Board Reports
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Strategic/Policy</th>
<th>Routine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 8</td>
<td>• 2014 Board Calendar of Work</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2014 Operational Changes for Efficiencies and Savings</td>
<td>• Monthly Financial Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Succession Planning - Essential Competencies Needed for Executive Position</td>
<td>• 2014 Legislative Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• STAR Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tehaleh (Newland Communities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 24</td>
<td><strong>American Library Association (ALA) Mid-Winter Conference, Philadelphia PA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>• Technology Plan Update</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Internet Policy</td>
<td>• Monthly Financial Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collection Budget</td>
<td>• 2014 Legislation Related to Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-Service Lobby</td>
<td>• 2014 Pierce County Library Foundation Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Customer Surveys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11-15</td>
<td><strong>Public Library Association (PLA) Conference, Indianapolis IN</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td><strong>Meeting canceled due to lack of quorum</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Metropolitan King County Library Joint Boards Meeting</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• PC Reads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>• Access Policy</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Board Self-Evaluation</td>
<td>• Monthly Financial Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2013 Reciprocal Borrowing Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emergency Capital Project: Diesel Generator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Technology Plan Update</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Executive Director Search Firm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Facilities Master Plan Overview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td><strong>Oregon Library Association/Washington Library Association (OLA/WLA) Conference, Wenatchee WA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>• 2013 Year-End Financial Review</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Re-appointment of Donna Albers</td>
<td>• Monthly Financial Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• South Hill Library Project</td>
<td>• ULC Innovations Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Facilities Master Plan Next Steps</td>
<td>• IRS Tax Form 990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Summer Reading Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• WLA Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11</td>
<td>• 2013 Capital Projects – Year End Report</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2014 Mid-Year Budget Process</td>
<td>• Monthly Financial Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Metrics in 2014 Budget</td>
<td>• PC Reads Final Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Scout Introduction</td>
<td>• Our Own Expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wellness Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Resolution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26-1</td>
<td><strong>American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference, Las Vegas NV</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 9</td>
<td>• 2014 Mid-Year Budget Adjustment:</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Operating Budget</td>
<td>• Monthly Financial Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Capital Improvement Plan</td>
<td>• IRS Tax Form 990 Final Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Circulation Decline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Self-Service Lobby Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maker Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maker Fest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3D Printing at Gig Harbor Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Strategic/Policy</td>
<td>Routine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 13</td>
<td>• 2015 Budget: Budget Process and Calendar</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2015 CPIU</td>
<td>• Monthly Financial Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meeting Room Policy/Procedure Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meeting Room Use Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fife Update - Surrounding Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Board Bylaws Revision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• OPMA Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 10</td>
<td>• 2015 Budget: Estimated Revenue and Expenditures</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Capital Facilities Plan</td>
<td>• Monthly Financial Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leadership Competencies</td>
<td>• Library Card Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Key Center iPad Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Annual Branch Service Plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Science to Go</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teen Summer Challenge Marketing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Long Range Capital Costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>• Review of Regular 2015 Draft Revenue and Expenditures</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2015 pre certification of Property Tax Levy</td>
<td>• Monthly Financial Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• IPD for 2014 Property Tax Levy</td>
<td>• Set 2015 Board Meeting Schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2015 – 2019 Cash Flow</td>
<td>• Director Evaluation: Review Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 12</td>
<td>• First Public Hearing Regarding 2015 Budget</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review And Approval To Certify Property Taxes To Be Levied For Collection in 2015</td>
<td>• Resolution: Schedule of Recurring Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Review Of Regular 2015 Capital Improvement Budget And 2015 Capital Improvement Plan</td>
<td>• Pierce County Library Foundation Annual Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 10</td>
<td>• Second Public Hearing Regarding 2015 Budget</td>
<td>• Monthly Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Resolution to transfer a portion of the fund balance of the general fund to the capital improvement fund</td>
<td>• Monthly Financial Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Resolution to Adopt 2015 Budget</td>
<td>• Resolution: Cancellation of unredeemed warrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Resolution to Adopt 2015 Capital Improvement Fund Budget</td>
<td>• 2015 Insurance Renewal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Motion to certify property taxes to be levied for collection in 2015 (if needed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Resolution to set 2015 wages for non-represented staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2015 Election of Officers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Negotiate 2015 Executive Director Agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Library Activities

- Fewer books, more downloads from library
- Library Board to discuss budget, circulation changes, maker movement and more
- Scout. A new way to explore your Pierce County Library
- Around the Sound: Big excitement at the Steilacoom Library
- 3-D class models science education
- Lakewood Makerfest – Free Event August 9th
- Fizz Boom Read at Your South Sound Library
- The Pierce County Library System Teen Summer Reading Challenge
- Pierce County Library Teen Summer Challenge Program
- Online Teen Summer Challenge
- Libraries Hosting Job-Search Workshops
Fewer books, more downloads from library

Jul 7, 2014 - 04:58 PM | Business Examiner

Pierce County Library System Board of Trustees will discuss a midyear budget adjustment, materials circulation changes and more when it meets at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 9.

Data reports from 2012 to 2013 show a 39 percent increase in circulation of downloadable e-books, audiobooks and music through the library system. There was also a 7.9 percent decrease in circulation of print and audiovisual materials. Managers continue to analyze usage patterns as they prepare to build the 2015 materials collection budget.

Due to additional revenue and lower expenditures, the library is eliminating the need to use cash reserves to balance the 2014 budget ($127,663). Net total sources of funding increased by $370,473.

Meetings of the library board are open to the public and the agenda can be found here.
Library Board to discuss budget, circulation changes, maker movement and more
July 8, 2014 by Linda Farmer | Suburban Times

At its July meeting, the Pierce County Library System Board of Trustees will discuss the 2014 midyear budget adjustment, materials circulation changes, engagement in the maker movement, and more. The board meets from 3:30 to 6 p.m. on July 9 at the library’s Processing and Administrative Center, 3005 112th St. E., in Tacoma. The meeting is open to the public. Download the agenda.

2014 midyear budget adjustment

The library adjusts its budget at the midyear mark to ensure that spending is on track for the remainder of the year, make corrections and adjustments as needed, and begin planning for 2015. Due to additional revenue and lower expenditures, the library is eliminating the need to use cash reserves to balance the 2014 budget ($127,663). Net total sources of funding increased by $370,473. The capital improvement plan also was reviewed and revised.

Circulation changes: downloadables up, print and audio down

Changes from 2012 to 2013 show a 39 percent increase in circulation of downloadable e-books, audiobooks and music as well as a 7.9 percent decrease in circulation of print and audiovisual materials. Plans are in place to increase downloadable options and engage customers in providing feedback to improve collections. Managers continue to analyze usage patterns as they prepare to build the 2015 materials collection budget.

Library engages in maker movement

The maker movement or maker culture is having a complex social, technological and economic impact. Today’s tinkerers, DIYers, techie and dreamers are garnering the attention of educators, business and industry leaders. Making provides a certain freedom and excitement in people of all ages and backgrounds. And makers like to collaborate. Pierce County Library is diving into the maker movement by hosting Lakewood MakerFest on Aug. 9 at Pierce College and a DIY MakerFest in the near future in South Hill. Funding for these events comes from a $5,000 grant through the library’s 2013 National Medal for Museum and Library Service.

The library system has been serving people in Pierce County for 68 years.
Scout. A new way to explore your Pierce County Library

JULY 6, 2014 BY LINDA FARMER — LEAVE A COMMENT

It's a game, it's an online library, it's a rewards program. Pierce County Library today officially launched Scout, an interactive online library experience.

Members of Scout participate in an open community of readers, earn badges, qualify for prizes, and share their experience. Four categories of fun: Books, Do-It-Yourself, Food and Local. Ages 18 and up. A library card is required to earn prizes. Prizes include gift cards to local museums, restaurants, cooking supply stores, book stores, home improvement and craft stores, along with a grand prize drawing for an iPad.

Sign up today at scout.pcls.us and automatically win a tote bag (while supplies last). Scout is funded by the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation.

Share:

Like 1  Share 0  Share  Tweet 1  More

FILED UNDER: ANNOUNCEMENTS, GOVERNMENT, PIERCE COUNTY
TAGGED WITH: PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
Around the Sound: Big excitement at the Steilacoom Library
July 7, 2014 by Nancy Covert | Suburban Times

Monday morning at 11:45 I was at the Steilacoom Library. The parking lot was full because there was a kid’s program underway—a loud, exciting juggler. Well about 10 minutes later, lights started flashing, and librarian Jennifer told us we’d have to leave. Apparently the grand finale of the show involved steam, but the steam set off the smoke alarm.

West Pierce Fire & Rescue was dispatched, but unfortunately they went to Lakewood instead of Steilacoom. The librarians had the alarm shut off by 12:15. The juggler Alex Zerbe—attired in wild trousers—red, yellow and orange plaid—apologized for the commotion. He was off to his next show at Orting Library. It is hoped they’re prepared.
3-D class models science education

Four 3-D printers at the Gig Harbor branch of the Pierce County Library are part of a series of courses available for free

By KAREN MILLER

Staff writer July 2, 2014

Adam Jackman shows off the Gig Harbor Library's set of 3-D printers to David Gaither, 11, Finn Allen, 8, and Ella Allen, 7, on Thursday.

KAREN MILLER/GATEWAY PHOTO

While Adam Jackman and Terri Tortorici May closely watched 3-D printers making plastic cellphone holders, a group of young children gathered around in awe.

"It makes those?" David Gaither, 11, inquired.

"89-year-olds have the same reaction," Jackman said.

May, 52, and Jackman, 43, are adult services librarians at the Gig Harbor branch of the Pierce County Library. They've both been there seven years, but May outranks Jackman by about two weeks. The two help out with the library's series of 3-D printing classes.
"We, for a long time, were saying (3-D printing) was the future, when really it's the present," May said. "It's been around for 30 years, it's just because the desktop stuff is new."

By the end of June, the library had presented nine introductory classes that brought in 227 attendees. Of that number, 184 were adults and 43 were teens and children.

The diverse age groups are part of why the library applied for a grant from Afina (the company that manufactures the printer) in the first place. May said she's discouraged by statistics showing the lack of women in engineering fields. Her hope is the printers will be a gateway for young minds.

"It's men, it's women, it's girls, it's boys," she said, describing the class. In the hands-on course, the youngest participant so far was 12 years old; the oldest 81.

The library has four machines, a gift from the manufacturer Afina with an encasement given by the Friends of the Library. The library offers two classes. Introduction to 3-D Printing is a lecture and demonstration class; 3-D Printing for Beginners is a hands-on, five-week class.

The printer uses a digital file, some of which is downloaded from thingiverse.com. To melt the plastic, the printer's head gets to be about 500 degrees. Naturally, the classes are very safety conscious, May said.

For Jackman, the program is a new way to experience the library. In the past, the library has always been the place to go for more details, he said, so why not more details about cutting edge technology?

"The public library wants to be in that position. You've got a questions? Go to the library," he said.

May and Jackman have a box of projects that have been created by the printers. Abraham Lincoln's face, a spaceship from 'Doctor Who' and a little red elephant.

May said there are misconceptions the library has had to clear up. For example, a patron worried the printers could make guns. May listed the other uses for the printer and assured the patron the library's machines are too small and would never be used to print anything dangerous.

"We talked about printing in chocolate, printing in plastic, printing houses, printing clothes, printing parts that you need for your toaster. You name it, it can do it," May said.

