

FORTHELOVE ...OF LIBRARIES!

By Heather Estrada

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Among 12 libraries of the Umatilla County Special Library District there are two directors who have been working in libraries since before Y2K. Both began their library work in high school or college and have such a love for books and people that they never left.

Each of their paths are very different. Mark Rose, library director of Hermiston Public Library, began his time in libraries in college. He had such a positive experience while working at the Brigham Young University library that, after doing a stint in the U.S. Army, he went back to libraries as a career.

Mark began his formal library career in Flagstaff, Arizona, in 1991 and discovered he loved public libraries because these exist to serve everyone, regardless of age, status or personal resources. Mark's career has spanned Colorado, Utah, Ohio, and Idaho before landing in Hermiston.

Over his career, Mark has played a big part in helping libraries make the transition to automation, i.e., allowing for online access to library catalogs. He cites this as one of the biggest changes he's seen over the course of his career — the disappearance of the card catalog.

Mark has stayed in libraries because he never gets tired of watching kids learn to read, and because of how much he enjoys books. Additionally, he said he is most proud of mentoring specific employees who have gone on to become directors themselves, carrying on a passion and love for libraries. The Hermiston library

is in the planning stages of major renovations to their space and Mark encourages people to come and see what they have to offer as well as the exciting updates.

On the other side of the UCSLD, geographically, the Weston Public Library is staffed with a phenomenal director who has been working there for 28 years. In contrast to Mark's multistate resume, Kathleen Schmidtgall started her library work in the Weston library and never left.

She volunteered in the library as a Weston High School student and after returning to the area, married with kids of her own, she returned to the Weston library. Kathleen's great-great-grandparents were homesteaders on Weston Mountain and the city of Weston, and its library, are in her blood.

Weston is steeped in history and Kathleen herself is part of the story.

Through her years at the Weston library, one of the projects Kathleen is most proud of is the work, mostly grant-funded, to preserve, display and restore many historic photos.

She has spearheaded projects that include large albums on display as well as beautifully framed and mounted photos of the area. Additionally, in the past year, the State Library has undertaken a project that has many of these Weston photographs included on the Northwest Digital Heritage Site. You can view these, as well as some of the neighboring town of Athena's historical photos, at www.northwestdigitalheritage.org.

Since 1955, the Weston library has known only two directors. Kathleen worked with Margaret Sutherland for many years before becoming the director. During her years as director, Kathleen has seen the

fruition of a major library expansion (again mostly grant-funded) and has worked hard to be an integral and fundamental part of the community. You can witness this yourself this year on Oct. 21 as Kathleen, the Weston Friends of the Library and the city host its annual book sale alongside the Potato Show, an event which began in 1919!

You can witness it in the story times she hosts, both in her library and at the preschool situated in Weston's public school up the road, and you can see it in her every interaction with the community members who come through the library doors.

Through the years, both Kathleen and Mark have stayed in public libraries because they believe so strongly in the mission to serve and provide free access to books, the internet, movies, magazines and so much more. They, along with all the library staff at the 12 Umatilla County libraries, come to work each day, year after year, because they love to serve you!



Schmidtgall



Rose