

About Shortgrass

Shortgrass is one of seven regional library systems. We provide support services to member libraries and municipalities, providing cost-savings and consultation support.

Shortgrass Mission Statement:

Shortgrass Library System provides quality library support services to member municipalities and partners.

Shortgrass Values:

Sustainable, Flexible & Efficient High Quality Service

Innovation

People (Internal/External)

Fiscal Responsibility

Intellectual Freedom

Shortgrass Library System History

It took a while, but it happened: while the earliest discussions about creating a library system for southeastern Alberta took place as far back as 1977, it was not until 1988 that Shortgrass Library System was confirmed as Alberta's fifth regional library system.

The ball really started rolling in 1981 at the Alberta Library Conference, when staff and trustees from various libraries in the area met to discuss the potential for a regional system. As a result of this initial meeting, an organizational meeting was held in Redcliff in June 1981. The group applied to the Alberta Library Trustees Association for financial assistance, and received \$5000 of seed money. A further two meetings, attended by representatives from Brooks, Bassano, and Burdett. A further three meetings were held in 1982, this time also attended by representatives from Duchess; at the final meeting in 1982, the system's boundaries were established and the name "Shortgrass" was confirmed. In 1983, the Committee was restructured to allow for both improved communication and representation from boards and from councils that did not have boards. That year, the committee also obtained letters of support from boards and councils representing 89% of the local population, and applied for a \$5000 grant from Alberta Culture.

The hard work continued in the following few years, as the committee continued to establish itself and create connections with supporting libraries. A logo (still in use to this day) was approved, and the executive agreed that a proposal for service be prepared and promoted to all boards and councils by early 1986. In March 1988, the province announced that Shortgrass Library System would be Alberta's fifth regional library system.

Things started progressing quickly. Colleen Swift was hired as the system's first Director in 1988, and municipalities were invited to bid on the location for SLS headquarters. After some discussion, Medicine Hat was chosen, and the search for a suitable location began. Ground was broken on the present-day HQ site in September 1989. The first book was also ordered, catalogued, processed, and delivered by Shortgrass that year.

Over the years, Shortgrass continued to grow, gradually adding the provision of delivery and cataloguing services for area school districts and increasing the number of member libraries, including the (then) Village of Tilley in 2005, the Village of Duchess in 2011, the Irvine library in 2015, and the Gem library in 2016. With the addition of the Gem library in 2016, all libraries located within Shortgrass' geographic area are now fully participating members.