Facebook| Twitter| Google Plus| Reddit| E-mail| Print

Join The Conversation

The Peninsula Gateway is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

Commenting FAQs | Terms of Service
Lakewood MakerFest – Free Event August 9th – Sign Up to Display your Project!

July 25, 2014 by Jen | Thrifty NW Mom

Lakewood MakerFest – August 9th – Pierce College

Pierce College, Fort Steilacoom Campus is hosting the 2nd annual Lakewood MakerFest on Saturday August 9th, 2014 from 1 – 5pm at Pierce College in Lakewood. This is a FREE event for all ages where you can meet the makers of fun, unique projects and get inspired to create your own project!

There will be kids activities as well as presentations by makers and Pierce College’s science dome will be open to check out as well. One of the presentations will be a 3D printing demonstration by the Gig Harbor Library, which has the only 3D printers in the Pierce County Library system.

Sign up as a Maker:

It’s not too late to sign up to display your own project too & be one of the makers at the event. If you can make it, you can bring it! Sign up here to bring a project to this event – all ages can bring a project from kids to adults!

Here are some categories of the types of projects that could be showcased:

- Alternative Energy
- Art
- Data Collection
- Electronics/Technology
- Gaming
- Mechanical Things
- Photo
- Practical Ideas
- Robotics
- Sewing
- Sculpture
- Video
If you don’t see your category on the list, that’s ok – these are just suggested categories. The makers movement is moving across the nation as a way for people to showcase their unique DIY creations & inventions.

**Location:**
Rainier Building – Pierce College Fort Steilacoom campus
9401 Farwest Drive SW
Lakewood, WA

Make sure to follow Pierce County Library on Facebook and Twitter to stay updated on the latest information & you can follow the hashtag: #makerfest to learn more about the event.

**This event is sponsored by:**
- Pierce County Library System
- City of Lakewood
- Lakewood Computer Clubhouse
- Pierce College

Don’t forget to check out information about the Pierce County Library Teen Summer Challenge Program, too!

**Disclosure:** This post is sponsored by the Pierce County Library system. All opinions are 100% mine. See our disclosure policy for more details.

- See more at: [http://www.thriftynorthwestmom.com/lakewood-makerfest-free-event/#sthash.CbeX0lRU.5iDjF1JP.dpuf](http://www.thriftynorthwestmom.com/lakewood-makerfest-free-event/#sthash.CbeX0lRU.5iDjF1JP.dpuf)
Fizz Boom Read at Your South Sound Library

06/21/2014 Filed under Activities, Family Posted by SouthSoundTalk Editor

By Rhonda Gould

Get ready to FIZZ BOOM READ at area public libraries this summer. Public libraries in the South Sound are gearing up for summer reading programs for kids of all ages, teens, and adults. The Pierce County Library System libraries, Puyallup Public Library, and Tacoma Public Library are all members of the Collaborative Summer Reading Program, a national grassroots organization devoted to the creation of affordable summer reading program materials. This year’s Fizz Boom Read early literacy and children’s theme, the teen Spark a Reaction theme, and adult Literary Elements theme features age appropriate science and technology programs and activities.

According to Judy Nelson, the Customer Services Manager for Youth Services and Outreach at the Pierce County Library System, this year’s Fizz Boom Read program offers over 300 free programs during the eight-week program along with a wide selection of fun reading materials for self-selection. Nelson states, “Programs at the branch libraries range from science magic to robotics. Other elements of the program include the tracking of reading in 20-minute increments and specific activities to report out on that utilize the scientific methods of observation and exploration. Children can earn prizes for reading and enter drawings to win a free science tool kit.”

Fizz Boom Read is free and available for every family in Pierce County at their eighteen branch locations and online at PCLS Summer Reading. Their program begins June 21 and runs through August 31.

Research shows that youth who read for fun during the summer months maintain and even build stronger literacy skills than those who do not. The National Summer Learning Association estimates that the “summer slide” accounts for two months worth of learning loss by students who do not actively engage in learning opportunities over the summer. Judy Nelson says that experiences such as attending camp or visiting the zoo or a museum helps kids continue to learn and expand their knowledge base, and the library provides a wide variety of programs at no cost.
"From my perspective, public libraries would probably not be able to stay open in the summer were it not for summer reading," agrees Puyallup Public Library Director, Tim Wadham. "I certainly sell summer reading to adults on the basis that research shows that kids who spend time reading during the summer are better prepared when they go back to school. I sell it to kids by saying that it gives them a chance to read whatever they please, and not just what is assigned for school. I think that's one of the most important things about it—reminding kids that you can actually read for pleasure."

Bonnie Svitavsky, Puyallup’s Young Adult Librarian, has the same philosophy. She says, "Summer reading isn’t just for young kids – teens benefit from it too! Teens can also suffer from the summer slide, and encouraging them to read and offering attainable goals is a great way to combat learning loss. But more than that, a summer reading program is about making reading – and the library – fun! Instead of required reading, teens can meet program goals by reading books, comics, magazines, audiobooks, and websites. Programs aimed specifically at teens make them feel welcome at the library and can introduce them to all the services the library offers."

This year, the Puyallup Public Library has partnered with the Tacoma Rainiers baseball team to promote summer reading. Participants who complete the program will earn a ticket for the Puyallup Public Library night at the August 20 Rainiers game. This is the first year that the library is offering online registration for participants. Information about the programs for children, teens, and adults can be found at Puyallup Public Library Summer Reading Program.

The Tacoma Public Library has a website devoted to their summer reading club activities and events with three separate sections for children, teens, and adults at Tacoma Public Library Summer Reading Club. Registration is online for participants of all ages. Programs include puppet shows, musicians, magicians, Pacific Science Center experiments, anime club, a voice-over workshop, retro gaming for adults, and much more. Teens and adults can review books and post them online. Registration has already begun. Report on reading through August 9.

The next time you go to the public library, check out the Fizz Boom Read summer reading program as well as your books for free and engaging entertainment for the whole family.

All photos courtesy Katy Levesque/Puyallup Public Library.
The Pierce County Library System Teen Summer Reading Challenge

JULY 17, 2014 BY ADMIN | SOUNDS FUN MOM

Know teens who need to keep busy this summer? Or maybe you know some parents of teens pulling their hair out already?
Share this post about the awesome, Interactive summer reading challenge the Pierce County Library system has just for teens.

![Spark a Reaction](image)

Yep-the library has summer reading for all ages!
The teen program is super cool. Participating readers create profiles and then earn virtual badges that have them reading books and completing a variety of fun tasks. In keeping with this year's theme, Spark A Reaction, activities and badges focus on learning in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).

![Hunger Games](image)

For example, teen readers can earn the Hunger Games badge by keeping a journal from the point of view of a Hunger Games character, watching a parody video and answering
questions, and making their own bow and arrow. Badges include Dr. Who, Code An App, Stop Motion Animation, and more. Of course, there are also badges for hours spent reading and story writing.

I was really impressed by the look of the site, which I think teen gaming fans will love, and the creative and current challenges. I know a lot of you who love Young Adult fiction will be wishing you could join this program, too! You can have your favorite teens check it out here. I also hope you’ll take a minute to share the scoop on this program. I know many of you have younger children, but I also know you have lots of friends and connections whether on your kid’s soccer team or your Facebook page, and you know they’ll be grateful to learn about this program.

Oh and teen challenge participants can also look for meet-ups where they can work on challenges together or just hang out.

Anyone ages 13 and up can register. Participants with a Pierce County Library card qualify for prizes. Each completed activity equals another entry into a grand prize drawing for an iPad mini. Top point earners win an Amazon gift card. Prizes are courtesy of Pierce County Library Foundation.

Disclosure: We are thrilled that the Pierce County Library System, one of the finest in the country, sponsored this post! I hope I can count on you to help spread the word about the Teen Summer Challenge.
Pierce County Library Teen Summer Challenge Program – Hands on Activities & Teens Earn Prizes
July 23, 2014 by Jen | Thrifty NW Mom

Pierce County Library Teen Summer Challenge Program

Earlier this summer, we shared with you this huge roundup of Summer Reading Programs around the Northwest. We recently learned about another awesome library program, this one just for teenagers offered by the Pierce County library system called the Teen Summer Challenge. It can be a lot harder to find activities to keep your teens engaged & interested in learning over the summer, so I like the fact that this program really seeks to interest the teens with popular themes in a fun, interactive online program, as well as hands-on challenges. It looks like a cool video program or fun app, too!

The theme for this year's Teen Summer Challenge is Spark a Reaction, which focuses on activities with STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering & Math. So, even though this is set up as an online program, the actual activities range from a variety of different hands-on activities & "challenges" to reach students with different interests. The activities focus on popular themes such as Doctor Who, Hunger Games, Harry Potter & more.

The program runs through August 31, 2014, so it’s definitely not too late for your teen to sign up now & have plenty of time to complete a number of activities during this timeframe. The Teen Summer Challenge has the opportunity for the teens to earn prizes, everything from an Amazon Gift Card to the top prize of an iPad Mini.

What to Know:

- Anyone ages 13 & up can register online for the Teen Summer Challenge program
- If you have a Pierce County Library card, you’ll be eligible for prizes (so make sure your teen has their card so they don’t miss out on cool prizes)
• Prizes include a drawing for an iPad Mini (every activity completed gets you an entry into the drawing) and top earners in the program will earn an Amazon Gift Card (Prizes courtesy of the Pierce County Library Foundation).

• Teens will complete activities to earn badges & qualify for prizes. As of right now, over 11,000 activities & over 800 badges have been completed thru this program. As the summer progresses further, more badges will be unlocked for more activities teens can complete.

• Teens can also enlist friends to help complete activities – so make sure to tell their friends to join up too, so they can pair up on some of these activities.

• Teens can connect with other teens thru the online community or through community meetups at local Pierce County libraries, where they can work on the challenges together or just hang out & get to know other kids.

Here are a few of the activities I saw on the site:

Cardboard Challenge – Teens have to grab a cardboard box & complete a variety of different activities where they get creative & come up with unique concepts, such as a cardboard arcade game, cardboard comic strip, & more.

Video Game Challenge – View, Play & Create your own Video Games

Hunger Games – Try out Activities & Challenges all centered around the Hunger game
The Pierce County Library’s Teen Summer Challenge is in its 3rd year and just last year, they won 7th place in Clickipedia’s Top 25 Best Examples of Gamefication in Business list. They really have put a lot of effort into making this an interesting & fun experience for teens, so make sure to have your teen sign up for the program to check it out.

You can also follow the Pierce County Library on Facebook & Twitter for more information & updated information on library programs.

Don’t forget to check out more Summer Reading Programs going on around the Northwest this summer.

Have any of your teens checked out this program yet – what do they think?
Disclosure: Pierce County Library system has sponsored this post so we can share about this cool program for teens in Pierce County. All opinions are 100% mine. See our disclosure policy for more details.

- See more at: http://www.thriftynorthwestmom.com/pierce-county-library-teen-program/#sthash.vyHhycnT.lgPTd19C.dpuf
Online Teen Summer Challenge
By: Orting News Orting News enews letter
July 15, 2014

A summer reading program and more, Pierce County Library’s Teen Summer Challenge offers teens a one-of-a-kind way to explore their interests, library and community, now through Aug. 31.

Teens complete activities to earn badges such as Code an App, Doctor Who, Hunger Games, John and Hank Green and Stop Motion Animation. New badges are released throughout the summer as participation increases. As of today, more than 10,000 activities have been completed. Players share their experiences online and with other teens through regular community meet-ups.

