

## The world's longest job title

By Heather Estrada

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Umatilla County Special Library District Director. That is my new job title, and it feels like the world's longest.

Except that probably belongs to my co-worker, Monica. Her title is Umatilla County Special Library District Early Literacy Outreach Program Manager. As I've started my new job, and people ask me about it, my first response is to stumble through the long title. And after I've laid that out there, I'm met with a blank stare. Of course, the next part of my response is to begin with an explanation of what the Umatilla Special Library District is and does.

I launch into an enthusiastic telling of how in 1986 Umatilla County residents voted to fund libraries by forming a Special District.

Do you know that today your tax dollars fund a Special Library District with a mission to work in partnership with the 12 libraries in Umatilla County to make excellent library services, programs and continuing education available to all residents regardless of where they live in the county? What a great mission! It is the reason I was intrigued by what this district does and inspired to apply for this new job title I'm now holding.

Library services help level the playing field for people regardless of socio-economic status or any other barriers that society might set up. This district was created 37 years ago by the voters, a brand-new library board, and a new district director who had a long-term vision for created stable funding and library services for the entire county. Services you can count on, regardless of whether you live on Main Street in Pendleton or on your own 100,000

acres with no neighbors in sight outside of Ukiah.

Thirty-seven years later all the libraries in Umatilla County are filling that wonderful and vital role. The UCSLD has 11 member libraries, and 1 partner library (Hermiston). These 12 libraries are working day in and day out to provide every person who lives in Umatilla County a multitude of services.

In February alone you can go to the library for an Adult Date Night (Hermiston). You can make and then distribute Valentines to your city residents (Helix). In Milton-Freewater you can attend a Valentine's Party, and in Pendleton you can solve a Valentine Crime Mystery (Valencrime).

There is a reading challenge in Ukiah (and many other libraries as well), a Mo Willems Day in Umatilla, and a "Left, Right, Center" game night and Fondue Challenge in Stanfield.

Weston has a Reader's Book Group and preschool story time (as do most all of the libraries), and Athena is part of a state wide "Expedition Happy" virtual challenge course (<https://runsignup.com/Race/OR/NorthBend/ExpeditionHappy>) where participants virtually visit nine libraries around the state.

If any of these offerings intrigue you, go check them out. This is only the beginning of what they offer.

This Special Library District is made of 12 individual and unique libraries. Twelve different communities with different flavors and interesting histories to explore. Yet all are part of a greater vision and mission to serve every citizen in Umatilla County with stellar library services.

The above list is only the tip of the iceberg of the fun and services currently happening at our libraries.

If you aren't using your library, or more than one of these district libraries, you are missing out! Go and check them out, you will be amazed at what all the libraries have to offer!

Find more information on your library at <https://www.ucslld.org/>.



**Several libraries in Umatilla County are planning special events themed around Valentine's Day.**

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