



Western Manitoba Regional **LIBRARY**

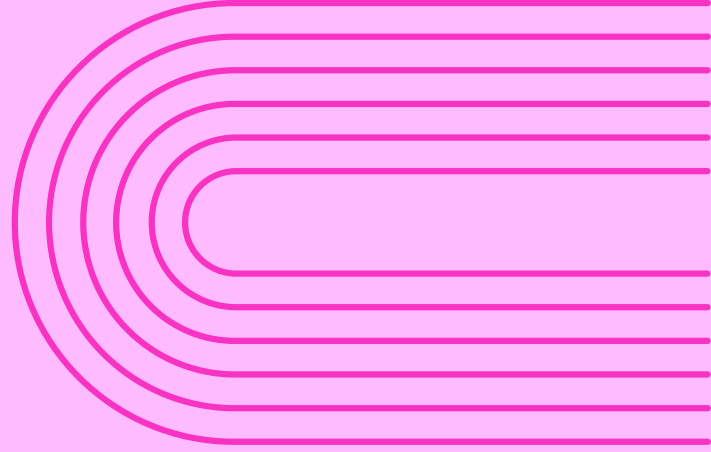
Branches in **BRANDON • CARBERRY • GLENBORO • HARTNEY • NEEPAWA**



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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Letter from the Board Chair



**Shaun
Cameron**

WMRL Board Chair

To the patrons and members of the WMRL,

In 2024, our libraries thrived as vibrant community hubs, welcoming more visitors than ever and providing a service to the community that is truly unparalleled.

Guided by the team of the WMRL, we took great pride in strengthening our connections to community by enhancing marketing, supporting staff development, and making strategic budget choices to improve services while ensuring communities throughout our region receive the most from their commitments to libraries. Further to this, we actively engaged in facility upgrades across all branches creating more welcoming and functional spaces.

As a board we are tremendously fortunate to be able to work with such a strong team, and every interaction with the libraries in our communities reflects that team effort.

Our Board remains committed to keeping libraries at the heart of our communities—offering memberships, resources, and programming for everyone. Your voices shape our spaces, and we invite you to visit and discover all that the WMRL has to offer in 2025.

See you at the library!

Kindest regards,

Shaun Cameron
WMRL Trustee Chairperson

Letter from the Library Director

**Erika
Martin**

WMRL Director of Libraries



2024 saw a lot of change and growth across our WMRL libraries – with retirements we saw some of our longstanding employees move into higher roles and we were also able to hire new staff with excellent training and enthusiasm. What I'm most proud of at WMRL is our staff; the people that work here are smart, caring and helpful. We have built a team that works so well together and love their role in the community.

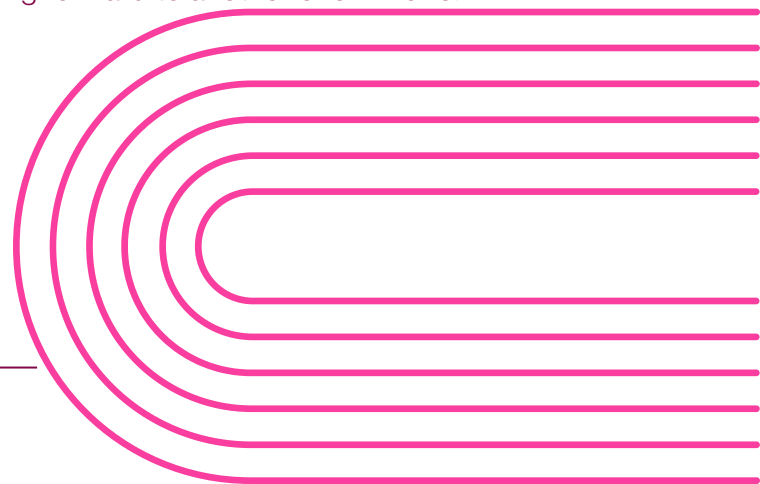
A goal for Collections this past year was to improve wait-times for patrons for high demand books. We were able to shift funding to increase the budget for Libby/Overdrive and that money was used to purchase additional copies of books with high holds. For our print collections we watched holds lists and popular titles closely, purchasing additional copies locally.