Anyone ages 13 and up can register. Participants with a Pierce County Library card qualify for prizes. Each completed activity equals another entry into a grand prize drawing for an iPad mini. Top point earners win an Amazon gift card. Prizes are courtesy of Pierce County Library Foundation.

This year’s theme is Spark a Reaction. Activities and badges focus on learning in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

This is the third year of the library’s online challenge for teens. The 2013 effort landed the No. 7 spot on Clickipedia’s Top 25 Best Examples of Gamification in Business. Pierce County Library beat out top household brands such as Verizon, Nissan and The World Bank on Clickipedia’s list.

Contact
Elise Doney | Teen Librarian | 253.548.3525
Jami Schwarzwald | Teen Librarian | 253.548.3556
Linda Farmer, APR | Director of Communications | 253.548.3428 | 253.232.2891 cell
LIBRARIES HOSTING JOB-SEARCH WORKSHOPS

Job-seekers can get tips for finding work through free job-search workshops at Pierce County Library System branches, including the Eatonville, Parkland-Spanaway and South Hill branches. The events are co-sponsored by WorkSource.

The schedule includes:

• **AUG. 21** at Eatonville Library, 205 Center St. W., “Effective Applications and Resumes” at 11 a.m. and “LinkedIn Help” at 2 p.m.
• **AUG. 11** at Parkland-Spanaway Library, 13718 Pacific Ave. S., “Advertising Your Abilities” at 11 a.m.
• **AUG. 7** at South Hill Library, 15420 Meridian E., Thursday, “Presenting Yourself as a Polished Professional” at 11 a.m. and “Effective Applications and Resumes” at 2 p.m.

“Advertising Your Abilities” focuses on profile statements and the use of social media.

“Effective Applications and Resumes” deals with situations such as age, background and reason for leaving a job. Resumes and cover letters also are covered.

“LinkedIn Help” provides assistance in utilizing a LinkedIn profile. Participants must have a current LinkedIn profile and familiarity with the Internet and computers.

“Presenting Yourself as a Polished Professional” covers topics such as preparing for and what to say in an interview, including how to respond to questions about over-qualification, salary and background issues.

Other courses available through libraries include “The Job Doctor” (resume reviews, mock interviewing and other help from WorkSource job search specialists) and “Job Seeker Services—Russian” (for job-seekers whose primary language is Russian, Romanian or Ukrainian).

In an effort to devote resources to military veterans, including those who are disabled, WorkSource helps thousands of veterans find jobs each year. As a veteran, you can get preferential access to WorkSource services, including priority referrals to jobs.
Communications
Other Libraries

- Public Libraries Survey. Part One: Public Libraries in the United States
- Have you built an engaged board? Trusting Trustees
- Can you read me now?
- Making Room for Community
- Gates Foundation Exits Library Granting
Part One: Public Libraries in the United States

National Level Data and Trends
Over the past two decades, public library services have experienced constant change. Communities grow, technologies get faster, and people expect their local service providers to keep pace. The demand for print books is shifting, with e-books capturing more market share every day. Public libraries must continue to change to meet the needs of the communities they serve. Just a decade ago, people needed access to computer terminals. In FY 2011, the ubiquity of smartphones and tablets has shifted these needs to broadband access and e-books. Despite all of these changes, public libraries have remained uniquely positioned to meet the public's information needs for years to come.

In addition to keeping pace with changes in culture and technology, libraries continue to address a core set of informal learning functions in their communities. Public libraries promote reading, provide access to information, and serve as anchors for their communities. Libraries are the first community institutions to provide a child with learning resources, the first and largest homework help center in the community, and often first responders in times of personal crisis or natural disasters, providing a safe place and access to government resources. Libraries deliver access to information and bridge the digital divide. By helping people gain skills and find jobs, they serve as an economic engine. In a world where there are multiple demands on the public attention, from movies and video games to social networking, the library serves as a dynamic community center where people can gather together and discover new things about the world in which they live.

Across the nation, public libraries are important community-based institutions that provide valuable resources and services to the public. In fiscal year 2011 (FY 2011), there were 8,956 public libraries in the United States\(^1\) (Figure 1), more public libraries than there are in any other country in the world. Public libraries provided access to information and resources through 17,110 branches and bookmobiles. Collectively, they served most Americans, with 299.9 million people living within a library service area, or 95.3 percent of the US population. This translates to approximately 3.0 public libraries and 5.7 outlets for every 100,000 people.

Public libraries are found in almost every community across the country. Almost half of the public libraries in the United States (46.8 percent) are located in rural areas. In FY 2011, there were 483 public libraries in cities, 2,058 in suburban areas, 2,225 in towns, and 4,190 in rural areas. Most public libraries (76.6 percent) served a population area of fewer than 25,000\(^2\). Only 6.1 percent of libraries had a service area of 100,000 people or more.

In this analysis, we looked at public libraries as a group and as individual entities. First, we described several measures of library use and investment in aggregated form, including how these measures have changed over time. After the measures were described, we examined the relationship between investments and use. To do this, we used multilevel growth modeling, which estimates patterns in the relationships between measures of public library investment and use.

There are many indicators for the use of public library resources and services. In this report, we focused on four metrics of library use: visitation, circulation, program attendance, and use of public-access computers. For public library investments, we have examined revenue and expenditures. In addition, we have included services and resources, which show more specifically how expenditures have been directed toward meeting community needs. The resources reported here parallel the indicators of use: staff size, collection size, number of programs, and number of public-access computers. Each of these—use and investments alike—are described in aggregate to provide a national estimate, in order to answer how many visits there were to public libraries across the U.S. We also provided information about how much these estimates have changed from previous years.

### Public Library Use

#### Visits

In FY 2011, there were 1.52 billion visits to public libraries across the United States—the equivalent of over 4.2 million daily visits! Although this is a 10-year increase of 23.0 percent, recent years have seen a decrease in physical visitation. In-person visitation to public libraries has experienced a 2-year decrease of 3.9 percent the first decline in 10 years. When looking at current visitation patterns, it is important to interpret with caution. Although the PLS collects data on in-person visits to public libraries, virtual visitation is

---

\(^1\) Data reported here are based on values reported from the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data from the outlying territories are available in the PLS data file.

\(^2\) For this report, the categorization of public libraries by size used the legal service area population (POLPU). In order to calculate aggregated statistics, such as visitation per capita, the unduplicated population of the legal service area (POLPU.U) was used to prevent double counting across libraries which might have overlapping service areas. When using the unduplicated population to classify library size, 77.1 percent of libraries served fewer than 25,000 people.
not included. Like retailers and other businesses, public libraries are meeting the demands of their users by increasing their virtual resources and services.\(^3\)

**Circulation**

Public libraries have varied collections they share with the public, including print books, audio books, DVDs, and e-books. Circulation is the combined number of materials that are checked out for use. Public libraries circulated 2.44 billion materials in FY 2011, one-third of which (34.5 percent) were children's materials. This represents a 10-year increase of 29.0 percent. There were 1.6 materials circulated for each visit.


**Program Attendance**

Libraries also serve as learning spaces in their local communities, where people come together for a variety of activities. People go to public libraries for computer training, homework help, speaker series, story hour, and more. There were over 89.0 million attendees\(^4\) who participated in library programs in FY 2011, an 8-year increase of 32.3 percent.\(^5\) Most attendees (70.0 percent) who participated in a library program were there for children’s programming. Per capita attendance has increased by 24.7 percent since FY 2004, with 296.8 attendees per 1,000 people. Aggregated across all public libraries, average attendance was 23.4 attendees per program.\(^6\)

\(^4\) The number of attendees is not an accounting of individual people, but rather may include multiple incidences of people who participated in more than one program

\(^5\) The PLS first collected data on total number of programs and attendance at all public library programs in FY 2004.

\(^6\) This is based on over 3.8 million programs offered across all libraries.
Public-Access Internet Computer Use Sessions
Access to the Internet is one of the many valuable resources public libraries provide. The PLS provides a metric for the use of this resource: the number of uses (sessions) of public-access Internet computers. Across all libraries, there were 341.5 million uses of public-access computers at public libraries in FY 2011, a decrease of 7.2 percent since FY 2006. There were 223.88 computer uses per 1,000 visits to the library, a decrease of 7.4 percent since FY 2006. Many libraries offer broadband, which can be accessed not only through library-provided computer resources, but also through patrons’ personal devices. Although the uses of public-access Internet computers may be decreasing, we will explore how to capture the many other ways people use public library wireless access in future surveys.

Investments in Public Libraries
Public Investments allow libraries to provide access to many popular services and resources. Financial investments are made by the public at the local, state, and federal levels. Public libraries direct these revenues to be spent in ways that support their local communities through services and resources. Although services may vary from place to place, most library expenditures are used to provide public resources including the collection of materials for loan, varied programming, digital access, and knowledgeable staff. The PLS collects key measures of investment in public libraries: revenue, operating expenditures, collection size, the number of programs, the number of public-access Internet computers, and staff size.

Revenue
The vast majority of public libraries receive part or all of their revenue from public sources, often including money from local, state, and federal government. In FY 2011, the public invested over $11.4 billion in public libraries, a 10-year increase of 8.5 percent after adjusting for inflation (Figure 2). Most revenue (84.8 percent) comes from local government, with smaller portions originating from state (7.5 percent) and federal (0.5 percent) government. This money was used to build collections, including books and e-books; to deliver programming to adults, teens, and children; and to provide Internet-accessible public-access computers. In addition to these resources, revenues for public libraries support the library workforce, including librarians, who connect people with critical information, support research skills, and develop rich programming to meet community needs. Revenue streams to public libraries have decreased since the recession, experiencing a 3.8 percent decrease since FY 2008. The largest decreases have been seen in state sources of revenue, which exhibited a 3-year decrease of 16.4 percent.

Operating Expenditures
Whereas revenue describes the sources of public library funding, operating expenditures show how libraries allocate these funds towards resources and services in order to meet the needs of their communities. Public libraries spent $10.74 billion in operating expenditures in FY 2011, a 10-year increase of 9.2 percent after adjusting for inflation. Like revenues, expenditures experienced a post-recessionary decline, showing a 3.9 percent decrease from FY 2008. The bulk of public library expenditures (67.0 percent) went to support the workforce through salaries and benefits. This percentage has remained relatively stable, with a three-year change of 1.9 percent. Expenditures on electronic materials were $174.9 million, an increase of 68.0 percent since FY 2003. Electronic materials accounted for 14.3 percent of expenditures on library collections in FY 2011.

Public Library Resources
Collections – Number of Items
Librarians and other library staff develop the collections of materials at public libraries to meet the information needs of the people in their communities. Public library collections include both physical and digital materials—print books, e-books, CDs, and DVDs. Across material types—print and downloadable—public libraries had 948.9 million items available for public use, an increase of 12.3 percent since FY 2002. Although most of these items (83.4 percent) are print materials, and in particular, books, public libraries have seen decreases each year in the proportion of the overall collection that their print material holdings comprise. In FY 2011, libraries had 35.0 million e-books available to lend, a one-year increase of 89.4 percent. E-books comprised 3.7 percent of the total collection in FY 2011.

