

# Small but mighty...visit the Helix Library!

By Heather Estrada

For Go! Eastern Oregon

**H**ELIX — Most likely you've heard of it. Or possibly you've heard of the Helix crab feed, the Heart of the Country Rodeo or maybe something called Wheatstock? You have an idea it's around here somewhere, but have you ever been there?

If you've never had this pleasure, let me paint you a picture of this small but mighty town. Helix encompasses a four-by-four block area in the middle of wheat fields about 17 miles northeast of Pendleton. It has a school, a post office, a pub and a library.

Despite the small size of the town (under 200 souls call Helix their home), the town has a vibrant and active library. The Helix Public Library has moved several times and now shares space in the historic city hall. Although the Helix library's local patron count is small, Annette Kubishta, the library director, makes sure it is the heart of this little town.

She has served those who come into the library for 21 years, and six of those as the director. She is passionate about trying new things and loves it when people use the library. She sees libraries as an antidote to the loneliness in the world today. It's a place people can come and feel like family, find interesting and new things to do and learn and, of course, a place to read. In a town the size of Helix, Kubishta thrives on engaging the community in new activities and planning events that can bring the town together.

Helix has a very small library and it relies on the Umatilla County Special Library District for support. Dea Nowell is the cataloger for the district and the all-around go-to person when Kubishta and other library directors have questions. In this small rural library, Nowell comes alongside Kubishta and enters the Helix books into the Sage Catalog, which has books (as well as movies, e-books, etc.)



Contributed Photo

**Annette Kubishta is the director of the Helix Public Library.**



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**The Helix Public Library shares space in the historic city hall.**

from 77 libraries across the eastern half of the state. If an item a patron is interested in is not on the shelf in Helix, they can

put it on hold, and it will be delivered right to the Helix library for that patron to pick up.

Nowell has been at the library district for more than 30 years, back when the library's card catalogs were still on notecards in large wooden cabinets. She was an integral part of the automation process which took more than a decade to complete, beginning in the 1990s and continuing through 2013. She continues to be on the cataloging committee for the entire Sage system, as well as mentoring other catalogers across the region.

"Dea is my go-to person, my advisor, sounding board, and always gives me excellent feedback. She does all my cataloging, there is no way my small library could do it all," Kubishta said.

Nowell's support through the years won her the Public Library Division of Oregon's "Pearl Award" this year. The award was a small indication of the value of her many years of dedicated service to the libraries in Umatilla County.

With Nowell and her library assistant's help, Kubishta is keeping Helix up to date with access to books, the internet and even a kayak to check out. She's always looking for the next great community event to bring connection, whether that be moms and preschoolers, elementary school children or adults of every generation.

In January, the Helix library has several events:

- Jan. 8: Paint party for elementary kids.
- Jan. 11: The adult book club will discuss "Winter Garden" by Kristin Hannah at 3 p.m.
- Jan. 16: Dragons Love Tacos Day with free tacos to anyone who checks out a book.
- Jan. 28: "Travel to Switzerland" day presented by residents who visited that country this spring, as well as hot drinks and fondue. All are welcome to this community event.

For more about the Helix library, search [www.ucslid.org](http://www.ucslid.org) and follow their Facebook page. For questions, call 541-457-6130.