Knowledge At Your Finger Tips
Fontana Regional Library®

Making Our Communities Stronger

Annual Report 2019
Fontana Regional Library was created in July 1944. For 75 years, it has been our mission to provide the public of Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties with excellent service and convenient access to resources for their educational, informational, and recreational needs.

Regional Libraries are established by Article 14, Chapter 153A of the North Carolina General Statutes and the North Carolina Administrative Code 07 NCAC 02I. We are governed by a Library Board with representatives from each of our counties in accordance with the Regional Agreement signed by all three counties and the State Library.

Funding for the libraries comes primarily from our counties, towns, and the state, supplemented by donations, grants, and our Friends of the Library groups. The funding provided by our counties stays in our counties, providing employment for 68 well-trained staff members.

In 2019 we received grants from local Community Foundations, the Public Library Association, National Science Foundation, NASA, and the federal government through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

We utilize the Schools and Libraries Universal Service Program (E-rate) to receive 80% discounts amounting to nearly $160,000 for broadband connectivity service and infrastructure. Our annual audit is available for review.
Fontana Regional Library Turns 75!

1944 was a busy year for readers in Macon, Jackson, and Swain Counties because Fontana Regional Library was formed by the North Carolina General Assembly, bringing bookmobile service to many residents throughout these counties. Although public library buildings had been established for some time in Franklin, Highlands, Sylva, and Bryson City, the library got wheels in 1944.

"At first I didn’t like reading but the first time I checked out books I felt like I was being introduced to a whole new world!" - Riley W., 9

In 2019, much has changed, and yet much has stayed the same. Books popular in 1944 included titles that have become classics and are still in demand: A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, Johnny Tremain, and Curious George. Fontana Regional Library still has a bookmobile, the Reading Rover, that brings books to childcare centers. But some things have changed, and library collections now include digital resources like eBooks and streaming video, as well as more unusual items like wildlife cameras, backpacks, telescopes, and even a portable planetarium.

"Local libraries have been a great blessing to me since early childhood."

Your library provides access to the Internet, friendly and knowledgeable staff who can work with you on online job applications, assist you in learning about new technologies like 3D printing and robotics, and even help you convert those old VHS tapes to DVD!

"My daughter has been a library user since she was small. She still loves checking out eBooks to use for her class assignments. Over the years, the library has been great at providing supplemental science education & opportunities to explore and create. The fun she’s had at the library continues to inspire & motivate her to do well at school & beyond."

Many of us have memories of the libraries we have used and how those experiences strengthened us - to celebrate 75 years of service, we asked our Patrons to share their stories, which you’ll find throughout. Eric Klinenberg’s recent book, Palaces for the People: How To Build a More Equal and United Society, highlighted the role of public libraries in people’s lives:

"I interviewed dozens of people about their memories of growing up in libraries and learned about all kinds of ways that the experience mattered: discovering an interest that they’d never have found without librarians. Feeling liberated, responsible, intelligent. Forging a new relationship, deepening an old one. Sensing, in some cases for the first time, that they belong.

Social infrastructure provides the setting and context for social participation, and the library is among the most critical forms of social infrastructure that we have.

Our communities are full of children whose future will be formed in the places where they go to learn about themselves and the world they’ll inherit. They deserve palaces."

Our mission remains the same, providing the people in our communities with excellent service and convenient access to resources for their educational, informational, and recreational needs. No matter how many new tools, technologies, and trends emerge, Fontana Regional Library will continue to strengthen its communities by encouraging important local conversations, partnering for positive impact, creating valuable community programming, and providing spaces for everyone to explore their interests.

- Karen Wallace, Director

"Roughly 20 years ago I attended a library program called Snakes Alive. I remember it quite clearly despite only being around 7 years old. I recall touching and even holding snakes and being surprised at the way they felt!"
MakerTools programs and materials really took off in 2019, having been launched with an LSTA grant from the State Library in 2018.

The FRL MakerTools project includes a variety of technologies, such as 3D printers and pens, robots and Arduino kits, building toys for kids and teens, media conversion equipment, fiber and fabric arts, photography and podcasting equipment, vinyl cutters, large-format printing, and much more.