---

7 All financial trends reported are adjusted for inflation using a GDP deflator. For more information, see the Technical Notes in the Appendix.
8 Financial analysis of State Library Administrative Agencies shows a decline in state funding. For more information, see the Technical Notes in the Appendix.
9 For this metric, we have combined print materials, which includes books, e-books, audio (physical and downloadable) and video (physical and downloadable).
Number of Public Programs
Public libraries provide opportunities for learning experiences that inspire people throughout their lifetime. Programs vary from story time for young children to after-school homework support and maker spaces for teens and young adults, to digital literacy and job training for adults. Libraries offered 3.81 million programs in FY 2011, an increase of 46.7 percent since FY 2004. Of all library programming, 60.5 percent was geared toward children and 8.8 percent toward young adults. There were 12.7 programs offered for every 1,000 people, an 8-year increase of 38.3 percent.

A core function of public libraries is to make available the resources needed to ensure open access to information and ideas. In the 21st century, public libraries accomplish this by providing public access to computers and the Internet, serving as technology access points for their communities. Public libraries provided 261,413 public-access Internet computers, a 10-year increase of 86.2 percent. Per capita, libraries provide 4.4 computers per 1,000 people.

Number of Full-Time Equivalent Staff
Although library materials and computers are valuable resources, one of the most important assets found in public libraries is the knowledgeable library workforce. Public library services were supported by 137,103 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees on staff in FY 2011, one-third of whom held the position of librarian. These staff members supported library services at all levels and worked in a wide variety of positions, such as library paraprofessionals who serve as clerks and technicians, as well as employees who support library operations in maintenance, security, IT, and administration. The recession has had a negative impact on the public library workforce. Public library staff has decreased by 5.5 percent since FY 2008; the number of librarians fell by 2.5 percent during the same period.

Summary of National-level Estimates of Public Library Use and Investments
Although research has shown increases in public library use over the past 10 years, in the past few years, there
has been evidence of decreases in common metrics such as physical visitation. Investments in public libraries have shown concomitant decreases, particularly since the recession in 2008. Decreases in revenue, most significantly at the state level, have been accompanied by less pronounced decreases in resources and services. In recent years, libraries have found ways to do more with less, continuing to provide valuable services to the community in the face of shrinking budgets.10

We have seen changes over time for these metrics, but we have not yet examined how these different measures relate to one another. Specifically, we do not know how changes in resources affect changes in use. What are the critical elements of public library resources that drive use? Do resources and use fluctuate in the same manner? Are resources interdependent? Although there is widespread belief that resource investment affects use, we know of no other analysis that has explicitly examined this in an empirical manner using existing data. The analysis in this report serves to fill that gap. To address these questions, we need a different kind of analysis to explore these relationships. In this report, we have used multilevel modeling to identify the significant predictors that affect the growth or decline in public library use over time.

The Effect of Investment on Public Library Use

Although it is valuable to look at the percent of change in public library use, as we do in the descriptive information above and in the public library indicators in Part Two of this report, the analysis that follows identifies the factors that influence the growth or decline in use over time. For these analyses, we examined the effect of public investment in libraries and the resources provided by public libraries on the use by patrons.11

We tested the model of the effect of investment on use (Figure 3). To do this, we estimated four multilevel growth models, one for each of the metrics of use described above: visitation, circulation, program attendance, and computer use. For each model, we determined which measures of public library investments are significant predictors of use.

For the analysis, we no longer focus on the aggregated estimate of the national picture, but rather examine the relationship of investments on use for individual libraries. For each library, we estimated a separate trajectory of how use has changed over time. Then we examined how different investments relate to changes in use at the level of the individual library. For example, although visitation has shown an overall increase with a recent decrease at the aggregate level, this pattern may be different for different libraries. Thus, some libraries may have experienced decreases prior to the recession, while other libraries have seen no decline and continue to report increasing visitation numbers. In other words, what happens at the national level, aggregated across all libraries, may obscure the experience of individual libraries throughout the nation. Multilevel growth modeling provides a method for modeling the change that occurs for each library, thereby capturing the variation of library use.

We focused on four key metrics of public library use: physical visitation to public libraries, circulation of materials, program attendance, and uses of public-access computers. We also focused on the effect of specific investments on use, including revenue, the number of books and other print materials available for use, the number of e-books available, the total number of programs offered, the number of publicly-available Internet computers, and the number of staff12 at the library.

This is the first analysis that shows a direct relationship between library investment and use. It also shows that this relationship persists over time. Findings include:

- Increases in book and e-book volume, programs, public-access computers, and staffing were associated with increased levels of visitation.
- Increases in collections and programs were related to increases in circulation.
- Increases in the number of public-access Internet computers were related to increases in computer use.
- Increases in programs and staffing were related to higher levels of program attendance.

---


11 We used multilevel models to analyze trends and relationships between public library investments and use. The level of significance for fixed and random effects was set at α = .01. For the public library use we examined: visitation, circulation, program attendance, and uses of public access computers. More information on these models, including the estimates for each model and an explanation of the technique, can be found in Appendix C.

12 All numbers referring to staff, including number of staff and librarians, are based on full-time equivalent (FTE). One FTE is based on a 40-hour work week. For example, if 2 people each work 20-hour per week, this is equivalent to 1.0 FTE.
Visitation

One of the strongest indicators of the use of public libraries is visitation. The Public Libraries Survey (PLS) measures visitation as a count of the total number of people who physically entered a library during a given year. In FY 2011, there were 1.52 billion visits to public libraries. Although this is a 10-year increase of 23.0 percent, recent years have seen a decrease in physical visitation. After a peak in FY 2008, there has been a significant decline in physical visitation to public libraries.

To examine the relationship of investments on visitation, we tested eight different investments as predictors: revenue, book volume, e-book volume, number of public-access Internet computers, number of programs offered, number of staff FTEs, expenditures on electronic materials, and hours open. In addition, we also examined the effect of time—not only how visitation changed over time, but also how the relationship of the investments on visitation changed. In addition to time, all eight investment metrics were significantly related to public library visitation.

Although the post-recessionary downturn in visitation was significant, much of this change can be explained by the changes in libraries' resources and investments. With the exception of expenditures on electronic materials, all of the library investments examined had a positive effect on visitation. While some resources—public-access computers, e-books, and the number of programs—have continued to increase in availability, other critical resources, such as staffing and revenue, have declined. For example, for each additional full-time position (FTE) on staff, a library will see, on average, a 3371.8 increase in visits for any given year. Similarly, with each decrease in staff, there was a decrease of the same magnitude in visitation. Like visitation, each of these metrics of investment changes over time. Although the specific relationship may change for individual libraries, on average, these positive effects on library visitation persist across time.

In contrast to other investments, the amount libraries spent on electronic materials was a significant negative predictor, indicating that the more a library spent on electronic materials, such as e-books, the lower the physical visitation. It is important to remember that this is a measure of physical visitation. With the increased proliferation of digital media and devices, more and more people are beginning to visit their public libraries not only in person, but also virtually. As libraries invest more money in building their electronic collections, patrons are able to complete whole transactions—from finding, checking out, and returning an e-book to paying overdue fines, without setting foot in a physical building. By serving the public need for increased access to digital materials, libraries may see a decrease in physical visitation that does not fully reflect the many different ways patrons use library services. Because the PLS does not collect information on virtual visitation, we cannot explore this possible explanation with the current data.

Circulation

Circulation is another important metric for public library usage. In the PLS, circulation measures the total number of materials of all formats that have been checked out for use outside the library. In FY 2011, libraries circulated 2.4 billion materials, 34.5 percent of which were children's materials. There was a significant increase in circulation at public libraries over the past 10 years.

To examine the effect of investments on circulation, we tested seven predictors: visitation, revenue, book volume, e-book volume, the number of public-access Internet computers, the number of programs offered, and the number of staff. We also examined how circulation changed over time.

Circulation was positively related to all seven of the predictors examined. As the investment in each of these resources increased, so did circulation. For every 100 e-books available, 345 additional items circulated. Program offerings also had a positive effect. For each additional program offered, there was an increase of 61.2 items circulated.
Uses of Public-Access Computers

Internet computer access is one of the many valuable resources public libraries provide. The PLS provides a metric for the use of this specific resource: the number of uses of public-access Internet computers. Across all libraries, there were 341.5 million uses of public-access computers at public libraries in FY 2011, a decrease of 7.2 percent since FY 2006.\(^\text{14}\) Adjusting separately for service population and visitation, public libraries reported 1.1 PC uses per capita and 223.9 PC uses per 1,000 visits.

For use of public-access Internet computers, in addition to change over time, we examined the effect of five predictors: visitation, revenue, the number of public-access Internet computers, the number of programs offered, and the number of staff. Only three of the investment predictors were significantly related to public-access Internet computer use.

Use of public-access Internet computers at public libraries was predicted by the number of public-access Internet computers, library visits, and total number of library staff. As each of these investments increased, so did PC usage. Similarly, as these resources decreased, so did computer use. It is critical to keep in mind the difference between the aggregated national estimate, which is decreasing, and the relationships that are being examined in a multilevel model. Although the national estimate is decreasing, in some libraries the use of public-access Internet computers has been increasing. Multilevel modeling allows us not only to see and explicitly examine these differences across libraries, but also shows how these differences in usage trends are related to resource investments.

Use of public-access computers implies that people are at the library to use them, which means that visitation is a necessary predictor of computer use. For every 100 visitors, there was a 13.6 increase in computer uses. Similarly, the number of computers is also positively related to their use—as the availability increases, so does their use. For every additional public-access Internet computer terminal available, there was an increase of 474 uses. As digital information resources have increased and computing devices have become ubiquitous, library professionals have kept pace. People come to public libraries not only to use computers, but to learn more about how to use their devices and to improve their information search skills. For each FTE staff member, there was a 374 user session increase in computer use.

As access to these resources change over time, so does their use. Even though the number of user sessions has been decreasing in many libraries, the positive relationship between resources and use is still present. Furthermore, even as smartphones and other portable digital devices proliferate, increased availability of public-access computers leads to increased use.

Attendance at Library Programs

Public libraries offer a wide variety of programs for audiences of all ages. Library programs include digital literacy classes, tax assistance, parenting workshops, career coaching, e-book workshops and more. These programs may be taught by library staff, local volunteers, or by staff from local community organizations or public agencies. In FY 2011, public libraries offered 3.8 million programs, or 10,400 programs a day, every day of the year. This figure represents a 7-year increase of 46.7 percent. There were 89.0 million attendees at library programs in FY 2011, an increase of 32.3 percent since FY 2004. Most (60.5 percent) of these programs, such as summer reading and afterschool programs were targeted to children.

Attendance at library programs was examined for change over the eight years for which we have data, FY 2004 to 2011. In addition to the change over time, we examined four investments as predictors of attendance: revenue, number of programs offered, number of public-access Internet computers, and number of staff. All of the predictors examined were significant.

Programs continue to be a popular service of public libraries, with a significant increase in program attendance over time. The more programs a library offered, the more attendees came to those programs. For every additional program, there was an average increase of 10 attendees. Increases in other resource investments—computers and staffing—also predicted an increase in program attendance. Computer-based classes are one of many programs offered at libraries. For each additional computer, there was an increase in program attendance of 52.4 people. Programs are often staff-intensive investments, and the model suggests that they are a good investment. Beyond the average attendance, each additional staff person is related to an increase of 95.2 in program attendance.

