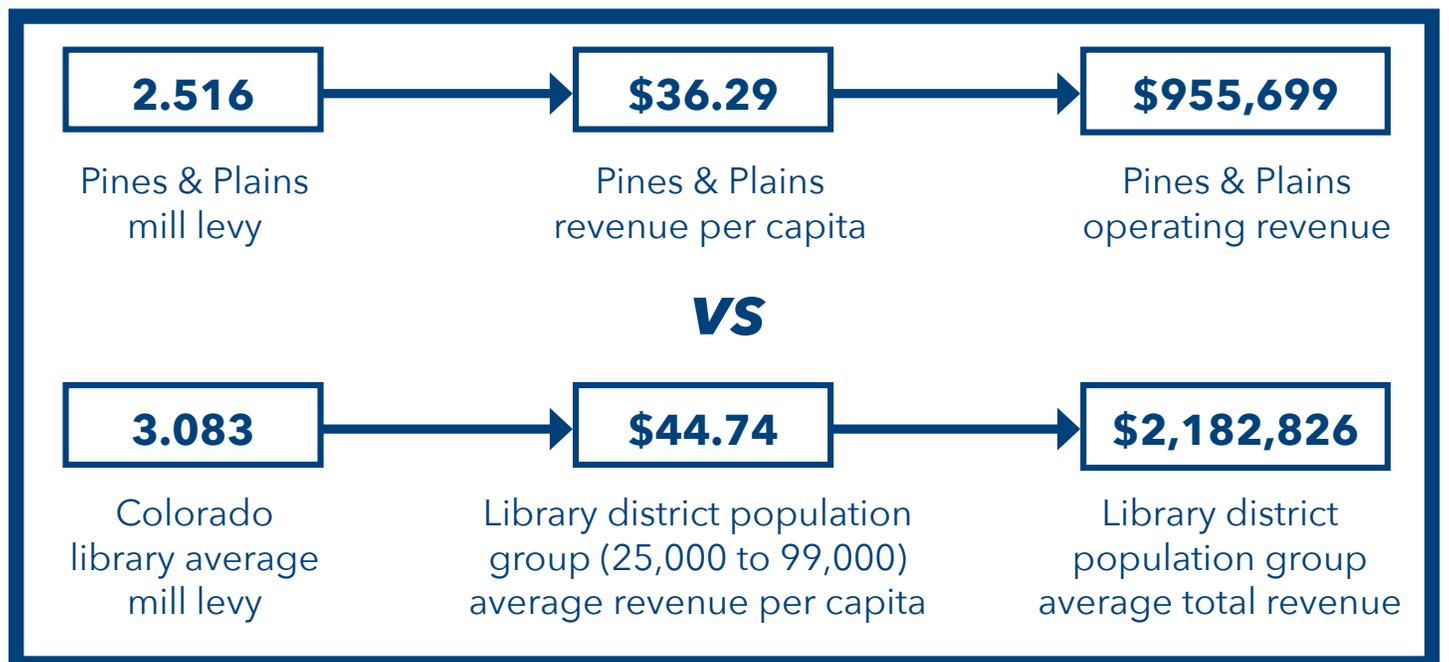
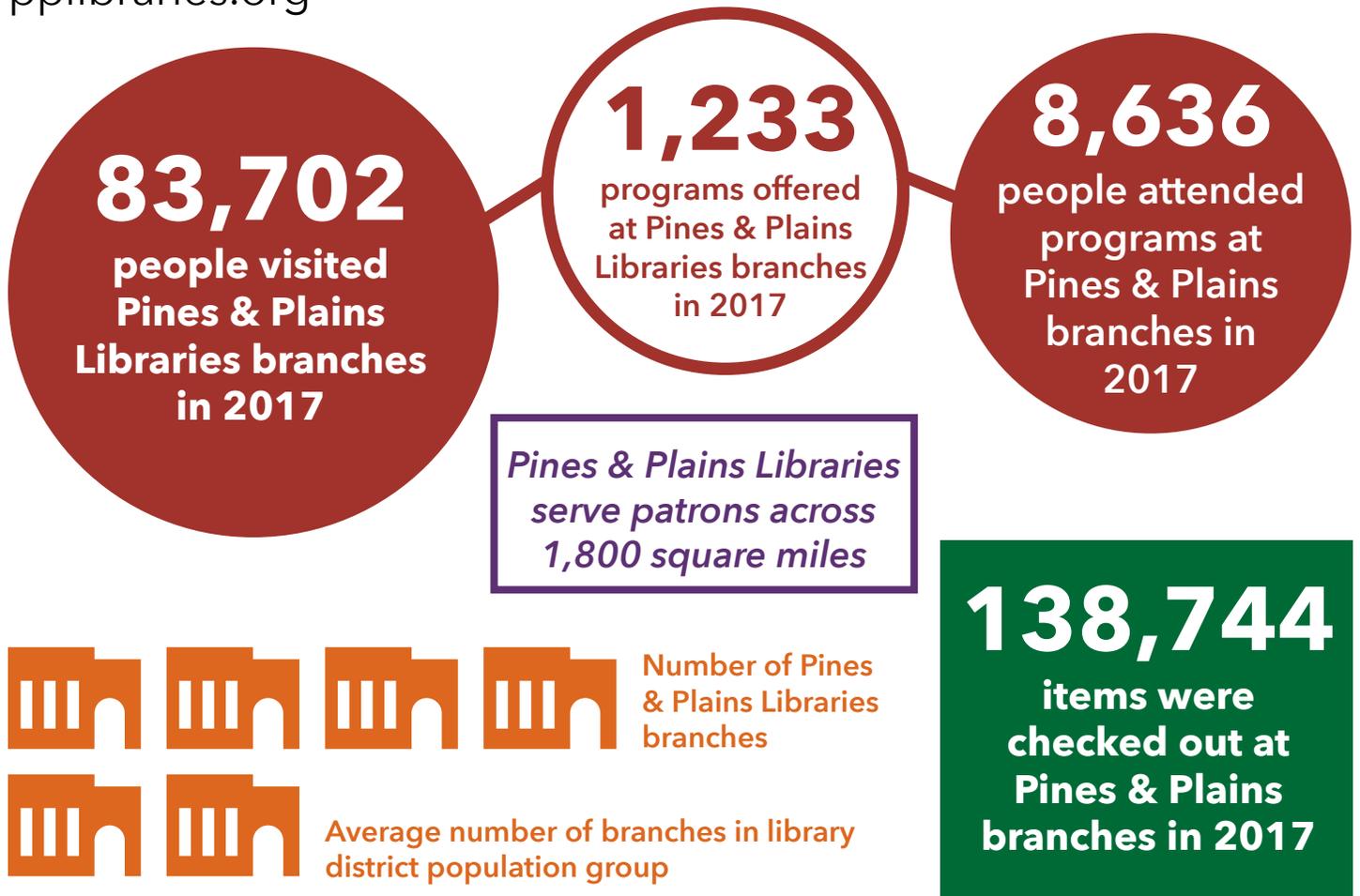
**Compared to other Colorado public libraries in their population group, Pines & Plains Libraries have been remarkably successful at providing a wide variety of services over the past four years. Excellent governance, a passionate staff, and adept planning have led these successes.**

