

LIBRARIES - The heart and soul of communities

Libraries have been called the people's university and as such, offer endless opportunities to the public. Libraries are all about connecting people and removing social and economic barriers even as technology advances, books remain special.

Presently, the Mohave County Library District supports three branch libraries – the main branch and administrative offices in Kingman, one in Lake Havasu City and one in Bullhead City. We also have community libraries in Golden Valley, Valley Vista, Chloride, Dolan Springs, Meadview, Ft. Mohave and Golden Shores, plus books by mail, and 2 bookmobiles.

Mohave County is looking at ways to provide library services in the most cost effective manner based on what our citizens want and need and within the dollar amount we are willing to levy for these services. Two years ago the tax rate for the Library District was reduced by 10 cents. The FY 2018 tentative budget proposed the full 10 cents be restored in order to keep library services at the current level while preserving the library building fund. At the August 7, 2017 BOS meeting the board majority approved a tax rate of \$.02716 per \$100 of assessed value, an increase of 5 cents.

During the discussion Supervisors expressed a desire to review library services and locations currently being provided at the next Board of Supervisors' meeting following comments that questioned the need for duplicate services of both bookmobiles and community libraries.

On August 21st many citizens attended the Board of Supervisor's meeting, voicing support for libraries and requesting their community library be saved. In fact, some even asked for increased library hours. No decision was made and the item was tabled until October 2nd to allow for D-5 Supervisor Wakimoto to be present during the discussion.

In the interim staff has been working to compile a plan for potential savings that would have the least impact on the level of library services being offered and avoid the closure of any library. Mohave County Library Director, Kathy Pennell has been analyzing ideas, discussing service needs, reviewing volume of use per location, service hours, other related analytics, and taking a look at the overall cost to provide for each of these services.

We do not want to compromise the quality of library services or to increase library taxes without doing our best to analyze the cost and level of various services provided throughout the County. No decisions have been made; the Board, citizens and staff are working together to come up with options and ideas to ensure library services are sustainable in the future while gaining a thorough understanding of the level of services we can afford to provide.

Supervisor Jean Bishop
Mohave County District-4