\(^{14}\) FY 2006 was the first year this metric was collected on the PLS.
Summary
In this section, we examined whether the level of investments affected the use of public library services and resources. Using multilevel growth models, we examined not only whether there is an effect of investment on use, but also whether this relationship persists over time. For each of the four metrics of public library use—visitation, circulation, uses of public-access computers, and program attendance—we found that for most investments there was a positive effect.

Revenue was a positive predictor for visitation, circulation, and program attendance. As revenue increases, so do these metrics of use. However, in recent years we have seen the converse: cuts in revenue have led to decreases in visitation, circulation, and attendance. Although revenue is an important piece of the puzzle, it is by no means the only investment that explains changes in library use. Visitation is affected by the many resources that illustrate how people use the library—collections, programs, and Internet access. Despite shrinking budgets, these resources continue to drive traffic to public libraries.

Conclusion
Over the past 10 years, use of public libraries has increased. Visitations has increased overall, even though recent years have shown a decrease in physical visits. Circulation and program attendance have also increased. During this time, we have also seen 10-year increases in many library investments, including revenue, collection size, the number of public-access computers, and the number of programs. However, each of these investments has experienced decreases in recent years—particularly revenue.

More importantly, this report provides empirical evidence of the strong relationship between the investments made in public libraries and the use of public library resources and services. We examined not only how public library use has changed over the past 10 years, but how it changed in relation to changes in investments in public libraries over the same time. We found that as investments, such as revenue, staffing, and programs, increased, so did critical use measures, such as visitation and circulation. In the same way, as investments were reduced, mostly in reaction to post-recessionary budgetary reductions, we saw decreases in library use. Another important finding is that even though investments might have declined, any decreases in use did not drop by the same magnitude.

People continue to use their local public libraries—for access to books and information and for gathering as a community.

This is the first analysis that shows the direct relationship between investment and use. For example, holding constant the effects of time and revenue, resources such as collections and programs have a positive effect on library visitation. Furthermore, it shows that this relationship of investment on use persists over time. Because we were able to employ advanced analytic techniques, we could see each of these relationships as they changed over time, and to demonstrate this relationship empirically.

As with any analysis, there are limitations. First, although the PLS is a rich dataset of detailed information about all public libraries for 20 years, there are some services that are not captured with the current survey. In particular, there is not a data element that captures e-visitation. Technology has changed, providing many opportunities. Public libraries have kept pace with these changes, providing access to more e-books and databases to meet the demand of the public. In today's digital world, it is possible to check out an e-book from the local public library all 'rom the comfort of your own home. Previously, this would have required a physical visit. This creates a limitation for the PLS because, given the current data, we cannot tell whether the decline in physical visitation is a true decline or if it is the direct result of increased online and digital services.

A second limitation of this analysis is that it focuses solely on the PLS data. Much more could be learned by incorporating other data, such as information on population demographics, poverty, and community characteristics. The PLS is particularly amenable to this kind of analysis. Since FY 2006, the datasets have been geocoded, providing information on latitude and longitude, as well as county identifiers. The merging of other data with the richness of the PLS would open doors to explore questions about the level of library resources as a function of target populations or community need. As much as it is a limitation here, it also presents a ripe opportunity for others in the field.

This report provides 13 indicators, each providing a snapshot of the status of public libraries on use and investments. The national level analysis echoes the findings of the public library indicators. Although there have been declines in recent years, particularly since the recession, these indicators tell a consistent story—people are still using public libraries. Furthermore,
the indicators dig a little deeper, looking at variability based on state, population, or geographic differences across libraries.

It is clear is that the public still has a high demand for the resources and services provided by their local public libraries. Taken together, the measures of public library use have shown an increased demand for library services over the past 10 years. Furthermore, these analyses elucidate the nature of the relationship between the investments made in public libraries and their use. As the public, through tax dollars and donations, continues to invest in the resources which public libraries make available, such as the public-access computers, program offerings, and library staff, we see a pattern of continued use of these valuable services. Furthermore, it seems critical that the investment continues not only with concrete resources, such as print materials and computer terminals, but in addressing the strong need for human resources provided by the highly-trained library workforce.
Have you built an engaged board?

Tenting Trustees

I HAVE A THEORY THAT TOO MANY LIBRARY TRUSTEES are underutilized in their board work. In far too many libraries, fear of meddling and of losing control have meant that directors don’t take advantage of the expertise and talent on their Board of Trustees. Where that is true, library leaders are squandering critical capacity and losing a potent edge in the key task of connecting to the community.

There is excellent board development happening in many libraries, but I have also seen politics trump proactive leadership. This can take place anywhere on a continuum from worst case to bad enough to unfortunate. In the worst, but relatively rare, case, an embattled board works purposefully against a director. Bad enough, but perhaps more pervasive, more subtle power struggles undermine a director’s authority or limit how deeply the director pulls the board into the strategic thinking involved in running a library. Unfortunately, and possibly most pernicious, the board walks through the process, rubber-stamping decisions and remaining relatively uninformed about the library—and that’s okay with the director. If any of this sounds like your board, take action to remedy the situation.

Working with a board can be a chore, or it can be an evolving collaboration. Trustees are often kept at arm’s length, out of the loop, and dealt with as another management problem, not as allies in the delivery of library service. Great things can happen when directors actively involve a diverse range of board members in solving problems and guide them in how to apply their special skills to delivering on the library mission. This is the goal of many directors I have spoken with, and many spend a great deal of time nurturing board members, attuning them to the fundamentals of the library, and educating them about the finer points of the responsibility of governance. That is hard work, requiring savvy and its own skill set. It also requires vision to keep seeing where new people can fit into the library plan. Also, if the board is hampered by a political issue, infighting, or a director who dreads micromanaging more than she or he desires aid, it can be a tense dance to move toward a more productive environment.

For many libraries, the bulk of board work occurs outside the flow of daily library life, via periodic meetings punctuated by special events such as fundraisers or holiday festivities. But it shouldn’t be an afterthought. In a crisis, such as a budget battle, a book challenge, or even something as simple as bad press about a library service, an aligned board can bolster and even improve the outlook, while an unprepared board will be a drain on the director, if not a stumbling block. During active strategic development, such as master planning, a disconnected board can slow responsive change, while an informed and community-aware board can help drive the right transformations.

Trustees are, of course, a source of all types of mastery and social and financial contacts, and they are committed library supporters ready to assist with the myriad talents they bring from their lives beyond libraries. The standing tenet, that trustees set policy and directors manage operations, holds—it is a critical balance in the governance of the library. Experienced library directors know this is most often observed in the breach, where policies and practice are frequently the product of shared cooperative effort by trustees and librarians to solve problems and improve service.

I consider board members emissaries of the library in the community and think they should bear issues and think about where the library could fit into a solution. They are also representatives of the community, bringing perspective and, one hopes, a diversity of voices back to the library. There should be a high expectation of their service.

As a library board member myself, at the Floyd Memorial Library in Greenport, NY, I think every player has a role in creating a better board—even if I sometimes fall short of my own goals.

Trustees, consider yourself a library ambassador when you are out in the community. Be prepared to speak knowledgeably about the library in informal settings. Understand the budget. Raise problems to solve and support innovation when needed.

Directors, trustees don’t want your job, but they do want a job. They should extend your strategic thinking. If the library’s challenges are shared with trustees, these individuals will engage in the work of meeting them. Don’t waste these valuable allies.

Rebecca T. Miller, Editor-in-Chief
rmiller@mediasourceinc.com
Radio frequency identification (RFID) systems offer libraries many ways to enhance productivity, ranging from self-check solutions to automated materials handling systems. RFID tags, which include a tiny chip for processing and storing information and an antenna for communicating with the readers in self-check stations, security gates, staff workstations, and other equipment, are a core component of any RFID system. Collectively, these tags are also one of the most expensive components of such a system, since individual tags must be placed on all circulating items when converting a collection from barcode readers. However, prices for RFID tags have fallen significantly in recent years, with basic tags currently retailing for about 30¢ to 40¢ each, down from 60¢ to 80¢ per tag a decade ago. Many distributors will also negotiate volume discounts for large orders, such as bulk buys made during the initial installation of a system.

Virtually all RFID tags used on books and other library materials share several characteristics. Passive, nonbattery-powered RFID tags are generally manufactured to communicate with the readers on three different radio wave frequencies. Low frequency, 128 KHz tags must be placed within six inches of a reader to work. High frequency, 13.56 MHz tags can be read from a distance of up to three feet. And ultrahigh frequency, 915 MHz tags can be read as far away as 20 feet. Library suppliers have uniformly settled on high frequency 13.56 MHz tags—which are also used in many retail applications—out of practicality. Three feet offers sufficient range for a system to process multiple items at once at a single checkout station, where a low frequency system would require individual item processing, and an ultrahigh frequency system might read tags on nearby shelves or book carts while a patron or librarian was attempting to check materials in or out.

Library tags are also described as "ISO compliant" or as ISO RFID tags. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an independent agency that develops voluntary standards for a variety of industrial applications, including business technology. ISO 15693 defines the minimal requirements for data exchange between a 13.56 MHz reader and tag. Many suppliers also describe their tags as ISO 18000 or ISO 18000-3 compliant, which refers to a more recent, broader set of standards covering a large range of devices, including 13.56 MHz readers and tags.

ISO-compliant tags also incorporate a feature called the application family identifier (AFI). This is a register on the tag that allows manufacturers to categorize tags for different applications and tailor security functions so that a tag in a library book won’t set off an RFID security gate in a retail store, for example.

Finally, most tags are compatible with ISO 28560, a set of data elements and recommended guidelines developed specifically for libraries and released in 2011. These standards are intended to facilitate interoperability between different libraries and equipment from different vendors.
**PRODUCT: 2X*GEN RFID Tags**
**COMPANY:** EnvisionWare, Duluth, GA

EnvisionWare's line of ISO-compliant 2X*GEN RFID labels are designed to have a 20–30 percent longer read distance than standard passive, high frequency RFID tags. This adds several inches to the distance at which their tags can communicate with RFID self-check stations, return chutes, RFID security gates, and other RFID readers. The company claims that this enhanced read distance offers several benefits, including better performance than standard tags when used with metallic item covers and improved detection at security gates.

EnvisionWare will customize orders on request, preprinting a message or logo in black and white or color. Customized orders are generally delivered in less than 30 days.

**PRODUCT: smartlabel**
**COMPANY:** Bibliotheca, Norcross, GA

Bibliotheca offers six different RFID labels under its smartlabel brand, with its square smartlabel 100, 110, and 200 lines tailored to books and magazines, and its round smartlabel 300, 310, and 320 lines designed for CDs, DVDs, and Blu-ray discs. (Separately, Bibliotheca also offers a line of electromagnetic security strips under the smartlabel brand.) All smartlabel RFID tags are ISO compliant, feature 1,024 bits of memory, and are reprogrammable for up to 100,000 read/write cycles.

**PRODUCT: 3M ISO RFID Tags**
**COMPANY:** 3M Library Systems, St. Paul

3M is the largest supplier of RFID technology to U.S. libraries and offers 50 x 50 mm and 49 x 81 mm ISO-compliant RFID tags for books and magazines, as well as StingRay Full Disc and CD-B hub tags for DVDs and CDs. The StingRay line works with RFID-based security systems as well as self-check and staff workstations, while the smaller hub tags are intended as a productivity solution and do not include security gate functionality. The tags have a 1,024-bit storage memory and feature an antenna design with enhanced read range. 3M also offers preprogramming and custom printing options for its tags, ranging from black-and-white logos to four-color photos.

