

Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Activity

Library Visits by Location		
2023/2024		2024/2025
Antigonish	144,754	161,362
Books-By-Mail	N/A	
New Glasgow	66,428	62,828
Pictou	26,851	49,356
River John	7,747	9,510
Stellarton	18,024	19,126
Trenton	9,747	11,274
Westville	21,411	23,889

Population Served	64,369
Total Holdings	139,760
Summer Reading Program Participants	449 ballots 3635 complete activities
Number of staff	60

24/25 Income		24/25 Expenditure	
Provincial Grant		Salaries/Benefits	
Municipal Grant		Books & Materials	
Board Income		Administration	
TOTAL		TOTAL	

Accumulated Deficit	
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Major Sponsors

Adopt-A-Library Literacy Program
Friends of the Antigonish Library
Friends of the River John Library
Our Communities

Library Board

Province of Nova Scotia:
Rev. Greg Dickson
(from Sept. 2024-)

Kathy Campbell
(Sept. 2024 – Feb. 2025)

Municipality of the County of Antigonish:
Coun. Mary MacLellan

Municipality of Pictou County:
Coun. Deborah Wadden

Town of Antigonish:
Coun. Sean Cameron
(to Oct. '24)

Coun. Patrick McKenna
(from Nov. 2024)

Town of New Glasgow:
Coun. Clyde Fraser
(Chair from November 2024)

Town of Pictou:
Coun. Dan Currie
(Chair to October 2024)

Coun. Robert Fry
(from Nov.2024)

Town of Stellarton:
Coun. Simon Lawand
(to Oct. '24)

Deputy Mayor Sandra Eis
(from Nov. '2024)

Town of Trenton:
Coun. Nicole LeBlanc

Town of Westville:
Coun. Sarah MacKinnon,
(to October 2024)

Coun Helen Dunn
(from Nov. 2024)

Library Management Staff

ERIC STACKHOUSE
Chief Librarian/ Board Secretary

TRECIA SCHELL
Community Services Librarian

MANSI NISHIT TRIVEDI
Technical Services Librarian

KAREN MACNEILL
Office Manager

JEAN ROZEE
Finance Manager

JES DAVEY
Manager of Web Services

MELANIE PAULS
Community Access to
Technology Coordinator

KRISTEL FLEUREN-HUNTER
Children’s Services Librarian

REGIONAL LIBRARY

Annual Report



April 2024 – March 2025

www.parl.ns.ca

Chairperson’s Report 2024/2025

After 10 years of planning, the Murray Family Public Library opened in Pictou on September 23, 2024 in the new and renovated deCoste Culture Hub. Congratulations to the Town of Pictou, the Municipality of the County of Pictou, the deCoste Entertainment Society and the community for their support of an amazing complex. Not only does the complex feature a new library and renovated theatre but includes workshop and office space for Creative Pictou County, community meeting spaces, world-class public art, a new boardwalk and sea stairs, and a gallery to showcase local arts and culture. Most important, the community loves their new space with over 32,000 visits in the first six months. The official opening of the deCoste Culture Hub was held November 1, 2025. Thank you to our community, municipal, provincial and federal funding partners.

The success of the project above can be contrasted with the disappointment felt by the regional library board in February when Library Funding Formula Committee recommendations were not accepted by the provincial government. With no increase in provincial base funding the board will struggle to maintain hours, services, and programs at current levels. It is clear communities and government want more of what public libraries offer. At the same time, the Funding Formula Committee indicated public libraries were at risk if not properly resourced. The Board, with municipal partners, will continue to urge the provincial government to work towards a resolution in the near future.

The board welcomed two new provincial appointees in June, Greg Dickson and Kathy Campbell. Unfortunately, Kathy was unable to continue due to family commitments. The board has notified officials with Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage and requested a replacement.

The municipal elections of October 2024 resulted in several changes to board membership. The board wishes to express its sincere thanks to councillors Dan Currie, Simon Lawand, Sean Cameron and Sarah MacKinnon for their dedication and support while members. The board would like to welcome new board members, councillors Robert Fry, Sandra Eis, Helen Dunn, and Patrick McKenna.

The renewal of the New Glasgow Library and Regional Headquarters is now underway. The Town of New Glasgow selected general contractor PCL to take on this \$12 million project. It will take two years to complete and both the library and headquarters will move elsewhere during this time.

Finally, I wish to thank board members past and present for their ongoing support. Also, to all of our employees, sincere thanks for all of your work and the caring you show while supporting our communities.

Clyde Fraser, Chair
Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library

Chief Librarian’s Report 2024/2025

This was a busy year for the regional library. The new Murray Family Library, located in Pictou, opened in September to rave reviews. The New Glasgow Library and HQ renovation project moved forward with an expected construction start of spring 2025. Many improvements have been made in branches across the region, especially in accessibility. Thank you to all levels of government for their support. A special thank you to our communities, it is clear they want welcoming and vibrant libraries offering a range of experiences.

And the statistics show this. Every year since the launch of Same Page our circulation has grown, this year saw a 2% increase, even though a postal strike interrupted the movement of books across the province. Library visits increased by 14%, with 337,345 visits to a library in PARL during the year. Of special interest is the 28% increase in information questions answered, which can be directly linked to more people looking for help finding and using government information. Public libraries have truly become community hubs.

In the spring of 2024 I was asked to Co-Chair the Regional Library Funding Review Committee. It was a positive experience, working with leaders from government, municipalities, and library boards, to identify the financial needs of public libraries over the next five years. What was obvious is how libraries have changed in the past 20 years and how much they support government services and community priorities. It was also very clear libraries faced an uncertain future in staffing, collections, and technology without provincial government leadership and investment. Recommendations were made to the Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage in September. It was with deep disappointment that we learned government chose not to act on those recommendations in its February budget. While their reasoning is understood, global financial uncertainty, it fails to recognize that during times of uncertainty, citizens need and ask more from public libraries.

I cannot review in this short space all the good work of the board’s employees. From innovative projects, amazing partnerships, exciting programs, and service with caring and compassion, library workers have shown tremendous resilience. I urge the provincial leadership to recognize how essential this work is and fund it correctly.

Eric Stackhouse, Chief Librarian and Board Secretary
Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library

Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Activity

Library Use	2023/24	2024/25
Materials Borrowed	368,884	375,097
Digital Materials Borrowed	95,797	92,823
Active Users	13,617	14,659
Library Visits per year	294,962	337,345
Information Questions	22,791	27,193
Virtual Library Visits	365,777	273,840
Electronic Database Sessions	25,378	20,724
Internet Bookings	32,158	32,230
Internet Training Programs	812	1,040
Library Programs	1,389	1,570
Library Program Attendance	13,434	14,151
Items Borrowed from Other Libraries	461	484
Items Lent to Other Libraries	507	462
Nova Story Page Views (Ant. & Pic.)	147,422	149,382

Materials Borrowed by Location (Renewals excluded)	2023/24	2024/25
Antigonish	103,095	99,385
Books-By-Mail	6,747	6,617
New Glasgow	69,339	60,650
Pictou	35,752	41,943
River John	7,605	8,158
Stellarton	26,776	27,908
Trenton	4,680	5,147
Westville	13,525	14,031