

THE NEWS

Province needs to support libraries

Published on April 15, 2016

The economic and social importance of our public libraries continues to be overlooked and undervalued by the provincial government. Just as large department stores in malls generate interest and increase foot traffic for surrounding businesses, a well-funded library can have a similar effect in a small town.

As society becomes more dependent on technology, libraries have evolved to meet the needs of the community by becoming cultural hubs. As municipal and provincial funding decreases, our libraries struggle to provide much-needed services to our community members.

Local libraries are educating and inspiring patrons in art, music, literature and help individuals to engage in their community. After school programming, hobby and interest groups, workshops, lectures and guest speakers are some of the many things that take place at our local library. The services offered assist young families, seniors, and new members to the community. Free-of-charge home delivery of books and literature is available to those in rural communities or those unable to access the services offered by the libraries. Many people would be surprised to learn of the variety of services offered. It is no longer just a place to borrow books!

Job seekers are able to use public computers and employment resources at no cost. This allows them to seek educational and essential employment tools to improve their lives. The fact that materials can be borrowed and technology used free of charge is of great importance in “levelling the playing field” between socio-economic classes, by offering universal access to information.

Libraries build engaged citizens, they educate individuals, foster equality, nurture thoughtful communities and are worth fighting for, and they are worth funding.

Karla MacFarlane

MLA Pictou West