**PRODUCT: Lib-Chip**
**COMPANY:** Libramation, Edmonton, Alta.

Alberta-based Libramation develops RFID solutions for a number of industrial applications, including heavy equipment, warehousing, and the oil and gas industries, as well as a full suite of self-check, security, media bank, automated lending, and circulation desk equipment for libraries. Their Lib-Chip RFID labels are available with two different microchip setups. The ICode SLIX chip features a 1,024-bit storage memory, while the ICode SLIX-L chip offers a 512-bit memory with security features including password protection and a privacy mode. The nonproprietary, ISO-compliant labels are reprogrammable for up to 100,000 read/write cycles.
THE WEST JORDAN LIBRARY, UT, is the new central headquarters for the Salt Lake County Library (SLCL) system. You might think a building of more than 70,000 square feet would not have to worry about efficient ways to make space do double, or even triple, duty. But when it houses 20,000 square feet of administration, management support, and information technology and another 20,000 square feet of library proper including room for 150,000 titles, it makes sense that the 7,100 square foot community room is designed to serve multiple functions.

Yet where a multipurpose room often ends up being a blank space with few if any notable features, at least not built-in ones, SLCL, MHTN Architects, and builders Jacobsen Construction have gone another route.

**Transforming in real time**

With an identity of its own, as the Viridian Event Center, the community event space is far from an afterthought. It even has its own website in addition to the library’s, at www.viridiancenter.org. It is designed to serve not just the local surrounding but the whole town as part of its civic campus, extending and enhancing the library experience.

The main room encompasses seating that retracts to free the floor for dances, martial arts classes, markets or festivals, and other activities. But don’t picture the uncomfortable tailbones that can accompany watching high school athletics; these bleachers, from the Hussey Seating Company, took up $90,000 of the project’s total $14 million budget and offer full theater seats. The space can accommodate up to 1,000 people, lecture style, or 400–500 at banquet tables. A pair of screens drop down for movie viewing, and a portable stage can be configured in a variety of ways. A nearby catering kitchen features power outlets suspended from the ceiling for flexibility ease of use.

Removable walls allow conversion into three separate rooms, with high-performance barriers absorbing enough sound to locate noisy events adjacent to quiet ones. They “work quite well—and we have distributed sound throughout the facility, which helps modulates the sound,” Director Jim Cooper tells LJ. “Although, I’ve gotta say, when we host a Battle of the Bands, it’s wise not to schedule anything else.”

A huge, garage-style bifold glazed door opens to connect the rooms to a fourth space: a 12,000 square foot outdoor amphitheater that seats another 300 people. This space provides a warm-weather alternative and connects the library to the neighboring park and rodeo. The aircraft hangar door was locally manufactured and not broken out as a separate budget line, but Cooper estimates it cost about $100,000. When LJ’s Rebecca Miller saw the space part of a Design Institute tour, music played as the door was opened to highlight the occasion as an event. The resulting indoor-outdoor venue links performances and presentations during the largest seasonal activities, like the Annual Summer Reading Kick-Off.

Above the outdoor seating, a canopy of photovoltaic panels affords substantial shade while generating electricity and contains a speaker system for broadcasting music or amplified spoken words. The structure also, as it turns out, provides a home for nesting ravens, which the library staff have named Nevermore and Lenore.

**Deep green**

The center’s name, Veridian, is designed to evoke a deep shade of green. Fittingly, the building’s connection to nature isn’t limited to the patron experience but continues into the behind-the-scenes systems. The building is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certified. To demonstrate its sustainability, the building’s energy production, consumption, weather, and many other parameters can be viewed at the library’s online smart building kiosk at ow.ly/x0TMg, including real-time solar energy output from the photovoltaic shades.

Since it opened in June 2012, the event space has hosted signings, screenings, symphonies, and even classes on how not to date a jerk. The event center is also available for weddings, graduations, etc., which generates revenue for the library and exposes new users to all that a modern library is designed to offer.

_Meredith Schwartz is Senior Editor, News and Features, LJ_
Gates Foundation Exits Library Granting

Departure will roll out over coming years

On May 7, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation took much of the world by surprise with its announcement that the massive charitable organization would stop offering grants and support to libraries worldwide in the next few years. Libraries have long been a pillar of the foundation's strategy, and while the funding will be missed, librarians are already looking ahead at how to preserve the work that's been done.

"The foundation has decided to conclude our work in Global Libraries over the next three to five years," wrote Deborah Jacobs, director of the Gates Foundation's Global Libraries Initiative and LJ's 1994 Librarian of the Year, in a blog post.

What is driving the decision? Many of the goals that led the foundation to focus on libraries in the first place, such as getting computer resources into libraries around the country and making sure patrons can use them to access the Internet, have been largely accomplished. Speaking to LJ about the foundation's decisions to decouple from libraries, Jacobs drew a comparison between the foundation's investments and the thousands of libraries funded by grants from Andrew Carnegie a century ago.

"I was a little surprised and a little disappointed, but it didn't seem totally shocking to me," said Ann Joslin, Idaho State Librarian and president, Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA). She compared the foundation's departure from the library ecosystem to its work in areas like public health, predicting that once advances have been made in the future in the fight against malaria, the foundation will look to reinvest elsewhere the money it's spending to support that research.

Some librarians saw the foundation's departure as an opportunity for librarians to step up. "In my view, the engagement that the Gates Foundation has had in the library field globally leaves us with the capacity and the confidence to go forward and do what comes next," Chrystie Hill, community director at Webluncheon and a 2007 LJ Mover & Shaker, told LJ. Indeed, much of the foundation's work in recent years has centered on training librarians to be advocates for the industry and developing tools like the Impact Survey to help libraries quantify the ways in which they serve their community.

"Librarians have to make a decision that they're not going to wait for someone else to do things for them," Jacobs said. "The tools are out there; we have to pick them up."

Of course, this won't be an easy pill for the field to swallow. According to its annual giving snapshot, in 2011, the Gates Foundation awarded just over $12 million in grants to libraries in the United States and nearly $39 million to libraries abroad. While individual donations to U.S. libraries are mostly a thing of the past, Gates Foundation grants recently took a more satellite view of the industry.

Idaho's Joslin was sanguine about the chances of finding new funders to fill those gaps. "The public library ecosystem is certainly at a place where we're at a higher visibility than we've been in a while," she said. "We're getting more recognition for our services and more recog-
dition that those services are important to local communities, so I’m hopeful.”

Jacobs noted that making sure the knowledgebase and training curricula the foundation has funded remain accessible for future generations of librarians and preserving advocacy tools such as the Impact Survey and EDGE Initiative will be a focus during the coming transition.—Ian Chant

**public**

**NYPL Partners with Coursera**

Pairing aims to teach both more about MOOCs

In a move that will help a leading urban library system begin defining its role in the burgeoning field of massive open online courses (MOOCs), the New York Public Library (NYPL) on April 30 announced a partnership with MOOC provider Coursera. Beginning this summer, NYPL will support a selection of Coursera’s online curricula by hosting weekly in-person discussion groups at several branches in the Bronx and Manhattan through Coursera’s Learning Hubs program. Neither organization is paying the other as part of the partnership, but NYPL officials note that sharing information regarding participation in these programs will benefit both parties.

“Online courses can be a boon to increasing learning, especially when students engage with each other, keep each other focused, and have access to advice and further options for study,” NYPL president Anthony Marx said in a statement to the press. “The library is proud to be joining this experiment by providing Coursera students with a place to gather, support each other and delve into the library for more information to help them persist and learn.”

“I think it’s a meaningful collaboration on both parts,” Luke Swarthout, NYPL director of adult education services, told LJ. “For us, it’s a way of experimenting with a different type of blended learning, with a real partner who can give us some feedback and even potentially give us a sense of whether these students are more likely to persist and complete a MOOC.”

NYPL and Coursera estimate that about 50,000 New Yorkers are already signed up for Coursera content. The library is still in the process of selecting the first round of classes it will support with discussion groups. Swarthout explained, “We are looking to find courses that have some broad appeal among New Yorkers and that are also consonant with the other work of the...
What’s Happening

- Pediatrics Group to Recommend Reading Aloud to Children From Birth
- School office professionals ask for a fair contract
- Peninsula schools float two funding measures
- Bond, levy vote for schools draws near
- Yes twice on Prop.1, 2 is best option for future
- Capital Bond and Levy Propositions
- If schools falter, then community falters
- School spending should be based on true needs
- Why Graham fire levy should pass
- Changes to school district boundaries on horizon
- Tacoma gets “C” in small biz friendliness
- More $$ coming for Pierce jobless
- Jobless rate fall, updated state forecast
- State unemployment lowest in six years
- Bond, levy passage is investment in students
- CPTC gets funding for aerospace programs
- CPTC announces first bachelor’s program
- Lewis County still a ‘distressed’ area
- New listings, pending home sales up slightly in Pierce Co.
In between dispensing advice on breast-feeding and immunizations, doctors will tell parents to read aloud to their infants from birth, under a new policy that the American Academy of Pediatrics will announce on Tuesday.

With the increased recognition that an important part of brain development occurs within the first three years of a child’s life, and that reading to children enhances vocabulary and other important communication skills, the group, which represents 62,000 pediatricians across the country, is asking its members to become powerful advocates for reading aloud, every time a baby visits the doctor.

“It should be there each time we touch bases with children,” said Dr. Pamela High, who wrote the new policy. It recommends that doctors tell parents they should be “reading together as a daily fun family activity” from infancy.

This is the first time the academy — which has issued recommendations on how long mothers should nurse their babies and advises parents to keep children away from screens until they are at least 2 — has officially weighed in on early literacy education.

While highly educated, ambitious parents who are already reading poetry and playing Mozart to their children in utero may not need this advice, research shows that many parents do not read to their children as often as researchers and educators think is crucial to the development of pre-literacy skills that help children succeed once they get to school.

Reading, as well as talking and singing, is viewed as important in increasing the number of words that children hear in the earliest years of their lives. Nearly two decades ago, an oft-cited study found that by age 3, the children of wealthier
professionals have heard words millions more times than have those of less educated, low-income parents, giving the children who have heard more words a distinct advantage in school. New research shows that these gaps emerge as early as 18 months.

According to a federal government survey of children’s health, 60 percent of American children from families with incomes at least 400 percent of the federal poverty threshold — $95,400 for a family of four — are read to daily from birth to 5 years of age, compared with around a third of children from families living below the poverty line, $23,850 for a family of four.

With parents of all income levels increasingly handing smartphones and tablets to babies, who learn how to swipe before they can turn a page, reading aloud may be fading into the background.

“The reality of today’s world is that we’re competing with portable digital media,” said Dr. Alanna Levine, a pediatrician in Orangeburg, N.Y. “So you really want to arm parents with tools and rationale behind it about why it’s important to stick to the basics of things like books.”

Reading aloud is also a way to pass the time for parents who find endless baby talk tiresome. “It’s an easy way of talking that doesn’t involve talking about the plants outside,” said Erin Autry Montgomery, a mother of a 6-month-old boy in Austin, Tex.

Low-income children are often exposed little to reading before entering formal child care settings. “We have had families who do not read to their children and where there are no books in the home,” said Elisabeth Bruzon, coordinator for the Fairfax, Va., chapter of Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, a nonprofit program that sends visitors to the homes of low- to moderate-income families with children ages 3 to 5.

