



PCIN

The
PERTH COUNTY
INFORMATION NETWORK

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INTER-LIBRARY LOAN FUNDING & SERVICE STILL REDUCED IN PERTH COUNTY AFTER FUNDING CUT ONLY PARTLY RESTORED

On Friday May 31st, public libraries in Ontario were notified that the Government of Ontario had made a partial restoration of funding to the Inter-Library Loan (ILLO) service. Although details are still unclear, the Province has stated that there will be a partial reimbursement of postage costs for libraries to use the Canada Post Library Materials Rate.

The restored funding is valued at \$340,000 and will be divided amongst nearly 200 municipal library systems in Southern Ontario. As administered by the Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS), the prior cost of the ILLO program was approximately \$1.1 million and included a fully subsidized van delivery service. This restoration represents funding of only 30% of the original service, for which most other Provinces in Canada provide full funding.

In Perth County, the SOLS ILLO courier service moved nearly 80,000 items in 2018. This is because in addition to the provincial loan system, the 5 libraries in geographic Perth share their collections with each other to maximize the benefit to their communities.

Due to the volume of items moved, full ILLO service using Canada Post as proposed by the Government is estimated to cost PCIN well over \$150,000 per year in postage and additional staff time.

“Until we can confirm what the financial impact to the municipality and its rate-payers will be, it would be irresponsible for the Perth County Information Network to resume the full ILLO service,” says PCIN Board Chair Charles Fitzsimmons. “The libraries had only a few days advance warning that the ILLO service would be cancelled. We do not have funds allocated for ILLO in our 2019 budgets. Municipalities provide almost all of libraries’ operational funding, and they had no warning about this

either. Before the cuts ILLO service had been in place for more than 30 years and was perfectly suited to our needs. It was also very economical – it carried 710,000 items between Ontario libraries for about \$1.50 each. We need it, and we want it restored.”

At this time, PCIN libraries are unable to fulfill requests for loans from outside the region but continue to operate a reduced delivery schedule of materials for items borrowed from within the Perth County system. Materials are currently being delivered once per week rather than four times per week.

Perth County libraries are committed to continuing to share resources among its member libraries and are dedicated to finding a solution to maintain the high standard of information services available in Perth County.

While the PCIN libraries work through these changes, they thank residents for their ongoing support and patience.

Background

On Thursday, April 18, 2019, the Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) announced that it would cease operation of the provincial InterLibrary Loan delivery service. This announcement is in the wake of a \$1.6 million funding cut to the agency in the recent Ontario Budget. InterLibrary Loan (ILLO) is the service that allows library customers to request and borrow items from other libraries. While used for various purposes, the system is used by many students, book clubs, authors, and academics in the area. “Interlibrary Loan provides equalized access to materials, especially for those who are members of rural libraries with smaller collections.” says Kendra Roth, Management Chair of PCIN and CEO of Perth East Public Library.

The SOLS delivery service also functioned as the backbone of the Perth County Information Network (PCIN). Within Perth County, a library card provides free access to the collections of North Perth Public Library, Perth East Public Library, Stratford Public Library, St. Marys Public Library, and West Perth Public Library.

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If you would like more information about this topic, please contact your local PCIN member library:

- North Perth Public Library: Rebecca Dechert-Sage, CEO, 519-291-4621 / rsage@northperth.ca
- Perth East Public Library: Kendra Roth, CEO, 519-595-8395 / kroth@pcin.on.ca



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- St. Marys Public Library: Matthew Corbett, CEO, 519-284-3346 / mcorbett@stmaryspubliclibrary.ca
- Stratford Public Library: Julia Merritt, CEO, 519-271-0220 x110 / jmerritt@stratford.ca
- West Perth Public Library: Caroline Shewburg, CEO, 519-348-9234 / shewburgc@pcin.on.ca