Professional Development was a big focus for the year; three staff members attended a Saskatchewan Libraries Conference, all of the administrative staff/Supervisors travelled to Dauphin for a Professional Networking Day and WMRL hosted its second All-Staff PD day with sessions on programming, strategic planning, our ILS and a Poverty Simulation Workshop.

Overall, 2024 was a successful and busy year – we're looking forward to another one in 2025.

Erika Martin

Director of Library Services



Organizational Overview

The Western Manitoba Regional Library System, founded in 1967, serves a total population of 64,824 people across six municipalities. We are lucky to provide quality library services to the communities of the City of Brandon, the Towns of Carberry and Neepawa, the Municipalities of Glenboro South Cypress and Grassland and the Rural Municipality of North Cypress-Langford. With six branches spread across South-West Manitoba, the WMRL provides many great physical spaces for its patrons to access.

The WMRL is financially supported by a library tax which is levied in each of these communities and operational grants from the provincial government of Manitoba. Additionally, library staff and administration apply for various grants and fundraise to increase our revenue and service potential.

The organizational policies and operations are overseen by a Board of Governance; each participating municipality has both council and citizen representatives that contribute their volunteer time, input and guidance.



INCOME STATEMENT

For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

Revenue

Category	Amount
City of Brandon	\$674,766.00
City of Brandon – Security Grant	\$58,000.00
M. of Glenboro South Cypress	\$20,580.00
M. of Grassland	\$20,816.00
M. of North Cypress Langford	\$37,609.00
Town of Carberry	\$23,907.00
Town of Neepawa	\$74,758.00
Province of Manitoba	\$700,790.00
Province of Manitoba – ACSC Grant	\$21,176.00
Interest	\$26,799.00
Memberships & Fines	\$15,925.00
Amortization of Deferred Contributions	\$12,315.00
Other Revenue	\$1,228.00
	\$1,688,669.00

Expenses

Category	Amount
Advertising	\$14,328.00
Amortization	\$16,681.00
Bank Charges	\$529.00
Books	\$132,592.00
Building Maintenance	\$39,751.00
Computerization & IT Services	\$11,137.00
Convention & Travel	\$11,244.00
Employee Benefits	\$134,656.00
Insurance	\$7,665.00
Materials – ACSC	\$16,386.00
Miscellaneous	\$1,226.00
Postage	\$6,134.00
Professional Fees	\$17,607.00
Rent	\$150,731.00
Salaries	\$952,574.00
Service Contracts	\$138,784.00
Staff Training	\$6,283.00
Stationery & Supplies	\$29,053.00
Sundry	\$1,841.00
Telephone & Internet	\$9,049.00
	\$1,698,251.00

BRANDON DOWNTOWN LIBRARY

Report prepared by Carson Rogers, Downtown Library Branch Supervisor/Manager of Access Services

STAFF

Throughout 2024 our branch had three major retirements. All three were significant positions, both for our branch and the region. They had a combined 75+ years of service with the library. All the replacements were hired internally, and in each case the transition went very smoothly despite such a big shift in personnel. All three staff members have thrived in their new role and have had a positive impact on how the entire region functions.

TECHNOLOGY

Last Fall we also relaunched the WMRL App. When we migrated to Insignia, we started off using their in-house app and discontinued using the WMRL app. We had a lot of patron feedback, wanting us to return, and of course we listened. The launch went very smoothly, and patrons are very happy to have it back. The usage for the WMRL app is returning to what it was before the switch.



FACILITY

A key project for us last year was improving our children's area. We had made some cosmetic upgrades to that section of the library, but we wanted to make our children's section more interactive for kids and families. We made purchases of new adult and children's sized furniture, imaginative play toys, vinyl activity furniture, a reading house, Lego table and more. This has had an even bigger impact than we anticipated. Our play space became a destination for families to come and spend their time. Families started to hang out for longer periods of time instead of just selecting their books and leaving. It improved the quality of our children's programs too, even after programs wrap up, we now see patrons utilizing the space for much longer than they used to. This is one of the biggest impact projects we have done in my time here, and we have received a lot of positive feedback on these additions.

We wanted to add a new collection to our branch in 2024, and in the Spring, we added a board game collection. There is a range of games, from simple kid friendly to complex games that take hours to play. We have around 30 different board games available that have circulated 200 times since we made them available. They have been a popular addition and are something that adds depth to what our library offers to patrons.

