

# FOUNDATIONS

Wyoming Library

A publication of the Wyoming State Library

May 2014

## Another county completes the Wyoming Library Endowment Challenge

Albany County Public Library is the third Wyoming library to complete the Endowment Challenge, accessing the full \$797,826 available in state matching and incentive funds. Niobrara and Sheridan counties have also completed the challenge, and Teton County has enough in pledges to go over the top.

**How did these libraries succeed?** We asked them to share key things they learned from their effort and key ideas to share with other libraries that are still working toward their goals.

### Albany County Public Library:

“One key thing I learned from the challenge is how communities still highly value public libraries,” said Caitlin White, foundation executive co-director.

“Donors in Albany County believe in the mission of the library, were enthusiastic about the endowment challenge, and made the library a priority for community support.

“One idea I would offer to other libraries is to focus on the idea that every bit helps, no matter the amount. Make sure your donors really understand how their donation will be matched and what this money will do for their public library. Having a tracker that shows how the challenge is going at your library and putting out a donation box were also helpful. To keep our donors motivated, we built our Giving Tree, a 14-foot tree sculpture in the library. The tree was decorated with origami keepsakes. Each keepsake represented one donation, so as our donations grew so did our tree.”



*Albany County's Giving Tree was decorated with an origami keepsake for each donation.*

### Niobrara County Library:

“It is very important to not stop,” said Debbie Sturman, library director. “Keep the momentum going and keep the conversations going within the community. Don’t ever feel like what you are doing is impossible. The impossible is ALWAYS possible. Quite often we, as librarians, don’t know who or how our library has impacted someone’s lives; those unknowns are often key.”

### Sheridan County Public Library System:

Director Cameron Duff said, “We quickly found out how generous the community was in helping to reach the goal. Donors would also find out about additional funds being allocated by the Governor and Legislature and want to help out even further.” He advises libraries to “Be creative about fundraising ideas but don’t spend too much time trying to make the event too large. Smaller donations from a garage sale or auction item can be just as effective as a large scale fundraising event. Or maybe you have a Friends group that offers a used book sale, see if they are willing to donate the proceeds to the endowment.”

### Teton County Library:

Teton County Library Foundation used matching on top of the matching. “The best advice I can offer is to follow the state's lead and identify an additional donor (or two) who are willing to contribute an additional challenge amount, said Pauline Towers-Dykeman, foundation executive director. “This really made the difference in securing some key donations. 1:1 was great, but being able to make it 2:1 is what got it done. I imagine even in the 3:1 counties it would be a good way to appeal to major donors.”

Wyoming libraries have made great progress recently on the Endowment Challenge. In April and early May, nine libraries submitted a total of \$305,337 in donations that were matched with \$558,031 in state funds. Two libraries – Natrona and Uinta – each submitted more than \$100,000. The Wyoming State Library maintains a spreadsheet of the current Endowment Challenge status at [will.state.wy.us/statistics/Public/WYlib\\_endowment\\_status.pdf](http://will.state.wy.us/statistics/Public/WYlib_endowment_status.pdf).

## **Fundraising 101 on WebJunction**

New to the foundation board? Or just need a refresher? WebJunction has a 4-part archived “Fundraising 101” webinar series you may find helpful: [The Basics](#), [Creating an Annual Fund for Your Library](#), [Planned Giving and Endowment in the Public Library](#) and [Capital Campaigns](#). See the list at [www.webjunction.org/search-results.html?q=fundraising+101+series+presented&filter=allfilter](http://www.webjunction.org/search-results.html?q=fundraising+101+series+presented&filter=allfilter).

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