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# M E M O



Date: January 27, 2012  
To: Chair Steve Albers and members of the Board of Trustees  
From: Mary Getchell, Marketing & Community Relations Director  
Sally Porter Smith, Customer Experience Director  
Subject: Snow Storm January 2012 Staffing and Communications

Coined the Pacific Northwest's snowmageddon, Pierce County Library System responded to the snow and ice to determine staffing operations and conduct communications with the media and public from Tuesday, January 17, through Monday, January 23. Managers, using information from multiple sources, including staff, made decisions to open libraries balancing its commitment to serve communities and ensure staff is safe.

## **Staffing Libraries: Gathering Information and Preparing to Open, Close Buildings**

Staff from locations throughout Pierce County worked quickly and collaboratively to gather and share information very early each morning and, when needed, at points throughout the day. This information provided an understanding of road conditions, current weather, and power outages. IT staff worked to bring up the network in libraries that had lost power while working to maintain the Library's online network that powers servers, computers, website, and catalog. Technology was a significant factor in facilitating the sharing of information needed to make sound decisions and included email, voice, system bulletin boards, recorded phone messages, and text messages to provide staff different options for getting information about what was happening in their locations and the system as a whole.

Mary tracked media coverage and online sources of the storm, as well as decisions government agencies, schools, colleges, businesses, and other organizations were making regarding opening or closing.

## **Determining Opening, Closing Buildings**

Very early each morning a core team of Cliff Jo, Lorie Erickson, Mary, and Sally met via email, text, and mobile phones to discuss the various information they had gathered to discern opening buildings. We had three primary criteria to determine opening or closing buildings: power, access to buildings, i.e. snow and ice and tree limbs in parking lots, and available staff due to individual staff issues to traveling to buildings.

## **Communications with Staff, Public, and Media**

Sally communicated with all staff using email, snow line, text, voice and staff Web bulletin board postings. Managers and supervisors subsequently contacted many of their staff, due to power and Internet outages at employees' homes.

Mary communicated with the media and public, issuing a total of nine advisories, sending one media advisory daily to all mass print, radio, and TV media. Then, posting media advisories and updated advisories on the Library's website, at points during some of the days when we made further open or close decisions. Mary posted messages daily on Facebook and tweeted on Twitter, directing friends and followers to the Library's website for further updates.

Attached is the mass media verified coverage and synopsis of social media activity. In all we received 38 verified mass media reports, including print and online newspapers, TV, and radio. On Facebook we attained 23 interactions with five comments and 18 likes. We captured a nearly 130% increase in the number of people reached on Facebook compared with the previous week, for a total of 1,212 people reached. On Twitter we achieved nine retweets and 22 new people/organizations began following us.

## **Open/Close Results**

The snow and ice storms affected everyone in the Library's service area. As a result most people exhibited an understanding when the libraries were closed. Also, with so many people out of power and with days of feeling snowed in and isolated, individuals were jubilant when libraries reopened. Residents were very happy to check out books, go online, connect with other people, and get warm in the libraries. Throughout most of the snow storm, people with Internet access could use the online library. Included below is information about the Library's open and closed times, as well as data about items circulated and the number of customers visiting branches throughout the snow/ice storm.

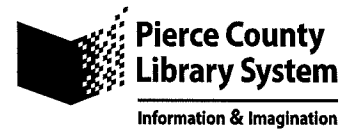
Staff was instrumental in serving our communities by checking neighborhood roads for driving and access conditions, emptying book drops in the snow, and shoveling sidewalks and putting down de-icers. Several staff contacted their neighboring businesses to get information about power. Staff came together as a community to serve our communities. Staff also used their personal Facebooks and phones to communicate information among each other.

**Tuesday, January 17:** Eatonville Pierce County Library closed January 17, 6 p.m.  
PCLS circulated 39,242 items; 9,608 customers visited libraries.

**Wednesday, January 18:** Pierce County Library System closed  
PCLS circulated (online) 5,150 items.

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**Thursday, January 19:** Buckley, DuPont, Gig Harbor, Key Center, Lakewood, Parkland/Spanaway, Sumner, and University Place Pierce County Libraries, as well as the Library System's Processing and Administrative Center, opened at 1 p.m. However, the ice storm continued to wreak havoc, and the Library's generator did not function, thus the Library's website and catalog were off line, and the Library System closed between 2-4 p.m. PCLS circulated 2,650 items; 378 customers visited libraries.

**Friday, January 20:** Eatonville Library: DuPont, Eatonville, Fife, Gig Harbor, Graham, Key Center, Lakewood, Milton/Edgewood, Parkland/Spanaway, Steilacoom, Summit and University Place Pierce County Libraries, as well as the Library System's Processing and Administrative Center, opened in the afternoon. PCLS circulated 12,713 items; 3,296 customers visited libraries.

**Saturday, January 21:** Bonney Lake, DuPont, Eatonville, Fife, Gig Harbor, Graham, Key Center, Lakewood, Milton/Edgewood, Orting, Parkland/Spanaway, Steilacoom, Summit and University Place Pierce County Libraries opened in the afternoon. PCLS circulated 26,909 items; 6,667 customers visited libraries.

**Sunday, January 22:** All nine Pierce County Libraries typically open on Sundays were open. PCLS circulated 13,954 items; 2,903 customers visited libraries.

**Monday, January 23:** For the first time in a week all of Pierce County Library System was open. PCLS circulated 33948 items; 10,028 customers visited libraries.