In the Fall, we replaced the flooring in our program room. We were continuing to grow our Children's programming, lots of which happens in this room on what used to be a dirty carpet. We switched to this vinyl flooring which is easier to maintain and looks much more contemporary. With the addition of the new shelf ends, the improved activity area, and new flooring, our children's area has undergone significant improvement.

FUTURE PLANS

The last five years have been a challenge for our branch, but we have continued to see growth and improvement in all areas. The achievements of this branch are entirely due to the fantastic staff that work here; we are all very motivated to continue offering excellent service and grow our services and patrons.

COMMUNITY PRESENCE

The Downtown branch had a solid year statistically. 49% of the region's total circulation came through our branch. We remained almost at parity with the previous year's circulation total. There was significant growth in our membership again last year, ending the year with a base of over 8,000 active patrons, a net increase of almost 800 patrons over 2024.

CARBERRY LIBRARY

Report prepared by Laurie MacNevin, Carberry/North Cypress Library Branch Supervisor

COMMUNITY PRESENCE

I focused a lot of my energy this year on growing the visibility of the library in the community, I was an active participant in the Chamber of Commerce and regularly offered the library as a place to meet, drop off and pick up things, and share information with the community. This work has brought the library into the eye of our local business community in a new way, and I was able to discuss with community minded business owners (people who don't often frequent the library) some of the ways the library serves the community that they weren't aware of.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology continues to be a huge part of the services we provide to the community. Our iPads, Chromebooks, are checked out daily. Our projector is regularly used for programming and events. Our fax service, public printer, and wifi are consistently used and appreciated by the community. We've particularly seen an increase in printer use this year.



SPACE

The work we did last year to make our space welcoming and inclusive has resulted in the community embracing the library as a community space to meet one another and spend time. We've seen groups of moms arranging to meet and spend time with one another, teens dropping in to eat their lunches, teens have booked the program room to run their own games of Dungeons and Dragons, and others have met up to play cards.

We've needed to make changes to our furniture to accommodate the larger numbers of people. We used grant money to add new tables to the main area, new chairs were added to the children's area to replace the old ones which were cracking, in our program room we removed old cabinets, painted, and added an area rug, tv screen, table and chairs.

STAFF

Mackenzie Altenburg has been a huge asset to our branch as programming assistant this year. She has built relationships with our local youth and grown our programming numbers. Having her here has allowed me to spend more time on other programs like book deliveries, Senior's Teas, and Book Clubs. Our part time and casual staff have done an amazing job this year building relevant displays, contributing to programs, and keeping the branch organized and efficient.

FUTURE PLANS

In the coming year we plan to expand some of our programming into outreach, working with Recreation, Service for Seniors, the Community Foundation, and our local schools to provide joint programming in other spaces. We're also planning some creative ways to reach some of our more rural patrons who may not often come into town but who can still use our digital services and are likely not aware of it.

NEEPAWA LIBRARY

Report prepared by Caitlin Henderson, Neepawa Library Branch Supervisor

STAFF

After years with the WMRL at the Neepawa Branch, Debbie Unger retired in May. Thanks to the region and the staff in Neepawa they were able to hold down the fort during the hiring process. July saw the start of new Supervisor Caitlin Henderson, coming from Northern Manitoba down to Neepawa.

This autumn we were able to hire not one, but two new staff members on a part-time basis to offer more at the library. One position allows us to be open on Saturdays without impacting weekday shifts while the other position is to focus on programming and events. We've been able to run things like weekend programming, add an additional book club, bring back Lego club, start and D&D club, and experiment with many other ideas.

CHALLENGES

One place we are seeing a bit of a struggle is when it comes to attending daytime children's programming. Things like our Storytime and baby time experience random or waves of attendance. There are a few reasons we think this is happening but getting enough feedback proves tricky. We do hope in 2025 to change this up and get those programs having consistent attendance and making the volunteer time of the Neepawa Rotary who come in to read for Storytime more meaningful.



COMMUNITY PRESENCE

Our summer reading program hosted quite a few events with the hire of a term part-time program assistant. Most days during this summer holiday the library could be found hosting something for the community. This staff was also able to offer some additional outreach programming to seniors in nearby senior residences above our usual monthly book exchanges.

The multi-purpose room located at the back of the library has seen many groups making use of the space. We continue to be a central place for groups like MPI to run weekly driving tests, the school district uses the space for various therapy sessions, a Healthy Baby program happens once per month, and many local community groups book the space to host events and meetings.

