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**NEWS PHOTO
EMMA BENNETT**
Petra Mauerhoff says part of the provincial grant money received by the Shortgrass Library System will be spent on upgrades to the parking facilities for delivery vans.



Province gives \$850K to Shortgrass Library System for needed upgrades

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The Shortgrass Library System will receive \$850,000 from the provincial government to help pay infrastructure upgrades at its 10th Avenue SW office building in Medicine Hat.

Shortgrass CEO Petra Mauerhoff said the money will be spent on upgrading the building's HVAC system, fire alarms, ongoing problems with leaks, garage improvements and other basic needs that typically plague a 30-year-old facility.

"Our facility is approaching 30 years and, as with any other facility, some things just need

to be upgraded," stated Mauerhoff. "We want to make sure the staff who work here have a safe environment and temperate environment, where you don't have to come in after a rainy day and wonder if you are going to have another leak. What this grant will allow us to do is stop with the band-aid solutions."

Mauerhoff acknowledged the central office might not be as visible as some of the Shortgrass Library System's more public-oriented facilities, but affirmed the building serves a vital need for all the libraries it supports.

"We are sort of the behind-the-scenes library ninjas that help the libraries be more awesome, is basically how I

always describe it," she said with a laugh.

In a statement released on Monday, Shortgrass Library System board chair Dwight Kilpatrick also expressed his gratitude for the government funding.

"This will ensure that the (central) building meets current standards and will allow Shortgrass staff to continue to provide excellent library support services to 14 member libraries in 11 municipalities in southeast Alberta in a safe environment. In the ever evolving public library world, a functional workspace allows staff to focus on supporting public library services with flexible and innovative solutions," he said