Fast facts
- Established in 1946.
- 1,600 square mile service area: unincorporated Pierce County and the annexed cities and towns of Bonney Lake, Buckley, DuPont, Eatonville, Edgewood, Gig Harbor, Lakewood, Milton, Orting, South Prairie, Steilacoom, Sumner, University Place and Wilkeson.
- Serves 534,000 people.
- 17 libraries.
- 24/7 access with downloadable audiobooks and eBooks; Live Homework Help® with real tutors; and e-sources with databases such as auto repair manuals and business support, magazines and encyclopedias.
- Three bookmobiles.
- A van to serve diverse communities.
- Brings books, movies and music to child care centers, adult care facilities and people who are homebound.

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Photos by Chris Tumbusch and Group 4 (3M)
Pierce County Library System is a community asset in today’s tough economy

During this tough economic time, people are turning to Pierce County Library System now more than ever for assistance.

Business is booming at Pierce County Library

Pierce County Library has seen a dramatic increase in use, due to the economic downturn as well as offering additional services from a re-authorized levy voters passed in 2006.

Communities get value from the Library

Pierce County Library System offers books, computers, staff and other resources to help people during these tough economic times:
• Create resumes.
• Locate utilities assistance.
• Locate home loan help.
• Search and apply for jobs.
• Find clothing, food, housing, transportation.
• Improve computer skills.
• Stretch and save money.
• Providing resources to Spanish and Korean-speaking people.

Pierce County Library System delivers on pledges from re-authorized levy

In September 2006, voters gave a 56% approval to re-authorize the Library System’s levy, which enabled it to maintain current and provide additional services. In 2008 the Library further developed services based on the levy promises.

Levy Pledge: New materials and faster service
• Added downloadable eBooks and expanded audiobooks, which resulted in an increase of downloadable checkouts by 172%.
• Updated online resources and added Value Line with stock information.

Levy Pledge: Additional services for kids and teenagers
• Increased hours children and teenagers read during summer reading by 44%.
• Added three early literacy stations with computers to help children prepare to read.

Levy Pledge: Upgraded services and technology for customers
• Added Korean and Spanish bookmobile services.
• Added 64 computers with high-speed Internet for public use and taught more people in computer classes. In 2009, the Library will continue to build upon, enhance and sustain these services.

New in 2008

Thousands of people participated in the first Pierce County READS

Pierce County Library System and The News Tribune’s first countywide community one-book program, Pierce County READS, met and exceeded expectations. For three months thousands of people throughout the county read, talked about and shared copies of the same book at the same time: best-selling “The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency” by international award-winning author Alexander McCall Smith.

Key Foundation, a foundation funded by KeyBank, sponsored Pierce County READS.

Pierce County Library 2030: Facilities Master Plan

Pierce County Library began to develop a facilities master plan to determine the services and buildings to meet community needs during the next 20 plus years.

To develop the plan, called Pierce County Library 2030, the Library started:
• Gathering ideas and opinions from thousands of people about their future community needs.
• Assessing current library services and buildings.
• Reviewing community growth trends and best practices from successful libraries.

Pierce County Library 2030 will form a basis for future buildings, expansions or replacements of library buildings. The plan will also identify new ways to deliver services to people in areas where buildings are not conveniently available.

Supporters of the Library System

In 2008 Friends of the Library groups from 17 libraries donated $48,158 for library needs. These volunteer organizations are instrumental in supporting and promoting local libraries.

In 2008 Pierce County Library Foundation awarded $148,640 for library programs that included Pierce County READS, Explorer Kids’ Bookmobile, summer reading program, diverse communities and early learning.

The Foundation’s active 20-member volunteer Board of Directors raises and allocates charitable gifts to expand library services beyond the scope of tax-based funding to reach underserved communities.

Pierce County Library System thanks the Friends and Foundation for their dedication and philanthropic support.

Financial picture in 2008

Property taxes fund approximately 96% of the Library’s services. In 2008 the Library System’s total revenues were $27.7 million.

The Library’s total expenditures were $26.7 million.

With the voter-approved re-authorized levy, the Library’s Board of Trustees approved a $29 million operating budget for 2009. The overall 2009 projected revenue is up by 3.4% from 2008, while costs to run the Library still outstrip revenue by an increase of 5.18%.

Pierce County Library System thanks property owners for their continued support.

Check out more detailed information about the Library’s budget @ www.piercecountylibrary.org/about-us/administration/finance.