

# BC library community responds after Slave Lake wildfire

By Gordon Yusko.

Slave Lake, Alberta lost its public library on May 15<sup>th</sup> when a wildfire hit, destroying about one-third of the town. The 6,300 square foot library occupied part of the town hall and had been open only a year and half. The photo below shows the building on fire and it's clear why nothing inside could be saved.



Photo credit: Rotary Club of Slave Lake Public Library

The library community and individuals across the country responded quickly and donations of books and funds began arriving both in Slave Lake and at the Peace Library System's headquarters in Grande Prairie, where storage, sorting, and cataloguing of the thousands of items took place.

Many libraries in B.C. and individuals working at those libraries responded by donating books, money or both. The generosity came from a solid cross section including public, academic, government, special libraries and unions. From the information I received

Dawson Creek Municipal Public Library was the most proactive, with residents there responding very well by donating books and by providing financial support through a book sale and silent auction.

The University of Northern BC sent books and funds (see *UNBC Update* in this issue of the BCLA Browser). The Royal BC Museum – Archives sent books, as did the Vancouver and Calgary libraries at Klohn Crippen Berger Ltd, an engineering/environmental firm. In the Lower Mainland an ad hoc committee raised funds at the Word on the Street event. The Northern Central Library Federation sent funds on behalf of its 10 member libraries. In the Okanagan members of the Professional Employees Association and the PEA Executive sent generous financial donations to the Slave Lake library.

In Slave Lake, the library is now moving into temporary quarters offered by the town and fundraising will continue. While insurance covered some of their losses and they are very grateful for the wonderful support from across the country. It's estimated that at least another \$100,000 will be needed before they can fully replace what they lost.

For those interested in supporting Slave Lake Public Library, visit <http://www.slavelakelibrary.ab.ca/Home>.

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