**We do more with less.**

# We do more with less



pplibraries.org



# **Service Statistics**



## **Service Statistics Discussion**

### **Expansion of Services = Increased Use**

Pines & Plains Libraries increased hours and restructured staffing in 2018. Division of front-lines positions from the blanket-term “Librarian” to Technician, Service Lead, and Program and Outreach Coordinator specializations enabled the district to better address five product lines (research services, items, programs, outreach, and electronic services) while simultaneously building a stable leadership base and basic internal career paths. Also of note was a temporary increase in computer hardware budgets for the purpose of acquiring new computers for patrons in Elizabeth, Kiowa, and Simla. In addition, the district quadrupled activity budgets, increasing each library’s ability to provide more lectures—more Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) programs—more early literacy story times, and more performers.

**In summary, use of all services grew from 2017 to 2018.**

### **Effective Planning and Assessment Lead to Growth**

The actions referred-to in the section above, and subsequent usage increases, reflect an effective execution of two strategic goals outlined for a three-year plan initiated in 2016.

The relevant strategic goals were to...

- Utilize outreach to create community destinations.
- Increase service capacity.

One key component to achieving these goals was a Needs Assessment conducted in 2016. Administrators analyzed data acquired through surveys and user feedback, and our libraries responded by meeting the needs and wants of our patrons through strategic action.

The Needs Assessment identified the priorities below, which may be considered subsets of strategic goals.

One to Three-Year Goals:

1. Add to materials acquisition budgets (completed in 2017)
2. Acquire better Internet for all branches (completed in 2018)

3. Train staff to “sell” services and electronic downloads (begun in 2016, comp. in 2018)
4. Train staff to help patrons with e-services (completed in 2016, 2017, and 2018, ongoing)
5. Add programs and market them better (carried-out in 2017 and 2018)
6. Add coffee services (completed in 2016)

#### Five-Year Goals

1. Add hours (completed in 2018)
2. Make better, faster computing available (completed in 2018)
3. Acquire electronic tablets for patron use (completed in 2017)

#### Ten-Year Goals

1. Hire more full-time staff (hired full-time leads and increased coordinator hours in 2018)
2. Expand Elizabeth, Kiowa, and Simla facilities (not yet completed)
3. Improve the visibility of the Elizabeth Library (not yet completed)
4. Open a new service location in the northwest corner of the county (not yet completed)

### **Service Data Conclusions**

The district has “increased service capacity” and adapted to improve per user expectations. In turn, patrons have used services more. Typically, throughout the nation, patrons use libraries less when the economy is robust. P&PL has reversed that tendency by responding to changing patron needs and demands for our five primary product lines, being research services, electronic services, items, programs, and outreach. Our branches have become “community destinations” due to extensive marketing and outreach, as well as the creation of welcoming policies. Three and five-year Needs Assessment goals have been met either on-or-ahead of time. This has been no small task, as administration’s adherence to the third 2016 to 2018 strategic goal, “Maintain a stable fiscal structure,” (more on this in subsequent pages) and the need to address legacy debt, has necessitated austerity at times.

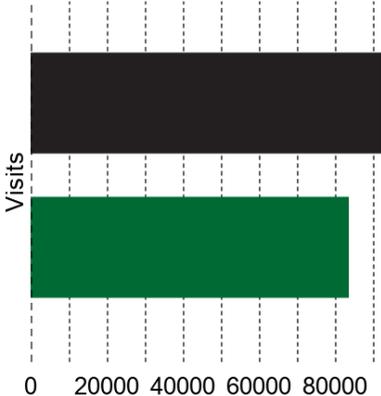
One specific “negative” stat stands out in the infographics provided on the pages after this discussion: Cardholders decreased by 6% in 2018. This is largely the result of the administrative decision to delete accounts that have not been active for the past two years. We have extended the user account expiration time period five years because many people with accounts use electronic services without visiting libraries, and our operations software does not record these transactions.