Items such as our radon detector kits and Leapfrog reading kits are seeing an increase in use. The radon kits are often popular in autumn when it's suggested to test for it, while the Leapfrog kits see steady use all school year. We've also focused on expanding our puzzles and spinner books (books that can be borrowed with no membership) to include more variety, which has increased use of those collections.

FUTURE PLANS

With the changes in staff and hours we are hoping that 2025 brings more growth in the library with the continued increase in accessibility, programming, and visitors to the library. With the support of patrons and, additionally, places like the Beautiful Plains School division and local media outlets sharing library happenings we continue to see an increase in specific programming and new membership sign-ups.

GLENBORO LIBRARY

Report prepared by Kelly Tirschman, Glenboro/South Cypress Library Branch Supervisor

STAFF

The Glenboro/South Cypress Library employs one permanent/regular staff member, two casual staff members, and has two regular volunteers. Additionally, there are a total of three Library Advisory Committee (LAC) members.



SPACE

In March, the Glenboro Library utilized the remaining funds from the Art, Culture & Sport in Community grant to install an interior book drop. The library was also awarded a grant from the Glenboro Area Foundation to replace its front window, improving the library's appearance.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In June, the Branch Supervisor and one staff member attended a one-day training session and participated in a poverty simulation at the Downtown branch. In September, the Branch Supervisor attended a virtual training session on AI in Libraries. Additionally, the Branch Supervisor attended the Library Conference in Dauphin in October.

COMMUNITY PRESENCE

This year, the Glenboro/South Cypress Library ran a variety of engaging programs. In January, the library continued its bi-weekly book exchange with Glenboro Daycare, providing picture books and board books. February featured a coloring challenge for "I Love to Read" month, open to the community, with the winner receiving a prize basket filled with books, toys, and candy. From March to May, the library partnered with Paige Savard, Senior Park Interpreter from Spruce Woods Provincial Park, to conduct a three-part learning series for Grades 2 through 6, covering topics such as Skinks, Turtles, and Beavers. The seniors' book club began meeting monthly at the library starting in March. May marked Glenboro library's 60th anniversary, celebrated with cupcakes, keychains for patrons, a special sign for the front window, and an article in the local newspaper, The Gazette. Over the summer, the library collaborated with the Glenboro Step It Forward committee to offer a walking challenge and a family day event featuring a teddy bear picnic, story time, outdoor activities, and bouncy houses, attracting over 300 attendees. A summer student was hired for 8 weeks at 10 hours per week. The summer reading challenge saw participation from many students and a few adults. In July and August, the library worked with Spruce Lakes Recreation to host various summer activities and themed programs, including water days, Hot Wheels Day, Nature Day, and games day. In the fall, students from Glenboro School (Grades 5 to 8) attended presentations on responsible pet ownership, while students from MilsHof Colony School visited for library tours, borrowed books, and signed up for memberships. December featured the 3rd annual "Cookie Walk" fundraiser for the Glenboro Cat Rescue Centre during Glenboro's 'Tis the Season townwide event, with proceeds from cookie sales and a loonie/toonie donation tree going to the Cat Rescue.

BRANDON SHOPPERS MALL LIBRARY

Report prepared by Michelle Boudreau, Shoppers Mall Library Branch Supervisor

COMMUNITY PRESENCE

Our branch is in a population dense area of south Brandon, which is projected to grow much more. Many of our patrons find this Branch provides them with direct accessibility based on living proximity, proximity of community services and transport. In 2024 we have seen a very positive response & steady increase in patron registrations, traffic and overall interest in accessing all things from the library. We have regular groups that use our library for studying, homework, playdates, daily visits from newcomers eager to have a positive and affordable community minded hub space to take their children. With the increase in multicultural patronage, we have included multiple language books in rotation from downtown & the WPL to allow patrons to access this at our branch. These books have been popular and have proven to be successful.

Our patrons are regular & strong supporters of their library branch, many know staff by their name and enjoy engaging in conversations regarding books, programs and library services. I commend our vibrant and caring staff who work very hard to maintain those professional relationships with our patrons, continue to bring a positive engaging knowledge and an open mind to our growing library systems.