The pediatricians’ group hopes that by encouraging parents to read often and early, they may help reduce academic disparities between wealthier and low-income children as well as between racial groups. “If we can get that first 1,000 days of life right,” said Dr. Dipesh Navsaria, an assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, “we’re really going to save a lot of trouble later on and have to do far less remediation.”

Dr. Navsaria is the medical director of the Wisconsin chapter of Reach Out and Read, a nonprofit literacy group that enlists about 20,000 pediatricians.
nationwide to give out books to low-income families. The group is working with Too Small to Fail, a joint effort between the nonprofit Next Generation and the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation that is aimed at closing the word gap.

At the annual Clinton Global Initiative America meeting in Denver on Tuesday, Hillary Rodham Clinton will announce that Scholastic, the children's book publisher, will donate 500,000 books to Reach Out and Read. Too Small to Fail is also developing materials to distribute to members of the American Academy of Pediatrics to help them emphasize the read-aloud message to parents.

A version of this article appears in print on June 24, 2014, on page A14 of the New York edition with the headline: Pediatrics Group to Recommend Reading Aloud to Children From Birth.
School office professionals ask for a fair contract
Group has been without a cost of living increase since 2007

Staff writer July 16, 2014

A group of more than 150 clerical office professionals in the Puyallup School District have been without a contract since Aug. 21, 2013.

Since last summer, the bargaining unit known as the Puyallup Association of Education Office Professionals has been in negotiation for a new contract with representatives of the district.

"We're in the middle of bargaining," said Laurie Koval, president of the association that is represented by the Public School Employees of Washington, SEIU 1948. "The district chose to go to mediation. We wanted, instead, to work it out with the district."

Since 2007, Koval said the office professionals had agreed under the contract that expired Aug. 21, 2013, to freeze step wage increases.

"We knew that the recession was an issue," she said.

But now Koval said she and her colleagues are asking the district to "show our value to the district."

Lee Thoren, the field representative from PSE, said within the bargaining unit there are between 75 to 80 positions over six different pay steps.

"Levels are based on complexities, responsibility and difficulty of the job," Thoren explained.

Pay across those six steps ranges from $14 to $23 per hour.

"What we're trying to do is get some catch-up for cost of living," Thoren said.

Within the Seattle-Tacoma area, the cost of living has increased since 2007, Thoren said.

"The state has not provided COLA for six years, so our people have not received any cost of living whatsoever," Thoren added.

Thoren explained the district requested mediation services from the Public Employees Relation Commission.

"Mediation can last over three days," Thoren said. "We really only have a handful of unresolved issues."

Outside of the request for a cost of living increase, other concerns regard leave benefits and stronger policies related to office professionals' responsibilities for delivering health services, the kind of risk involved and the training required.

The district acknowledges that gray area concerning health services, Thoren said, but what the bargaining unit is concerned with is the district's pay increase offers.

"Our folks are feeling that the district money offers are too low," Thoren said. "Our bargaining unit feels like they haven't received a fair offer."

Koval will start her eighth year this fall as a secretary at Zeiger Elementary School.

"I can't say enough good things about the district," Koval said.

7/28/2014
Koval and her colleagues are sometimes the first people a child new to school interacts with.

"I make that child feel comfortable if they're feeling apprehensive," Koval added.

Koval and many of the office professionals picketed outside the school administration office along North Meridan in downtown Puyallup in the early morning of July 7.

The group spoke their case to the school board that same morning.

"I said at the board meeting that we hope for a quick and a fair resolution," she said.

The bargaining unit hopes to receive a fair contract before the start of the school year, which is less than two months away.

Brian Fox, a spokesman for the school district, said the district is making a good faith effort to continue bargaining.

"We're happy with the move and looking forward to reaching an agreement with the public employees relation commission," Fox said.

Andrew Fickes: 253-552-7001 andrew.fickes@puyallupherald.com Twitter: @herald_andrew

FacebookTwitterGoogle PlusRedditE-mailPrint

Join The Conversation

The Puyallup Herald is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

Commenting FAQs | Terms of Service
The News Tribune

Peninsula schools float two funding measures

By Shelby Rowe

Staff writer July 18, 2014

Peninsula School District has two measures on the Aug. 5 ballot that are something of a Choose Your Own Adventure for voters.

Proposition No. 1 is a $60 million general obligation bond, and Proposition No. 2 is a $55.9 million capital projects and technology levy.

Voters will decide the propositions individually, but their fates are still tied. If both pass, the levy shrinks to just $2 million, giving the district a total of $62 million to spend.

Superintendent Chuck Cuzzetto said the propositions aim to answer overcrowding at elementary schools and pay for updating at Key Peninsula Middle School.

Citizens for Peninsula Schools, a campaign in favor of the propositions, is urging district residents to "vote yes twice" to revitalize the schools.

Opponents say that raising taxes should be the last option, not the first.

Absent a double defeat, the election will result in one of three scenarios. Each would deliver a different outcome for district upgrades and residents' property tax bills.

Scenario 1: Only the bond passes

Proposition 1 is a 20-year bond issue that needs a 60 percent majority to pass.

The bonds would cover building a new elementary school, tearing down and replacing Artondale Elementary School, upgrading and strengthening security throughout the district, replacing playfields, modernizing Key Peninsula Middle School and upgrading middle school science rooms.

The proposal is a response to the failure of a $50 million levy in 2013, said Leslie Harbaugh, a member of the Citizens for Peninsula Schools campaign and Gig Harbor resident.

Critics of that levy had charged that the accompanying tax rate would have been too high. They called for a rate of under a dollar, which the current bond proposal meets.

If passed, communities within the Peninsula School District boundaries would have an increased property tax of .92 cents per $1,000 of assessed property value and the owner of a $300,000 house would pay an additional $276 in property taxes per year.

District officials say the money is needed to answer rapid growth at the north end of Gig Harbor that has caused crowded classrooms at elementary schools. For example, Purdy Elementary was built for 578 students but had 689 students attending in the 2013-2014 academic year.

The district also is preparing for further expansion with 1,400 new homes under development in the area, Cuzzetto said. A committee is working to redraw the lines for neighborhood schools in an effort to relieve some of the overcrowding, he said.

Jerry Gibbs, a member of the Citizens for Responsible School Spending campaign, said he agrees that additional space is needed for the students, but that the district should first seek to redistribute students.
"Redistricting is the best solution to overcrowding, and it should be finished before voters decide to build a new school," he said.

District officials say the extra classrooms are needed and that Artondale is in need of replacement. The school was built in 1959 and has received four additions, a modernization and a deep cleaning in 2001 due to poor ventilation causing illness in students and teachers, according to district reports.

Upgrades for security are another priority and include buzzer systems, key cards and cameras that would allow for limited access into the school, Cuzzetto said.

"Our schools were originally built to be welcoming, not keep people out, but times have changed," he said.

The $1 million updates won't be enough to secure every building in the district, but it's a starting point, he said.

Randy Boss, who wrote the opposition statement for the Pierce County voter pamphlet, said he thinks the $25 million Artondale rebuild is unnecessary and that the district should solve the school's problems through renovations.

"If you look as a voter, it appears to me that the School Board is doing everything they can to expose the bad things in the district to outrage the voters and pass the bond," he said.

Boss also said the district should use its current budget money to upgrade security.

Cuzzetto said the school has a security budget and is using it to pay for security guards within the schools.

The district would use other bond proceeds to replace 10-year-old artificial playfields at Peninsula High School, Gig Harbor High School and Harbor Ridge Middle School, and to update science labs at its four middle schools.

Key Peninsula Middle School would also get upgrades, ranging from cosmetic fixes such as paint and flooring to major work on heating and fire suppression systems.

Currently, the school's water system draws from a nearby pond to put out fires. The district wants to replace it with a water tower or water line, Cuzzetto said.

Scenario 2: Only the levy passes

Proposition 2 closely resembles Prop. 1 with a few key differences.

The $55.9 million levy would raise property tax rates $1.19 per $1,000 of assessed value for 5 years. A homeowner with a $300,000 house would pay an additional $357 a year.

Like Prop. 1, the levy would buy a new school, replacement of Artondale, upgrades for playfields and school security. It also would provide $2 million to put more computers in classrooms.

What it wouldn't do is make any upgrades to Key Peninsula Middle School beyond the new fire suppression system.

Levy opponents say taxpayers, especially older residents, can't afford to shoulder additional costs. A big concern is keeping property taxes low to allow the housing market to remain competitive, said Gibbs of Citizens for Responsible School Spending.

"Before we levy new taxes on anything for anyone, we need to make sure that every penny is being spent wisely," he said. "People are hurting, and we speak for them."

Leslie Harbaugh, member of the Citizens for Peninsula Schools campaign, said revitalizing the district is a worthwhile investment for the entire community, even if some people don't have children enrolled in the schools.

"Strong schools equals a strong community, and people who chose to purchase homes here in our area see if we invest in our schools," she said. "That affects property values."

Scenario 3: Both propositions pass
District officials patterned Prop. 2 after Prop. 1 on the premise that voters might decide to pass only one measure. If a levy proves more palatable, the district would still be able to finance most of the projects on its want list.

But that’s the not ideal outcome, according to Cuzzetto. District leaders prefer to use long-term bond debt to build schools and to pay cash from levy proceeds for short-lived purchases such as computers.

That's why the propositions were designed to pass together. If that happens, Prop. 1 would pay for its original $60 million list of projects. Meanwhile, Prop. 2 would be reduced to $2 million to cover only the technology portion of the levy proposal.

Under that scenario, property taxes for 2015 would increase by $.96 per $1,000 of assessed value and the owner of a $300,000 house would pay an additional $288 in property taxes.

Supporters argue that the ballot items are worth the price tag.

"We were all students once, and I suspect more of us attended public schools as opposed to private," Harbaugh said. "Public schools provide education for those who can’t afford to go to private schools, and I think its a worthwhile investment of the community’s future."

Shelby Rowe: 253-597-8672 shelby.rowe@thenewstribune.com

FacebookTwitterGoogle PlusRedditE-mailPrint

Join The Conversation

The News Tribune is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

Commenting FAQs | Terms of Service
The district didn't listen to voters, so voters following last November's election. Alternative solutions to overcrowding and spacing reform ideas were not

CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE SCHOOL SPENDING

KEN MANNING AND JERRY GIBBS

The Peninsula Board of Education is in the process of making the decision whether to fund the Peninsula School District's capital needs with either a bond or levy. Based on community feedback, the decision whether to fund the Peninsula School District's capital needs with either a bond or levy was evenly split. The School Board chose to run a capital bond (Proposition 1) and a Contingent Levy (Proposition 2) to allow voters to decide how to best fund capital needs.
ELECTION DATE:
Aug. 5, 2014

>> EXPLANATORY STATEMENT
PROPOSITION NO. 1

Passage of Proposition No. 1 will authorize Peninsula School District No. 401 to borrow $50,000,000 by issuing general obligation bonds. In accordance with Resolution No. 14-01 approving this proposition, the bonds will pay for constructing and equipping a new elementary school in the Gig Harbor North Area, replace (construct and equip) Artondale Elementary School, modernization of Key Peninsula Middle School, safety and security improvements, middle school science classroom improvements, and upgrade and replace fields and tracks, all for the benefit of the District and to meet the current and future educational programs for its students. The bonds would be repaid out of annual property tax levies over a period of 20 years. The 2015 tax rate is estimated to be $0.92 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation, costing the typical homeowner ($400,000 assessed value home) $30.67 per month or $368 per year.