**Administration can unequivocally state that, in a year of economic prosperity, when our libraries should have experienced less use, P&PL has experienced a significant increase in**

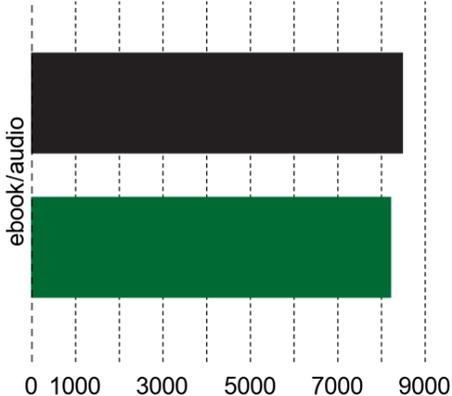
**services across the board. Sound governance, an excellent staff, and adaptive planning have facilitated effective growth.**

# P&PL 2017 to 2018 Service Stat Comparison

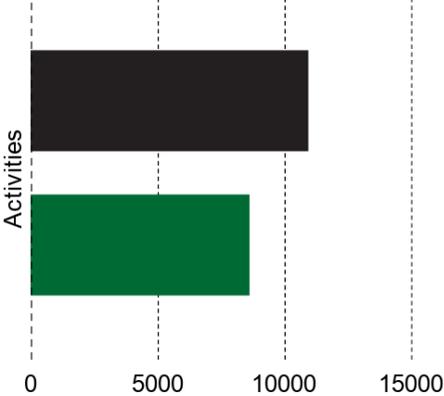
## Visits



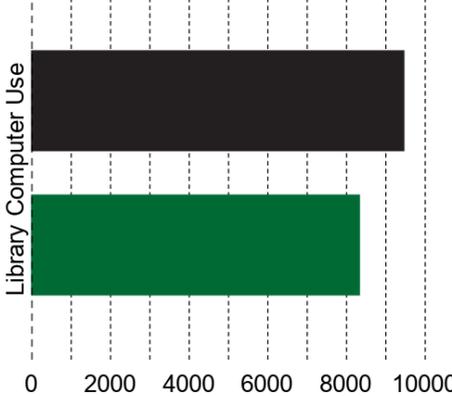
## Book Downloads



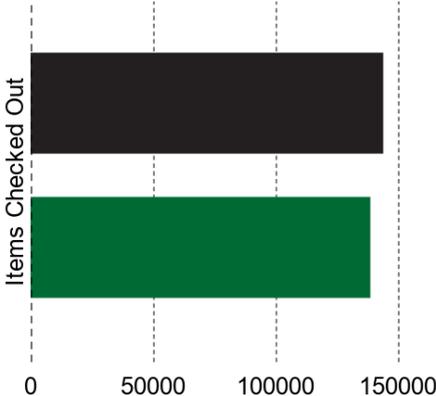
## Activity Attendance



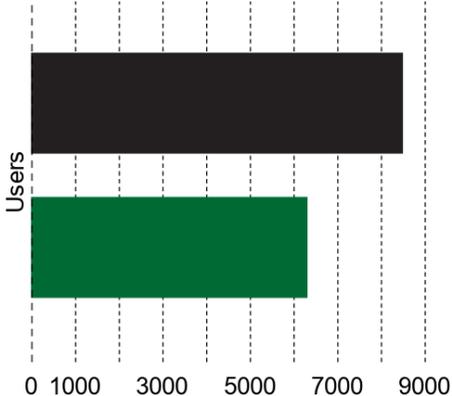
## Computer Use by Patrons



## Total Circulation

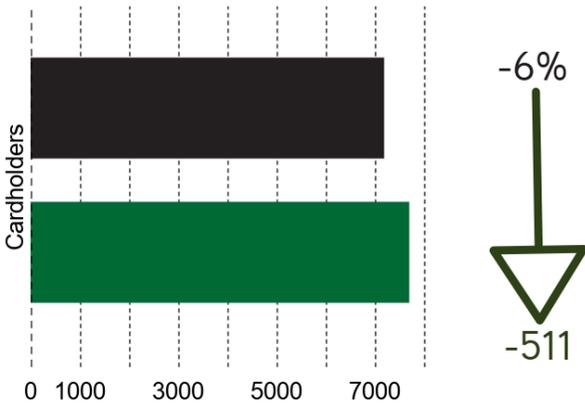


## Wi-Fi Use by Patrons

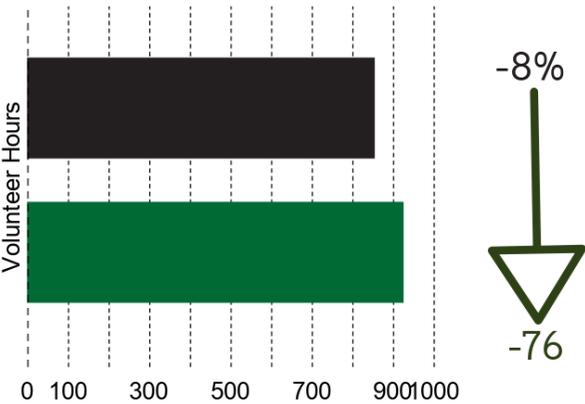


# P&PL 2017 to 2018 Service Stat Comparison

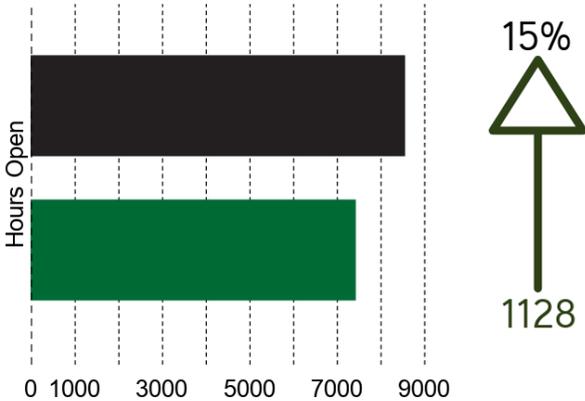
## Cardholders



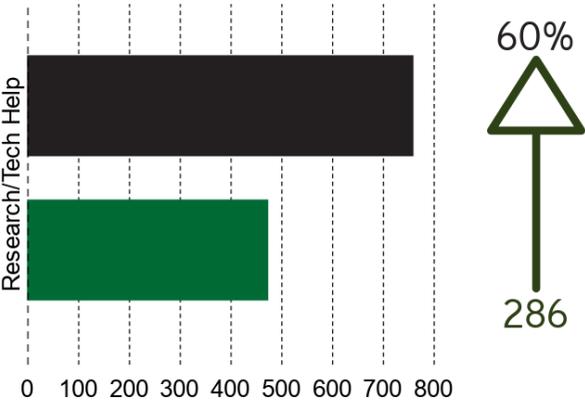
