

Annual Report 2009-2010

Community Spoken Here

This has been a year of deep reflection on what the core values of our library should be and how we can best promote them, especially during an economic downturn. According to recent research using local focus groups and interviews, it is clear that what the community of Holdrege and Phelps County wants from its library is adequate Internet access, plenty of books and movies to choose from, friendly librarians to greet and assist them, and an emphasis on early literacy programs for children. We also observe that many people like to come to the library to use the high speed broadband connection, work on projects or homework, relax and read the newspaper or magazines, spend time with their children, or simply browse the collection.

The library is a major player in the process of building community in many ways.

We leverage the investment of tax dollars to provide products and services that are widely shared throughout the community as evidenced by the 60,736 patron visits this year alone. To the extent possible, we source everything we buy locally, thereby reinvesting tax dollars in local businesses. Our Board of Trustees is made up of friends and neighbors from Funk, Holdrege, Loomis and Bertrand, and it is their honor to serve residents from throughout the County.

Grants and Gifts

To improve our service without adding to the burden on taxpayers, we have undertaken the following projects in 2009-10:

- Upgraded the technology lab using LSTA grant funds to expand our offering to ten public access workstations, plus six laptops that can be checked out for in-library use.
- Applied for and received a Phelps Memorial Hospital Foundation grant to cover the cost of new reading chairs, stools to browse the collection, an ADA compliant water fountain, and numerous books on health topics.

- Using membership dues, gifts and proceeds from fundraising efforts, the Friends of the Library accomplished several projects using Cornhusker Industries products and services:
 - purchased new carrels for the computer lab
 - purchased magazine display shelving with storage for back issues
 - recovered side chairs and armchairs

In 2010-11, we will focus on replacing the furniture in the Children's Library through grants and gifts.

Public Funding

This fiscal year has seen serious discussion with our funders regarding levels of support for the library both in terms of dollars and shared benefits. In an effort to respond to new limitations, we have taken the following steps:

- The Library Board of Trustees approved a reduction in hours plan for all employees of the library except the Director to close the gap in funding.
- The Library Board of Trustees voted to close the basement due to excessive costs for repairs to the elevator. Repairs only, not including inspections, cost \$3248 in 2009-10, plus another \$800 in a maintenance agreement.
- All procedures are in the process of review to identify opportunities to streamline operations, including materials ordering, technical processing and the management of overdue materials and lost items.
- We continue to participate in the Pioneer project to help develop a statewide system to improve service and reduce costs by sharing mission-critical library software. Among the benefits of this initiative will be the opportunity to implement self-checkout, which may help offset the impact of staffing reductions.
- Owing to the reductions in staff hours, we are recommending the installation of a video surveillance system, targeting the restroom hall in the Children's Library, Sam the Dragon area, the garage door, the Children's Story Time Room, the rear exit from the Children's library, and the computer lab to ensure the safety and security of library patrons when those areas cannot be staffed.

Cost Containment Efforts

Over the last several months, library staff has been working with the City and the community to focus on trying to find ways to reduce costs. What follows is a brief listing of those efforts.

- City workers replaced ballasts and bulbs throughout the library with energy saving alternatives
- The Library had programmable thermostats installed in both main reading room and Children's Library to reduce heating and cooling costs

- Durable Service cleaned all registers throughout the library to increase airflow and promote efficiency for both heating and cooling
- The Library Board decided to close the basement, in order to eliminate escalating elevator repair costs

Statistics

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010 (est.)
City Population	5521	5521	5521	5521	5521	5521
Total County Population	9630	9630	9630	9630	9563	9563
Registered Borrowers	unknown	8220	8330	8792	5845*	6298
Items Held	59468	60894	63359	60945	55432	53555
Items Added	3493	4033	3121	2964	5694	na
Items Withdrawn	2067	4337	7978	5584	12331	na
Circulation						
Adult Print	37140	41128	44053	41827	48165	44426
Young Adult Print	1822	3465	4572	3742	4837	5009
Children's Print	30636	29537	26602	26002	27622	27239
Adult Audiobooks	4632	4964	5230	5438	5482	4370
Overdrive Audio				218**	1115	1790
Video/DVD	25548	29820	33919	38098	41685	41955
Other	6560	4124	6628	6603	1552	5503
Total Circulation	118348	128294	133649	131,938	128228	128629
Internet Sessions	8075	8545	9114	10506	10620	12568
Library Visits	57677	60283	55806	59009	58543	60736
Website Visits						2080
Programs	203	214	201	210	205	na
Reference Transactions	1664	2028	2184	2288	2397	na

* Borrower records purged for patrons inactive for more than 5 years in preparation for ILS migration.

** Partial year statistic

Conclusion

The Holdrege Area Public Library is doing everything possible to respond to our more challenging budget situation. However, we are concerned that our efforts to date will not be effective for long without a more reliable and predictable funding solution. Although the Board of Trustees has indicated their support for a Joint Powers Agreement that has potential to mitigate some of the library's costs, we

have not yet been able to enter into substantive discussions about such an agreement with our funding partners.

The library is a key asset to Holdrege and Phelps County on many different levels. It not only provides valuable services to residents, it helps build a sense of community that few other institutions can match, and presents our town and county to the world as a place that cares about children, community and the future.