FACILITY

In early 2024 we introduced a public computer and basic printing services to the branch; this has proven to be successful. In 2024, We had 2 book sale fundraisers. In total we have raised over \$500. Funds will be used for purchasing books. The fundraisers garnished much attention, were well received and patrons have requested future fundraisers.

ACHIEVEMENTS

2024 was a very good year for the Shoppers Mall Library Branch. Our statistics have shown a steady increase in our door count, registrations, circulation numbers & programming. Our door count for 2023 was 39,803 and increased to 52,367 in 2024. Membership statistics from 2023 tracked 2,300 active patrons to 3,022 in 2024. Circulation in 2023 was 41,739 and up to 42,722 in 2024.

The Shoppers Mall Library Branch increased their In-House programming from 98 programs in 2023 to 239 in 2024. Total attendance being 3,760 in 2023 and 7,669 in 2024. Outreach programs have also increased, from 38 in 2023 to 67 in 2024. Total attendance being 3,402 in 2023 and 6,349 in 2024.

PROGRAMMING & OUTREACH

Community outreach is very important for our library as we are seeing a steady increase in cultural diversity and usage of our location. In 2024, we grew outreach programming to visit multiple locations within the City of Brandon. Including multiple Storytimes, table displays, mobile libraries, mobile card sign-ups, seed libraries & much more. We have focused on collaborating with different community organizations/events/festivals to promote the Shoppers Mall Library services.

We heard from our patrons that they would like the option to have more family-based events, so we started 2024 with a variety of programming which proved to be very popular. We have also hosted after-hours events, poetry workshops, book clubs & a specialized weekly Storytime for Neelin Highschool Lifeskill Students.

In February we celebrated 'I Love to Read Month' by bringing in special guests at the Saturday Storytime, 'James Chambers – Pinkalicious' 'BU Bobcat basketball players – paperbag princess' 'Constable Meaghan Puteran – everyday superhero' These events were so popular that our little library in the mall was busting at the seams with over 100 people each Storytime!

Our summer reading program was very successful, garnering nearly 400 patron sign-ups for all ages.

HARTNEY LIBRARY

Report prepared by Erika Martin, Director of Library Services



COMMUNITY PRESENCE

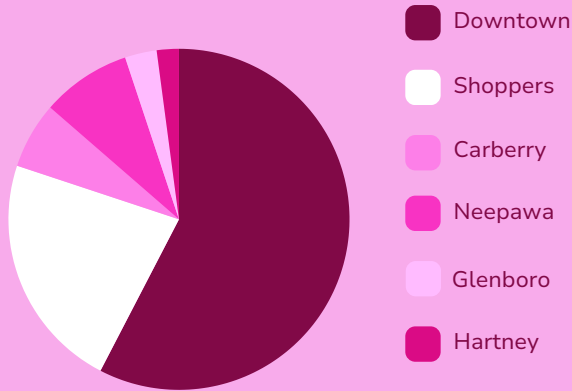
The Hartney and Grassland Library held regular Storytimes with the Daycare and hosted ongoing meetings for local groups. During the summer Hartney had a summer student who helped provide some local programming, including Storytime at the local pool.

STAFF

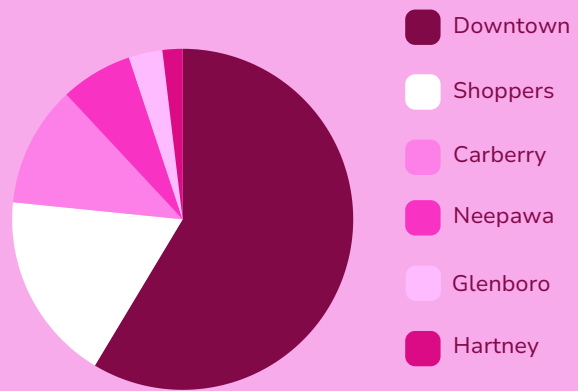
2024 was a year of transition and our longstanding Branch Supervisor decided to move on. At the end of the year we hired on Vicki Babey and we are incredibly excited to see what she accomplishes in 2025.