## Volunteer Hours



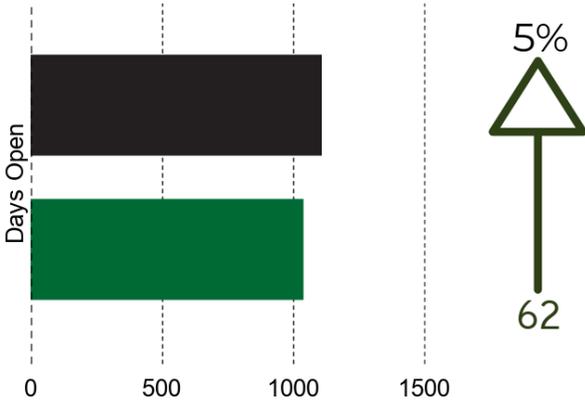
## Hours Open



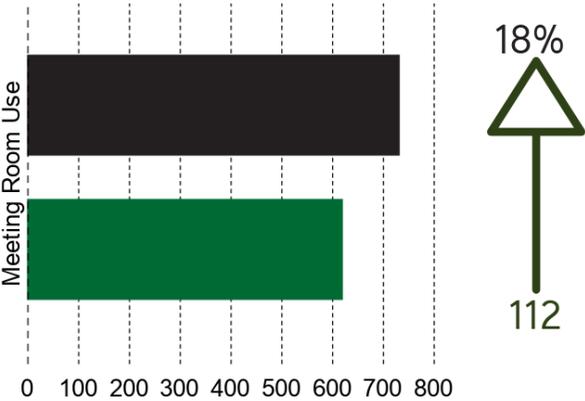
## Research Service



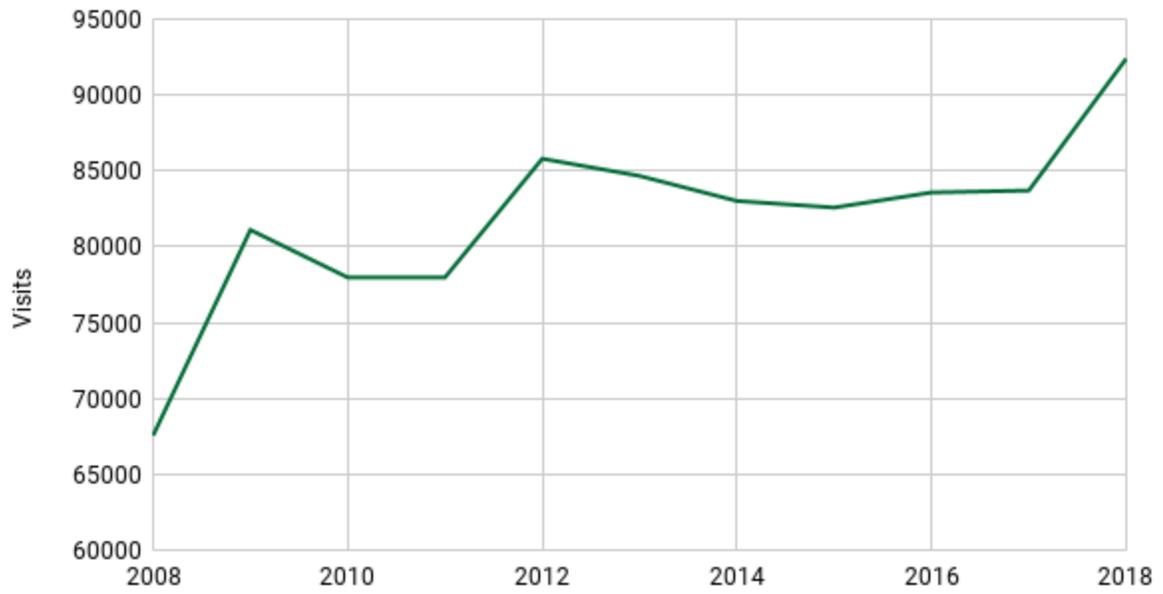
## Days Open



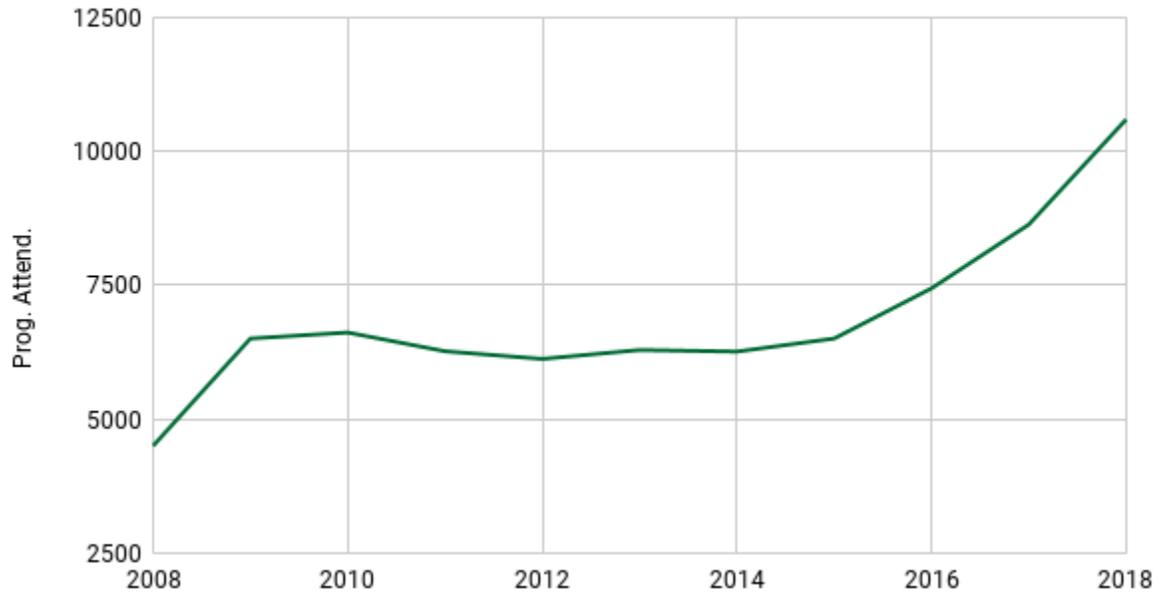
## Meeting Rooms



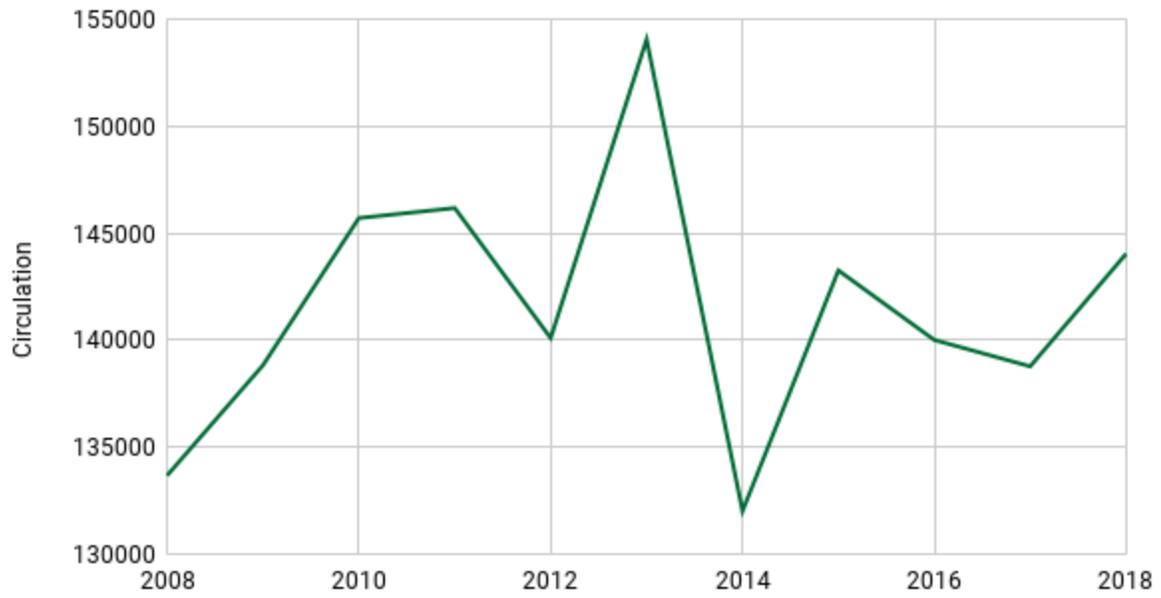
## Visits



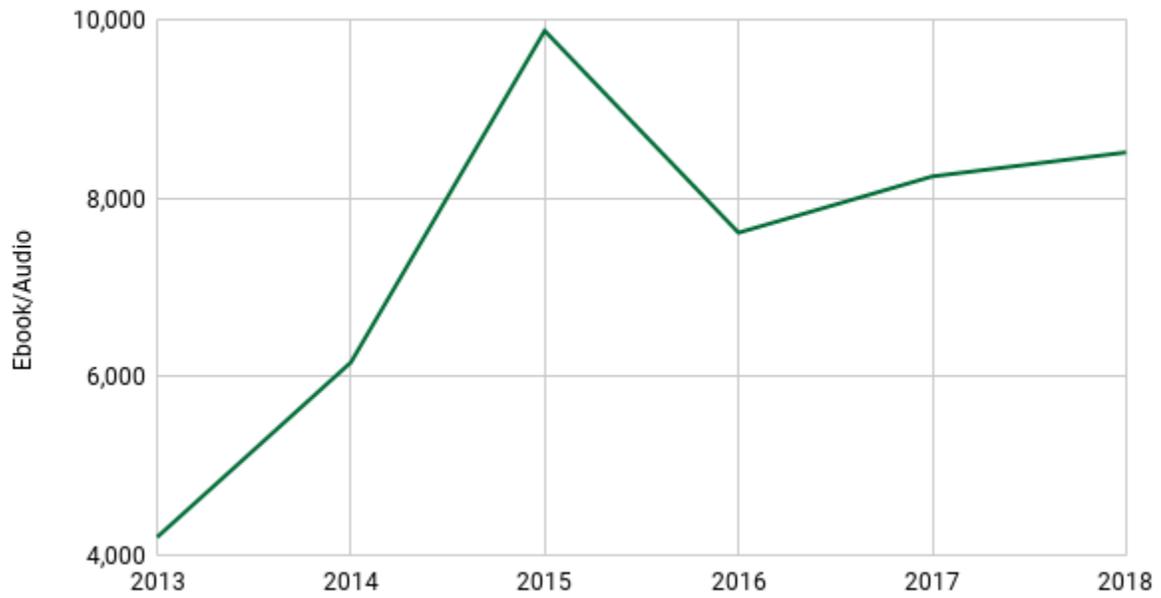
## Program Attendance



## Circulation



## Ebook/Audio



# **State of the Trust**



## Fiscal “State of the Trust” Discussion

### **The District is in Excellent Fiscal Health**

A 2018 net income of \$164,000 indicates that Pines & Plains Libraries made more than we spent. As in the previous three years, administration expects the 2018 audit to reflect an improved “net position.” Positive net position and increasing reserves balances are two of the best tools to gauge good stewardship of taxpayer funds by a local government. During the tenure of this administration, as well as the