

# The smallest library with the biggest plans

By Heather Estrada

For Go! Eastern Oregon

Dustin Schock never considered being a librarian.

For many years he owned a popular business in Ukiah.

Nevertheless, when the opportunity to be the Ukiah school/city library director came along, the timing was just right.

Schock has taken to the library as if he were born to be a librarian.

He has found that he loves the daily interactions with the students, loves getting to know them and being a positive role model in their lives.

He's also found that he is good at grant writing, which is a necessary skill when you are running a very small, very rural library with a very small budget.

In 2½ years he has secured several grants to expand the technology

(laptops, large screens, etc.) as well as expand his book collection and update furniture.

Currently, the Ukiah library is housed inside the school. This means that community members must buzz into the school and then trek directly into the middle of the school building to use the library.

This can be a deterrent for community members.

Schock is working with Laura Orr, the school superintendent, to pass a bond to update the century-old school and build a brand-new library.

The dream for the new library is that it would be a free-standing building on the school grounds with expanded hours, space and technology, as well as a business center, conference room and computers for patron use.



Schock

In a town that still does not have internet access in homes this is a huge development. The building will be three times the size of the current library and function as a community hub.

The addition of so much community space and access to technology cannot be overstated.

Until seven months ago, Schock couldn't use the library's online catalog until after school because there wasn't enough bandwidth for internet.

Last summer the school received fiber internet and is functioning at much higher speeds this year, but fiber internet is still not an option in the homes in Ukiah.

Jordan McDonald (a Pendleton business owner) is working on a grant to expand that fiber service to homes, and part of that grant would also provide access points in the new library.

## LEARN MORE

The school will host a "Taco-bout It" session with free tacos and tours of the school and library on April 12. They will also host a Pine Car Derby event on April 25.

If the bond passes in May, Schock and Orr already have a 100% matching grant for \$1.5 million lined up, and he has several other awards waiting in the wings for bond approval.

If you live in Ukiah, I encourage you to learn more about this bond.

If you don't live in Ukiah, next time you are passing through, a stop at the Ukiah library is pure joy.

Even though small, the current space is a delight and chatting with Schock will brighten your day.

Anyone with a library card in Eastern Oregon can use their card to check out books in Ukiah, as well as every other library in the area.

The world is at your fingertips with a library card, and Schock and Orr are working diligently to expand that view of the world from their tiny corner of Umatilla County.

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