Membership

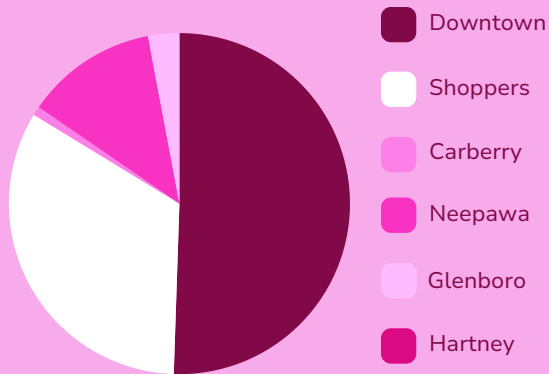
Adult



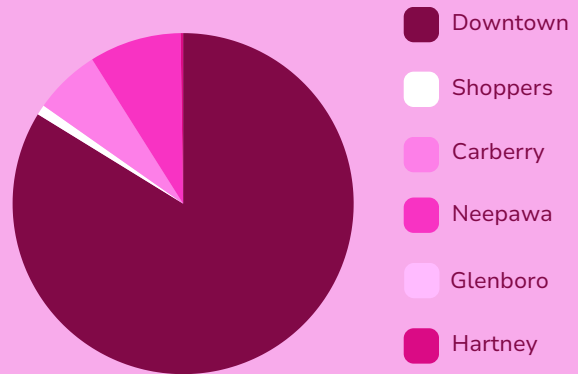
Children



Non-Resident



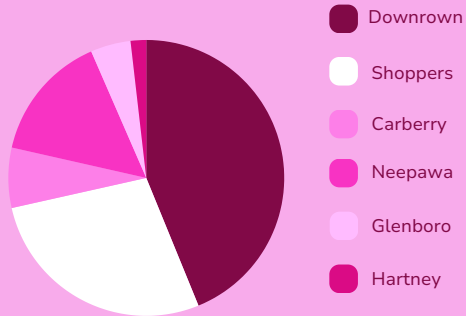
Other



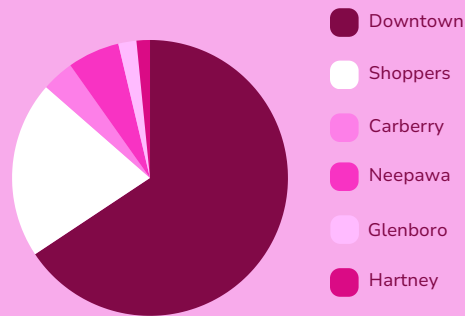
	Downtown	Shoppers Mall	Carberry	Neepawa	Glenboro	Hartney	Total
Adult	6,268	2,445	684	926	328	228	10,879
Children	1,355	416	265	158	74	44	2,312
Non-Resident	239	157	4	59	14	0	473
Other	346	4	26	36	0	1	413
Total	8,208	3,022	979	1,179	416	273	14,077