Trustees who have served since 2015, district net position has been, and will be, positive. The reserves balance has more than doubled, going from \$379,000 in 2014 to \$879,000 in 2018. Sound management and governance have not only rescued the district from a potential past fiscal precipice, but they have also resulted in significant progress toward a prosperous, planned future.

Administration would like to thank the Trustees for their dedication to libraries, as well as for their expert and deft stewardship of taxpayer funds. Past President Susan St. Vincent deserves special thanks for her brilliant and judicious leadership for the last six years. She recently tendered her resignation, and we will miss her.

### **Anticipation of Lease Purchase Option Payoff**

The P&PL Board of Trustees emphasized the necessity for fiscal conservation and discipline through a strategic goal outlined as part of a three-year plan, which began in 2016. The goal: “Maintain fiscal stability.” The district’s primary objective, under this goal, has been to improve net income for the purpose of owning the Elizabeth facility outright, rather than continue financing it under a lease purchase option. Payoff of the lease purchase option will be viable at or before the end of 2021. 2018 marks a major achievement in regard to the ownership initiative enacted since 2015.

**The amount in reserves (\$834,057) is nearly equal to the amount owed for the Elizabeth lease purchase option (\$836,718).**

The district will ensure that it has enough in reserves to cover other expenses before executing the pay-off of the facility. The Pines & Plains Libraries 2019 adopted budget estimates that the district will add \$138,000 to the reserves. If the estimate proves accurate, and it should—barring a catastrophe—the reserves balance will be \$972,000 at the end of the fiscal year. The

