

2009 ANNUAL REPORT



www.mentorpl.org



Director's Message

We're Here When You Need Us

2009 was an eventful year for us at Mentor Public Library and for libraries across Ohio. The state budget crisis introduced politics into the everyday lives of library communities. MPL and our patrons challenged legislators to reconsider state funding cuts at local rallies, by lobbying in Columbus, and through an e-mail campaign. We know that the reprieve for state library funding is temporary. Funding challenges continue to command our attention but our promise to you is still outstanding service.

Despite those challenges, we have been able to move forward on long term projects. The most exciting of these is the purchase and renovation of the Reed property adjacent to the Main Library. The Heritage Home and 1.33 acres were purchased in May 2009 after a six-month option provided for study and financing arrangements. The re-named MPL *Read House* will be ready to host meetings and programs once ADA renovations are complete. The investment in the Read House will last into the future. It allows for expanded space for the community and Library programs alike.

A top organizational goal for 2009 was to reduce costs through internal efficiencies. New software products allow us to float items between branches and have reduced the number of times items are handled. Through careful workflow retooling, we reduced our cost per check-out from \$3.30 to \$2.95. Retraining enabled us to rotate our branch staff, saving on overtime costs and providing better coverage. Careful scheduling and fiscal management permitted us to offer Sunday hours all year long. We maintained Saturday hours at the branches throughout the summer for the first time. *We're here when you need us!* We finished the year with a 25% increase in circulation and a balanced budget plan for 2010.

We are proud to announce that we have been chosen as the Mentor Area Chamber of Commerce 2010 Civic Organization of the Year – an honor that has helped us jumpstart this year. Because we are always looking for ways to make your Library better, we occasionally invite you to participate in patron surveys. Watch for details on our website. Let us hear from you!

Thank you for choosing Mentor Public Library and for your support of library services in Lake County.

Lynn Hawkins | Executive Director



Why does circulation matter?

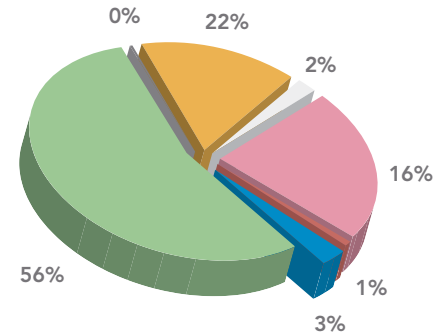
Lake County public libraries are supported by levy (property taxes) and state funding (Public Library Fund, or PLF). Currently, the PLF is funded at 1.97% of total state tax revenue, down from the 2.22% passed in the previous biennium budget. The result of this decrease was an 18% loss in funding in 2009 for public libraries.

The Lake County PLF is divided amongst the eight Lake County libraries according to a weighted formula of three factors: population (50%); circulation - the number of library items checked out or renewed - (30%); and the amount spent on materials - books, CDs, DVDs, magazines, etc. - (20%). Circulation and the amount spent on materials are key pieces of the funding formula; the more money we spend on materials, the higher circulation tends to climb—and our percentage of state funds increases with our circulation and our materials budget. In 2009 the Library's PLF amounted to \$1,573,568, which was well below the original forecast.



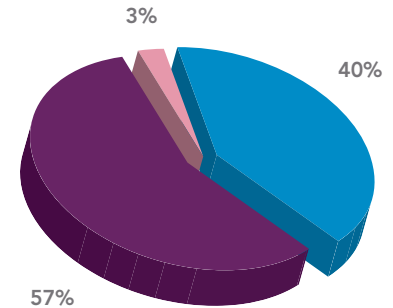
2009 General Fund Expenditures

- Salaries + Benefits
- Contingency + Transfers
- Supplies
- Contracted Services
- Capital Outlay
- Library Material
- Other Objects



2009 General Fund Revenue

- State Aid
- Operating Levy
- Miscellaneous Receipts



2009 MPL "FIRSTS" for Lake County

First to offer
self-check
circulation



First to offer
online credit card
payment via
Internet &
self-check kiosks



First to
use electronic
invoicing to
streamline
payment process



First to
use cameras for
media security



First to
offer a virtual
agent for library
information



First to
use social networking
tools (Facebook, blogs, texting)
to communicate
with patrons



First
*Men's
Book Club*



First
*Book & Brush
art book club*



First to
provide for
online donations



Great Value for Your Tax Dollars

- Our library users checked out nearly 1.2 million items in 2009 – 25% more than in 2008. At an average cost of \$20 apiece, this would have cost patrons more than **\$23 million**.
- Nearly 25,000 reference questions were answered by our librarians in 2009. At an average cost of \$2 per inquiry, this service would have cost patrons **\$50,000**.
- Attendance at 2009 library programs topped 13,000. Valued at \$2 per admission, this service saved patrons more than **\$26,000**.
- MPL databases, website, and online catalog were used a total of 728,159 times in 2009. Even with an average cost of \$1 per usage, the value of these resources is approaching **three quarters of a million dollars**.
- Library Internet stations were used 60,000 times. At an average cost of \$2 per usage, this service would have totaled **\$120,000**.
- The State Library Mobile Tech Lab saved **\$3,300** in training and travel by providing onsite staff training services.