Patrons of all ages have enjoyed the opportunity to learn and use these technologies.
"I've seen these robots at school, but I never had time to learn how to use them. I really liked having lots of time to learn about them. -- Practice makes it better!"

"It's wonderful that the library has this vinyl cutting machine and supplies available."

"Great activity, and fun. Working with these robots was a terrific activity to make the children think of the ways to arrive at destinations."

"In this more digital age, these building sets are great hands-on resources for children."
2019 Highlights

The Fontana Regional Library has a Long Range Plan to serve its communities with Focus Areas important to its patrons. Here are some highlights of services provided in these areas during 2019:

Employment & Economy

Our libraries partner with NCWorks to provide Job and Career Fairs for employers and prospective employees. Jackson County Public Library and Marianna Black Library also offer First Fridays Employment Support with a career advisor from NCWorks offering assistance to job seekers with filling out job applications, creating résumés, and preparing for interviews.

Diversity

Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library received grant monies from the Literacy Council of Cashiers to expand adult Spanish language collections, bilingual books, and periodicals. Our libraries embrace our diverse communities through a variety of initiatives including bilingual school outreach, storytimes using Spanish and Sign Language, and expanded collections and materials.

Connectivity

The third Broadband Information Sharing Meeting was hosted at Marianna Black Library to share significant actions towards the goal of increasing broadband access, not least of which is the award of GREAT grants to local companies in each of Swain, Jackson, and Macon counties.

"I always felt at home in the libraries of my childhood - the magic of reading could transport us anywhere. As a child, libraries represented a rich world of boundless possibilities. They still do."

Library Visits

Service Hours

(Hours Open to the Public)

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<td>494,790</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>12,814</td>
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"Growing up, I spent nearly every afternoon in the library after school. Born and raised in western North Carolina, those library visits helped instill the confidence in me to complete a BA in History, an MA in History, and an MLIS. I've returned to Franklin to pay the favor forward."

Health & Mental Health
The Library joined with community partners to participate in several outreach events highlighting various health and mental health topics; hosted blood drives in all 3 counties; offered participatory programs in health and wellness, such as yoga, dance, family fitness, and nutrition; and used a Public Library Association grant to assist with Affordable Care Act sign-ups during Open Enrollment.

Education
In addition to routine Storytimes for babies, toddlers, and children, libraries offer scheduled events such as: Planetarium shows, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) programs, weekly meetings for teens, and continuing education for adults.

Operational Excellence
The Wi-Fi internet service at all our FRL libraries is now being provided by a generous donation from BalsamWest. This opportunity to partner with BalsamWest in meeting the needs for connectivity is helping our communities with the lack of affordable broadband.

Recreation & Leisure Activities
In addition to having all sorts of books and other materials available for check-out, all libraries schedule movies, concerts, book talks, poetry readings, entertaining programs, and even a theater production!
Headquarters
(828) 488-2382
Director: Karen Wallace
33 Fryemont Street
Bryson City, NC 28713

Reading Rover Bookmobile
(828) 488-2382
Outreach Services
33 Fryemont Street
Bryson City, NC 28713

Jackson County Public Library
(828) 586-2016
County Librarian: Tracy Fitzmaurice
310 Keener Street
Sylva, NC 28779

Albert Carlton - Cashiers Community Library
(828) 734-0215
Branch Librarian: Serenity Richards
249 Frank Allen Road | PO Box 2127
Cashiers, NC 28717

Macon County Public Library
(828) 524-3600
County Librarian: Karen Wallace
149 Siler Farm Road
Franklin, NC 28734

Hudson Library
(828) 526-3031
Branch Librarian: Carlyn Morenus
554 Main Street | PO Box 430
Highlands, NC 28741

Nantahala Community Library
(828) 321-3020
Branch Manager: Sharon Crosby
128 Nantahala School Road
Topton, NC 28781

Marianna Black Library
(828) 488-3030
County Librarian: Jeff Delfield
33 Fryemont Street
Bryson City, NC 28713

The Heart of the Community
Enriching Lives & Inspiring the Future
providing the communities of Jackson, Macon, and Swain counties with excellent service and convenient access to resources for their educational, informational, and recreational needs.