Circulation

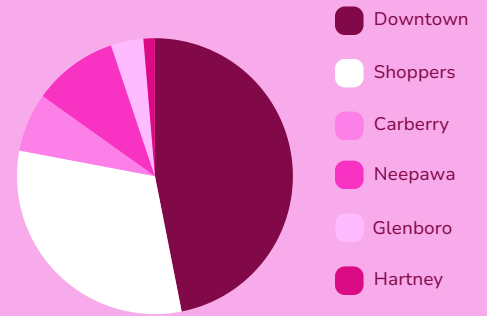
Adult Print



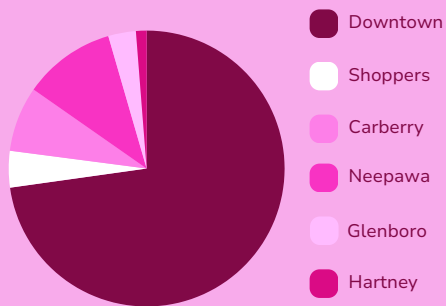
Teen Print



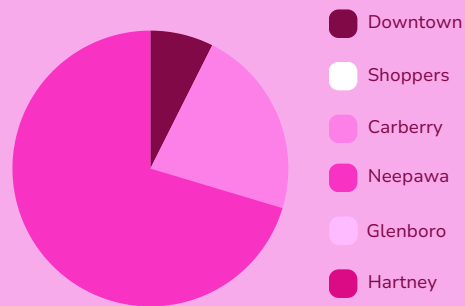
Children's Print



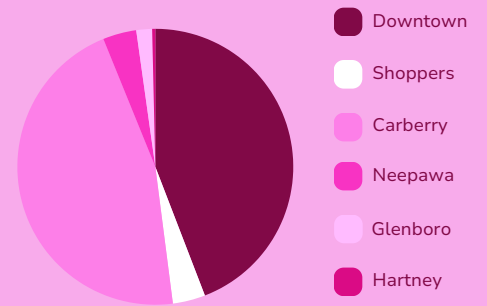
Adult Non Print



Teen Non Print



Children's Non Print



	Downtown	Shoppers Mall	Carberry	Neepawa	Glenboro	Hartney	Total
Adult Print	27,425	17,320	4,409	9,341	2,948	1,142	62,585
Adult Non Print	6,848	403	719	1,017	305	117	9,409
Teen Print	5,682	1,796	326	528	184	11	8,527
Teen Non Print	2	0	6	19	0	0	72
Children Print	34,805	23,067	5,104	7,149	2,824	996	73,945
Children Non Print	1,573	136	1,635	140	66	13	3,563
E-Resources	158,341	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	158,341
Total	234,676	42,722	12,199	18,194	6,327	2,279	316,397

Holdings

	Downtown	Shoppers Mall	Carberry	Neepawa	Glenboro	Hartney	E-Resources	Total
Adult Books	43,102	1,395	5,745	10,045	3,815	4,894	51,324*	120,320
Teen Books	5,237	100	486	532	418	189	0	6,962
Children's Books	25,968	1,396	4,278	4,657	3,941	2,152	0	42,365
Puzzles & Board Games	168	350	275	236	70	52	0	1,151
Magazines & Newspapers	35	1	13	15	10	9	5,753	5,836
Audio Books	1,031	0	145	93	71	13	14,872	16,225
DVD's	1,706	16	168	352	344	150	51	2,787
Miscellaneous	891	6	23	12	7	5	0	944
Total	78,138	3,237	11,133	15,942	8,676	2,279	72,000	196,590

*Overdrive analytics don't specify age demographics for their eBook's, but most of our eBook's are primarily targeted at adults.

Future Plans

2025 will usher in the new Strategic Plan that will guide WMRL libraries for the next four years. We are looking forward to focusing on building our collections, supporting our staff and creating beautiful library spaces. We hope to see the Downtown Brandon Library renovated; creating a cultural hub where we work alongside the Brandon General Museum & Archives and Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba. The first part of the renovation is slotted to begin in May of 2025 with the installation of a door directly from the library to Rosser Ave.

For the 2025 year we have plans to collaborate and learn from each other – each rural Library Supervisor will travel from their branch to another in the region to tour the space and spend some time in another library hearing about their programming and initiatives. We also plan to send a large group of staff (Supervisors and Library Assistants) to the Manitoba Libraries Conference in May.

2025 will see even more great programming, building our collections and working to maintain our spaces as safe, accessible and comfortable for all of our patrons and visitors.



Community Partnerships

- SpruceLakes Recreation Department
- Glenboro School
- MilsHof Colony School
- Seniors Independent Services (SIS)
- Glenboro Gaiety Theatre
- Glenboro Daycare Center
- Glenboro Cat Rescue Centre
- Glenboro 'Tis the Season committee
- Glenboro School Storywalk committee
- Spruce Woods Provincial Park
- Step It Forward committee
- Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation
- Westman Immigrant Services
- Brandon University
- Brandon General Museum & Archives
- City of Brandon
- Brandon Downtown Biz
- Brandon Chamber of Commerce
- Seniors for Seniors
- Age is an Asset
- Age Friendly Brandon
- Assiniboine Food Forest Initiative
- I want that stuff
- Morguard - Shoppers Mall
- Park Community Centre
- Salamander Music Festival
- Cree La Source
- Chez Angela Bakery & Cafe
- Brandon Bobcats
- Brandon Police Service
- Sylvan Learning Centre
- Coles Bookstore - Shoppers Mall
- Pride Brandon
- Work & Climate Poetry Anthology Fernwood Publishing
- St. Johns Ambulance
- WCGTV
- KEEP 1 & 2
- Brandon Friendship Centre
- Montessori Smile
- BU Early Learning Centre
- Beginnings Preschool
- YMCA
- Brandon School Division
- Neelin Highschool Lifeskill Students
- AGSM
- Carberry Plains Archives
- Carberry and Area Chamber of Commerce
- Carberry and Area Recreation
- Community Programming Directors
- Carberry and Area Foundation

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Charles Radford
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South Cypress*

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