

**SHARING THE WEALTH:**  
**AN APPROACH TO CREATIVE PROFESSIONAL**  
**LIBRARY STAFFING IN NORTHEASTERN ARIZONA**

by

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Rural Northeastern Arizona has been hard hit by the current economic crisis. Several jobs have been cut, and others have been lost. The current economic crunch has also been felt by area libraries. The area's community college was not financially capable of continuing the level of funding for their professional librarian position. Due to a resignation at one of the area's public libraries, the library professional employed at the community college was able to gain part-time employment at a public library in addition to continuing to work at the community college. The result has been a better use of professional staff time in each institution.

One area that has been helped considerably is that of collection development. The librarian has been able to learn the strengths of both library collections. Since the college has always had a policy of allowing community residents to use its library collection, whether or not they are students taking classes, a better spirit of cooperation has developed between both libraries.

Individuals needing materials owned by the college but showing up at the public library are directed to the college library collection. Individuals showing up at the college and needing public library materials are directed to the public library.

A spirit of cooperative buying is developing. The public library will not buy expensive materials that are already owned by the college and the college will not buy retrospective materials that are already owned by the public library.

With the informal exchange of patrons, both library collections are being used more extensively, and the public is getting more out of each tax dollar that is being spent for library service.

The public library now has the advantage of having a half-time degreed professional on its library staff. This is the only professional position in any the Navajo County public libraries.

This arrangement has generated beneficial changes for both libraries:

- The professional has been able to upgrade the cataloging procedures being used at the public library so that they are in line with current cataloging procedures.
- The professional is continuing to write a weekly news column for the public library which is printed in the local newspaper.
- A Friends of the Library group has been started, and several fund raisers have taken place.
- Because the college's library/media program has been involved in upgrading services at the public library, the professional has been able to give on-site library technology instruction for college credit to library staff and volunteers.
- The volunteer pre-school story hour has been re-vamped and upgraded. (The story hour is primarily staffed by area mothers whose children attend.)

- The public library has taken on a new appearance with attractive banners identifying significant special collections and service access points.
- The handling of overdues and fines has been re-addressed with a better return and payment of fine ratio.
- The public library is enjoying a renaissance, with increased circulation and more individuals using it than ever before.
- The public library staff felt quite comfortable including several new wishes as suggestions for the new 1992-1993 budget year.

All of this has taken place because the librarian chosen for both library positions – at Northland Pioneer College and the Holbrook Public Library – is a generalist with many years of experience in a wide variety of library positions. He is equally at home with a three-year-old story hour in the morning at the public library and with working with college level term papers in the afternoon.

A concerted effort has been made to help the library staffs at both institutions be part of the decision making process. Several exchange visitations are planned so that the library staffs of both institutions may become more comfortable working with each other.

Northland Pioneer College's Library/Media Technology Program will design several self-paced courses to assure that the cooperative work environment that has germinated in both institutions continues to grow.