

Walla Walla County Rural Library Receives Award Nomination

Walla Walla County Residents are fortunate to have a host of full service libraries close at hand. Established in 1972 with its first location at Touchet, the Walla Walla County Rural Library serves over 5,900 patrons per year. The network is made up of libraries at College Place, Burbank, Touchet and Prescott. A grand opening for the new Vista Hermosa branch took place February 12th, 2024. In addition to these branch locations, the county is further served by a Book Mobile. The Library announced that a building permit has been issued for a new facility in Touchet with design features that exceed the Washington State energy code.

The Walla Walla County Library District was nominated for the 2023 Smart Business Partner of the Year Award. Smart Business Partners are Walla Walla Valley Businesses and Organizations who set goals to reduce energy consumption, reuse materials, reduce waste (especially toxic waste) and recycle.

“The Walla Walla County Rural Library District was honored and excited to attend the Business Award ceremony as a nominee for the Smart Business Partner of the Year Award, recognizing our library district’s sustainability efforts. We were motivated by all other nominees and award recipients and look forward to exploring new solutions that drive best practices in all areas of our business.”

-Ana Romero, Walla Walla County Rural Library Executive Director

Reduction efforts by the Library District for 2023 included savings of 22,000 kWh by transitioning to LED lighting. Their purchase of recycled content materials (100% post-consumer recycled content of copy paper, lunch bags, and paper towels) reduced an additional 74 kWh and thereby encouraged manufacturers to produce more recycled content materials, 15,960 kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent (greenhouse gasses), 504 pounds of paper and 3,311 gallons of water. Vehicle fuel savings added up to 268 gallons by the simple act of ensuring accurate tire pressure on a courier van and the book mobile.

“Come visit any of our library branches and join us in making a positive impact on the planet (while also saving you money). Explore our Library of Things, check out an iPad and explore our many digital resources, and of course borrow all the books - we have an excellent collection of both print and digital books, audiobooks, movies, and more. Sharing resources is inherently green.”

-Chessa Grasso Hickox, Walla Walla County Rural Library Deputy Director

The Walla Walla County Rural Library is dedicated to providing new, current and relevant materials. In this process uncirculated materials are weeded out. In 2023, 5,036 pounds of

books were sent for reuse, recycling or resale. Throughout this process no books were thrown away. Recycling efforts also include recycling paper and cardboard locally.

“The Walla Walla County Rural Library District is in a partnership with Better World Books, a vendor whose mission is to divert books from landfills by collecting material from libraries, bookstores, college campuses through the community and in other areas where surplus materials exist. It then sells those used books and contributes a portion of the revenue on each sale to support literacy, libraries and education. Books that cannot be sold are frequently donated to at risk communities in the U.S.

As a participating partner Walla Walla County Rural Library is reducing landfill waste and helping to conserve our natural resources.”

-Joanna Grudzinska, Walla Walla County Rural Library Audio, Visual and Print Collection Development Manager

The Sustainable Living Center is grateful for the work of all the local \$mart Business Partners. As energy savings measures, new technologies and best practices are embraced by businesses of all sizes the Walla Walla Valley has a bright future.

\$mart Business Partners is a program of The Sustainable Living Center (www.slclww.org). To become a \$mart Business Partner, contact Technical Representative and Energy Auditor, Dave Dahlin, via email at smartbiz@slclww.org or by phone (509) 524-5218.