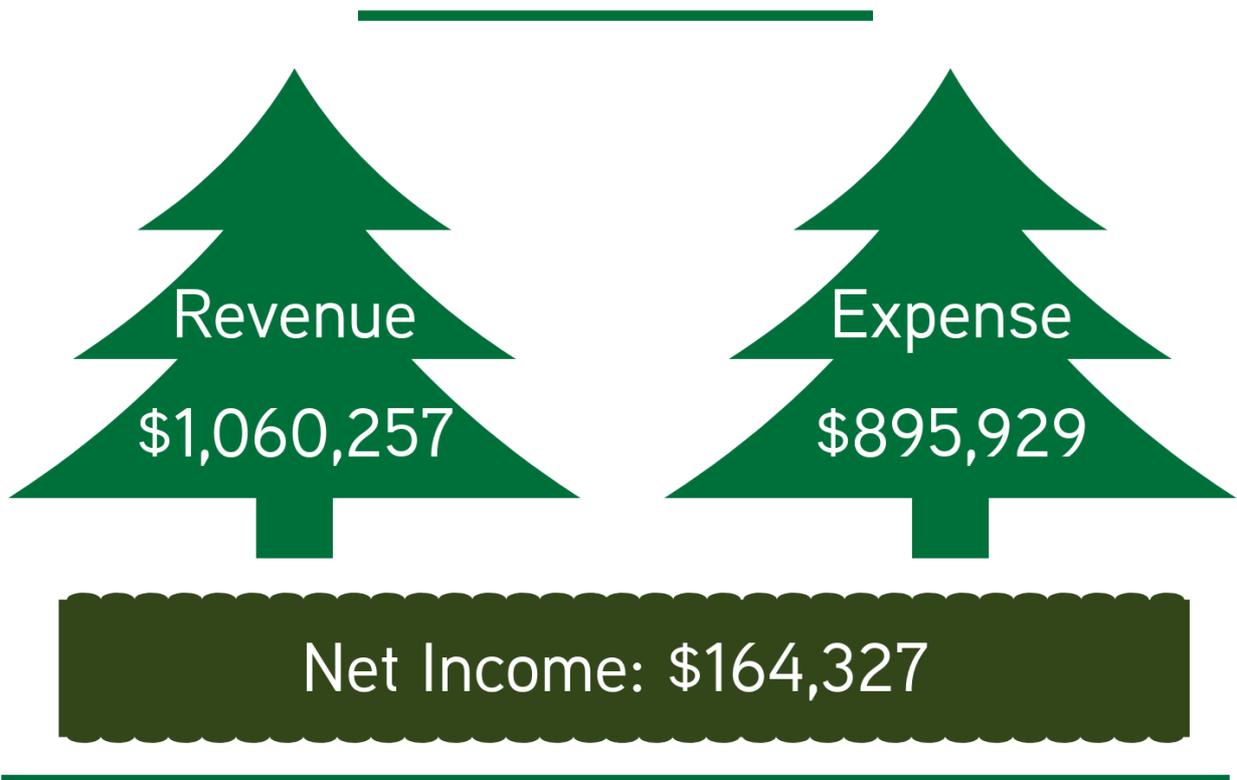
balance of the lease purchase option will be \$796,809. This would leave the district with \$175,191 in reserves if it chooses to pay off the amount owed at the end 2019. Our current projections estimate monthly expenses should average about \$75,000 at that point in time, and we typically do not see any substantial revenue in January or February. Payments, without revenue, would put the district at \$25,000 by the time it incurs a large revenue payment in March 2020. Nonetheless, if our estimates are correct, they indicate that payoff of the Elizabeth lease purchase option will be very viable within the next 14 to 24 months.

### **What's Next for Finances?**

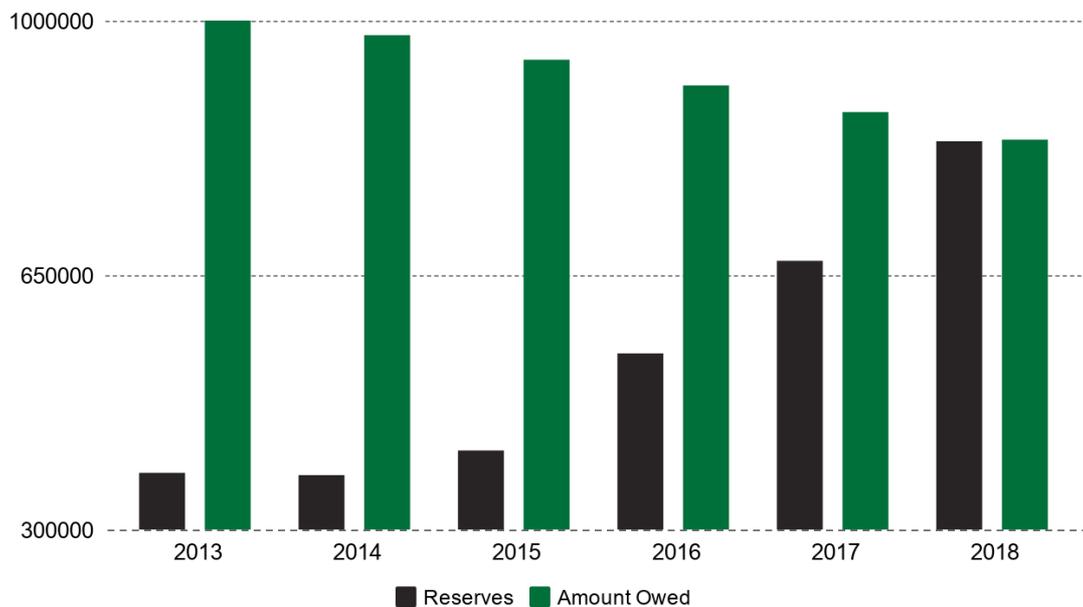
Pines & Plains Libraries has transitioned from needed reactive fiscal measures to a long-term proactive financial strategy. Our gaining ownership of the Elizabeth facility will serve as the final benchmark in this transition. In 2019, the district is beginning a new three-to-five year strategic plan. Part of that strategy will involve the creation of a capital fund and a capital improvements plan for all four branches and prospective facilities. A certain percentage of monies, which would otherwise go to reserves, will be allotted to capital fund "savings" toward new or improved facilities throughout Elbert County. In particular, expanding existing facilities and/or creating a new library to serve the fast-growing Elizabeth area will take top priority. Our Foundation's reserves have reached the critical mass necessary for it to apply for capital improvement grants, and the organization's funds will aid us in creating bigger and better libraries.

Increased staffing and more competitive compensation incentives for leads, technicians, and coordinators will happen concurrently to capital improvements. Full-time pay, living wages, and benefits will attract and retain talented individuals who would like to have a career at our libraries. The district will subsequently pursue more effective management structure and pay. Incrementally, as facilities expand, the district will leverage finances to grow activities, meeting and lounging areas, as well as physical and electronic collections.

