

Okanagan Regional Library Moves Into New Headquarters

By Pamela Medland.



Old HQ in front of new HQ

Okanagan Regional Library staff got an early Christmas present this year when their new Headquarters building opened on December 8th. After thirty years in a cramped and dated facility, the new building is definitely a treat. Staff are enjoying two shipping areas (incoming and outgoing), four meeting rooms, a Board room with kitchen facilities, a 25-seat computer lab, an in-house storage area for our shared Youth Services programming collection, ample open-plan space for cataloguing, processing, and allocations, a state-of-the-art server room, and spacious new quarters for our Computer Services staff.

There is also enough extra administrative office space to allow the ORL to safely expand for some years to come without facing major renovations. In fact, the building is specially designed to allow for the second floor balcony areas to be connected with a new floor, effectively adding another 5,000 square feet of usable space.

New HQ processing centre

Most staff has been provided with new and updated desks and/or work spaces, including automated counters in the Allocations Department that can be

raised or lowered to suit the task at hand and the size of the operator.

Other staff amenities include a comfortable staff room with an enclosed patio seating area, a much larger fridge, and Headquarters' first automated dishwasher. There is also a shower in the staff washroom, and plans for staff lockers for those who bike or run to work in Kelowna's intense summer heat. Bikers will also be able to take advantage of the built-in bike storage area with exterior access.



Near the boardroom looking down.

The move

Forty-five staff work regularly at the ORL's Headquarters building, which services twenty-nine branches located in twenty-four communities throughout our service area.



Old HQ demolition

While construction of the new facility, built on empty land immediately behind our old building, had been ongoing for some time, the actual move entailed restriction of branch services for a seven-day period.

The catalogue, the ORL website, and public Internet access were all down while we moved servers and rebuilt the network. Internal movement of library materials was postponed, and branch staff relied on back-up software to record items borrowed (nothing was checked in while we were down).

Customer response

Customers were, on the whole, supportive during the disruptions to library service entailed by the move. It is interesting to note that the majority of queries received were from customers unable to access Library To Go as a result of our inability to authenticate barcodes. One high light of the new facility that will help ensure branch network access in the future was installation of an emergency generator and uninterrupted power supply capability.

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