Technology Services

We provided 31 public workstations in 2009 and a fast Internet connection to get you where you wanted to go. Technology patrons used our Internet and word processing services more than 60,000 times. Our website was viewed 728,159 times, averaging almost 2,000 hits a day. Reference staff taught 350 sessions ranging from “mousing” for beginners, to computer security for the more advanced learner.

The State Library of Ohio’s Mobile Technology Lab made a week-long stop at MPL for staff technology training – a great example of your tax dollars at work!

In October, Emma the Catbot became the first virtual reference agent in Libraryland. Emma functions through Artificial Intelligence Markup Language, or AIML. She answers a wide variety of questions about library services. Her debut in October initiated 320 hits. In January alone, more than 10,000 streams were logged from info-seekers on our website.

The Information Technology Department rolled out a new floating collection module to minimize deliveries between branches. When an item is returned to a branch, the system identifies that branch as the item’s new “home” location. This reduces the number of times items are sent “back” to a location and gives the staff more time to handle the increased traffic and circulation the Library has seen.

We began offering self-check circulation and a credit card payment option for fines. 65% of checkouts at the Main Library now take place on the self-check kiosks and patrons are taking advantage of the quick and easy credit card payment option for fines.



Youth Services

Described as “quite possibly the most patient man on the face of the Earth,” longtime Department Manager Dennis Heritage retired in November and Children’s Services management passed to the capable hands of Amanda Densmore. 2009 saw the debut of a new children’s book club and the addition of Fuzzy the Hamster to the Children’s Department. *Paws to Read* remained popular in 2009, pairing school-age readers with a certified therapy dog for a read-aloud program.

Sign Deafinitely taught children about American Sign Language and the deaf community. The Summer Reading Program hosted a K-9 Drill Team, Wade the Ventriloquist, jugglers, and the Library’s own Julie Harmon demonstrated dancing techniques.

We hosted the Great Lakes Theater Festival for *Where the Wild Things Are*; held a Fancy Nancy Tea Party; and said Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss. The *Hallowread Halloween House Party* made great use of the Read House and grounds. Much of the children’s programming is directly funded through the generosity of the Friends of the Library! *Thank you, Friends of the Library!*



Community Outreach

Community partnering is one of our “Core Four” values. In 2009 we reached out to nontraditional contacts to add surprising partnership successes. We added delivery to Mentor High School and expanded Homebound Services. Storytime @ Mentor City Pools and *Beach Reads @ Mentor* beaches gained national attention in a 2009 ALA book as outstanding partnerships with the City of Mentor and Lake Hospitals. We partnered with Friends of the Library and Great Lakes Mall to provide materials of seasonal interest at a mall kiosk. Our partnership with *Yours Truly Restaurant* for their annual Dinner with the Presidents received wide recognition both locally and nationally. At tax time, outstanding AARP volunteers assisted more than 160 people with free tax preparation at the Main Library. We held events for children and seniors at the Concord Township Community Center. We also hosted the James A. Garfield National Historical Site’s series on President Garfield.

The Collection

Library use rose sharply in 2009, which is typical in a downturned economy. Circulation topped nearly 1.2 million, an annual increase of 25%, as we welcomed 1,200 library visitors a day. Around 44,000 items were cataloged in 2009 to bring our collection total to 261,927.

While we are still very much “about books,” media checkouts increasingly drove our circulation. Audiovisual materials were shifted at all facilities and new cameras were installed to provide better security for a collection that accounted for more than 50% of our checkouts. Stop in and check out your favorite new movie! The library purchases the latest award-winning films in multiple copies to reduce waiting time.

In order to stay on the cutting edge of the reading world, we purchased four Nook e-book readers and will soon offer digital copies of fiction and nonfiction bestsellers.

Search Ohio is the premier interlibrary loan partnership that augments our physical collection. MPL provided more than 12,000 loans to Search Ohio libraries and we borrowed nearly the same number for our patrons – an outstanding example of resource-sharing.



Our Mission:

We are your community Library, providing resources for lifelong enrichment. Our commitment to you is excellence in all that we do.

Our Four Core Principles:

Intellectual Freedom
Confidentiality
Personal Service
Community Partnering

2009 Mentor Public Library Board of Trustees

Amy Frank | President

Terry Kilbourne | Vice President

Harry Fishleigh III | Secretary

Jamie Callender, Jr.

Lowell Davis

Deborah Foley

David Roberts (thru 12/31/2009)

Nancy Grendze (as of 01/01/2010)

www.mentorpl.org

Main Library

8215 Mentor Avenue
Mentor, Ohio 44060

Mentor-on-the-Lake Branch

5642 Andrews Road
Mentor-on-the-Lake, Ohio 44060

Headlands Branch

4669 Corduroy Road
Mentor Headlands, Ohio 44060

The Read House

8245 Mentor Avenue
Mentor, Ohio 44060