# P&PL Fiscal Health: 2018



## Elizabeth Library Pay-Off Progress



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# P&PL Fiscal Results: 2018

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Total Expenditures: \$895,929

Budgeted: \$878,261

Total Revenues: \$1,060,257

Budgeted: \$1,013,650

\$164,000  
Net  
Income

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## "Big Ticket" Expenditures

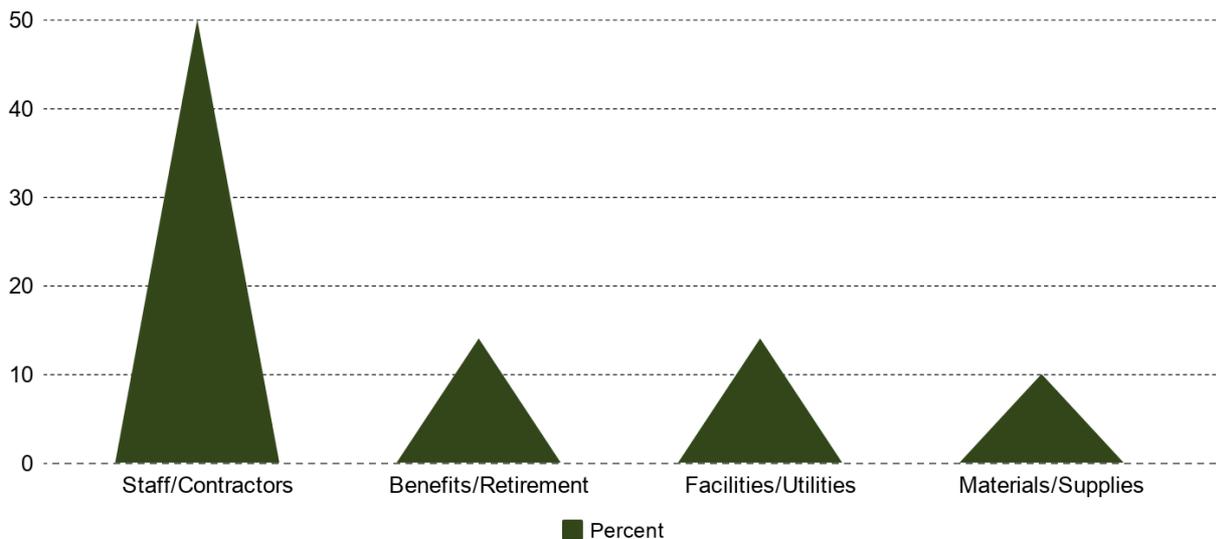
Staffing/Contractors: 50%

Benefits/Retirement: 14%

Facilities/Utilities: 14%

Materials/Supplies: 10%

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# Web Presence



## **Web Presence Discussion**

### **The Web-scape is Changing**

Overall, website use declined significantly in 2018, continuing a noticeable three-year trend. Unfortunately, we have no way to measure catalog use by patrons, as we share this tool and our collection with a consortium of over 100 libraries. Users can, and often do, access our catalog directly without stopping at our website. Ebook and audiobook downloads continue to grow. Newsletter views are level, but clicks on links and buttons that lead to various electronic services have increased. So what gives?

### **Users are Connecting with us in Different Ways**

People are connecting with the district more on the internet, but it is happening in different ways. Here's how:

- People who liked our Facebook page increased by 17%
- Facebook users who engaged with our Facebook content increased by 90%.
- Visits to our "locations and hours" pages have been coopted by the more effective and convenient Google My Business and Google Maps pages, which can easily be accessed on-the-go through mobile devices.
- 11,921 people searched for our libraries by name on Google, from April to December in 2018.
- 518 people asked for Google directions, from April to December in 2018.
- During the same time period, 467 people told their Android to call us after searching for a library.

### **What it All Means**

- The district is creating valuable, click-worthy content in the newsletter and on Facebook.
- Users prefer the convenience and familiarity of Facebook and Google over website navigation.
- As with all electronic and outreach services, our communication and marketing to Elbert County must occur "at the user's point of need." This means we must update and post to Google My Business and Facebook pages more for the time being.

# Conclusion



## Conclusion

**Demand for our libraries is growing, and we are responding to the needs of our communities:**

- **Pines & Plains Libraries increased hours, activity funding, full-time positions, specialization, computer capabilities, and broadband access in 2018.**
- **Use of materials, electronic, program, outreach, and service product lines has seen significant growth, as evidenced by data collected throughout the year.**
- **Since this administration and board of trustees took the helm of the district in 2015, we have cut unnecessary costs, increased funding for in-demand services, and built reserves. Audits and budgets submitted to the state for the past few years indicate strong fiscal health. This trend continued in 2018.**
- **P&PL's reserves balance is functionally equal to the amount owed for the Elizabeth facility. Payoff of the lease purchase option (LPO) should be possible before 2021.**
- **The district will establish a capital improvements fund once the LPO payoff occurs.**
- **The district successfully completed the goals associated with the 2016 to 2018 strategic plan. These goals were to...**
  - 1. Utilize outreach to create community destinations.**
  - 2. Maintain fiscal stability.**

### **3. Increase service capacity.**

- **P&PL has successfully completed most of the goals associated with the 2016 Needs Assessment ahead of schedule.**
- **The Board of Trustees and administration established new strategic goals for 2019 through 2023:**
  - 1. Work to develop and expand facilities that better meet the needs of existing and prospective users.**
  - 2. Foster creativity and local culture by becoming hubs for the generation of art, information, and technology.**
  - 3. Engage its communities through remote services, outreach, partnership, and marketing.**
- **We provide more services, to more communities, via more libraries, in a larger area—as compared with other Colorado public libraries that attend to similarly sized populations. We do all that with a lower mill levy and less funding than most.**