>> EXPLANATORY STATEMENT
PROPOSITION NO. 2

Passage of Proposition No. 2 would allow the levy of $55,500,000 in property taxes within Peninsula School District No. 401 for collection in the years 2015 through 2019, inclusive. In accordance with Resolution No. 14-02 approving this proposition, these taxes would be deposited in the District's Capital Projects Fund and used for constructing and equipping a new elementary school in the Gig Harbor North Area, replace (construct and equip) Artondale Elementary School, upgrades to Key Peninsula Middle School, safety and security improvements, upgrade and replace fields and tracks, and upgrade technology equipment and infrastructure, all for the benefit of the District to meet current and future educational programs for its students. If authorized by the voters and based on current assessed valuation information, estimated levy rate per $1,000 of assessed value would be $1.19 annually for 2015 through 2019.

The District is also offering Proposition No. 1 asking voters to approve the issuance of general obligation bonds for the foregoing improvements other than technology improvements. If both Propositions are approved for passage, then only technology improvements will be financed through Proposition No. 2 at the reduced levy rate of $.04 per $1,000 of assessed value annually, 2015 through 2019.

Source: Peninsula School District

FOR: School Board encourages community to 'Vote Yes Twice'

We listened. Through 15 public meetings – well attended with YES and NO supporters – we heard your concerns. We met with the NO committee and agreed upon a framework for much-needed capital funding, structured to provide stable tax rates for the next 30 years for less than $1. We vetted resolution language with the community, including both YES and NO supporters. Based on community feedback, we added a Key Peninsula Middle School renovation that will benefit EVERY student on the Key Peninsula.

We compromised. The capital bond and capital levy work together, but ultimately provide a choice for the community. Neither measure alone provides for all our students’ needs, but together provide critical funding that funds long-term projects through bonds while technology is funded with levy dollars. Even the Aug. 5 date is a compromise because the NO supporters wanted the election on this date.

We prepared. We have closed our elementary schools to out-of-district students. We have added portals across our elementary campuses, such that almost 40 percent of Purdy students are in portable classrooms. We have already redistricted some students, and more will occur in 2015. We have competed for and have been awarded a grant to create safety plans for all our buildings, and are working hard to keep students safe with the resources we have. We spend more to maintain our buildings than the average district because of the older age of our buildings. We intend to build elementary schools at a cost that is 40 percent less than nearby districts because we share your belief that taxpayer money must be guarded carefully and spent cautiously.

We acted. Even without additional growth, we need a new elementary school. We need capacity to accommodate smaller class sizes and provide early childhood education opportunities for all families.

By voting yes twice, you are voting for $62 million dollars. This is a set amount that does not increase when your assessed values increase. The proposed capital bond and levy have been widely endorsed by leaders throughout our community. Join us in supporting the 9,000 students in your community and VOTE YES TWICE!

HARLAN GALLINGER
President, Board of Directors
Peninsula School District

Peninsula
Gateway

7/16/14

2/2
The Peninsula Gateway

Previous Story
Next Story

Bond, levy vote for schools draws near

District has been preparing for a funding measure, which goes to voters Aug. 5

By Karen Miller
Staff writerJuly 23, 2014

FacebookTwitterGoogle PlusRedditEmailPrint

It’s been a long ride to the Aug. 5 election for the Peninsula School District.

Two funding propositions, a levy and a bond, were born out of the ashes of a failed levy measure last November.

Run as a complimenting bond and levy, August's Propositions 1 and 2 would fund capital projects including a new elementary school in Gig Harbor North and a new building for Artondale Elementary. In addition, money is set aside for field turf improvements, technology and security upgrades, and modification of classrooms at Key Peninsula Middle School.

Proposition 1 is a $60 million bond and Proposition 2 is a $55.9 million levy. Written into the language of the levy measure is a contingency that says should the bond pass, the levy would be knocked down in price to only fund technology measures for $2 million, about 4 cents per dollar.

The levy takes a simple majority to pass whereas the bond would need a 60 percent majority to pass.

In the past 25 years, the district has only passed two capital measures: 1989 and 2003.

"That's a long time between capital measures," district superintendent Chuck Cuzzetto said.

These measures are part of the district's large-scale plan to improve all the schools on a timeline. Currently the district is in Phase 1, which includes the project list.

"It's really paying attention to all our facilities with a 30-year plan," Cuzzetto said.

Initially it was thought that the dual measures would confuse voters, but school board president Harlan Gallinger doesn't think that's the case.

"In reality ... we have really highly educated voters," he said.

Stand Up for Schools spokesperson Shawna De La Rosa said that the vote for schools is an investment in the community.

"It baffles me that supporting schools is even an issue in this district," she said. "The community takes pride in our area. The state of schools matter, whether you have a student in the schools or not."

It took a series of 13 public meetings — both special outreach meetings and school board meetings — to figure out what measure to run and when. The school board also sat down with Citizens for Responsible School Spending, a group that opposes the current levy and opposed the previous measure.

As a result, Gallinger thinks this election season has had a less hostile climate.

"It doesn't have the divisive feel it had in November," he said. "Part of that is those meetings."
In January, the school board met with community members to gauge opinion on capital funding. The result is the inclusion of upgrades or modification to Key Peninsula Middle School on the project list. It also showed the board that opinion was split on bonds and levies.

Gallinger wanted a united front to bring to the voters, so a compromise was struck: Run both a levy and a bond and allow choice. Also, allow for the best funding option to fit the needs of the schools.

For example, under the bond a new school in Gig Harbor North and a replacement for Artondale Elementary could begin construction with bond monies immediately.

With the levy funding technology, the district wouldn’t have to continue paying off what was purchased and could update with an ever changing technological landscape.

“It would be like buying a new computer and refinancing your house to pay for it,” Cuzzetto said.

“Make no mistake, we want both to pass,” Gallinger said.

There’s opposition to both measures. Jerry Gibbs, speaking on behalf of Citizens for Responsible School Spending, doesn’t agree with some of the “bricks and turf” projects being built.

The Citizens group does not feel a $25 million building for Artondale is necessary, saying instead it should have the roof replaced.

“That’s a major sticking point, and a sticking point for a lot of voters,” Gibbs said. “It doesn’t pass the sensibility test.”

Randy Boss, chairman of School Responsibility First, does not support the bond or the levy. He wrote the opposition statement to the bond in the Pierce County voter’s guide.

His sticking point is the way the district uses funds, especially funds from maintenance and operations levies.

However, Cuzzetto said Boss is correct in saying that those levy dollars could help complete projects in the district, but usually the items the money maintains are teaching and education.

A better way to think of them, Cuzzetto said, is as an educational programs and operations levy. It subsidizes the school’s budget to make sure programs for students are covered.

It’s not capital bonds that Boss doesn’t support, it’s the way this particular bond is financed.

Built into the funding is a plan that will have higher payments in the first five years in order to pay down debt.

He’d rather see a $60 million, 20-year bond that keeps the same payments, around $150 a year in additional schools taxes.

“You know what? I’d vote for that,” Boss said.

Instead, Boss feels that’s more like making a bond a levy instead of running a true bond.

The payment structure does amp up payments in the first five years, but that’s because the district is hoping to bring another funding measure to voters in five years, Cuzzetto said. To make sure those taxes don’t stack up, the idea is to pay down debt early.

Because this measure isn’t meant to be the last, the district is looking to create a “predictable flow of funds,” for taxpayers, Cuzzetto said.

In the end, the propositions have many sides, but nothing is nailed down until Aug. 5.

“No matter how you feel,” Gibbs said, “what’s important is that you vote.”
The Peninsula Gateway is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

Commenting FAQs | Terms of Service
Yes twice on Prop. 1, 2 is best option for future

July 23, 2014

The need for funding for the Peninsula School District has been well established.

Twenty elementary classrooms are packed into portables, a 2010 state-mandated study found the cost of renovating Artondale Elementary would be almost as much as replacing it, and the need to solidify the foundation of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) is glaring when it comes to the lack of true science classrooms in every middle school.

These overcrowding problems are not going to go away, and cannot be solved by redistricting. More than 1,400 new homes and apartments are being built in Gig Harbor north and are being marketed to families.

While the idea of Proposition 1 and 2 working complimentary — not conflicting — may be confusing to some voters, the school board settled on the approach in order to allow voters to decide how best to fund the school's capital needs.

If voters approve both measures, Proposition 2 would automatically convert into a $2 million technology-only levy for a total cost of $62 million. The total tax rate of about 92 cents per $1,000 of assessed property value would mean that property owners' bill would still be below the average school taxes paid in Pierce County.

While the opposition is claiming the district has not done it due diligence in researching ways to fix things through other means instead of raising taxes, the district has been open and willing to hear solutions and has worked hard to amend the measures to try and appease those who voted no to a levy measure last November.

Although a capital measure has not passed in 11 years and only two have passed in 25 years, now is the time to act.

The district boasts the highest SAT scores in Pierce County while spending $600 per student less than the county average. The district has also produced three Rhodes Scholars in the past five years.

Without an investment in the students coming up through the middle schools now, those trends will likely stop, and may even take a turn for the worse.

While increased tax rates don't come along very often, when they do there is bound to be opposition from those who don't have direct involvement in the issue at hand.

But schools and the quality of education for the next generation are vital to a community working to sustain its high quality of life.

The current state of PSD schools can't wait 25 more years for help.
If schools falter, then community falters

July 23, 2014

Proposition 1 and 2 are key items on the ballot for Aug. 5. Most of the money being solicited would be used to replace Artondale Elementary (built in 1959) and build a new elementary school to meet the needs of new residential development. (Note the school district must fund this alone.) Additionally, Key Peninsula Middle School would receive a needed modernization. Maintenance costs are climbing and an investment is needed.

We need to VOTE YES TWICE! Here is why:

If BOTH measures pass, the $60M capital bond will finance the building projects, the modernization of Key Peninsula Middle School and the renovation of middle school science classrooms. The levy would then be REDUCED to a $2M five-year levy that would provide district-wide technology upgrades. This is the most cost-effective approach.

Saying YES to BOTH measures would keep your tax increase to $0.96 cents per $1,000 of assessed property value. If only the levy passes, KPMS would miss out on its modernization and taxes will increase by $1.19.

We must stand behind the Peninsula School District and provide the money it needs to keep up with new community development. PSD is fiscally responsible, spending $700 less per student than the state average, while maintaining academic excellence in the region.

If BOTH the bond and levy pass, our school taxes will remain the lowest in the region and the investment in schools will translate into higher property values. If our schools falter, our community falters.

Keep a good thing going! VOTE YES TWICE!

Bryan Webb

Gig Harbor

Join The Conversation

The Peninsula Gateway is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

Commenting FAQs | Terms of Service
School spending should be based on true needs

July 23, 2014

I recently attended a school board presentation on the bond/levy vote. I came away totally convinced that these tax increases must be defeated. Here are their two main points:

1. We need to increase funding because we are not taxing as much as other nearby districts. I was under the strange impression that school spending should be based on true, justified educational needs. I was surprised to learn that the board regards it as a competition to out-tax and spend Tacoma.

2. The proposed tax increase is justified by the construction of two schools, but the 40 percent school tax increase is far higher than required. They have created a 30-year wish list of expensive projects and they know that you would get tired of decades of repeated tax increases. Their solution is to hit us hard with one huge increase before we have become tax weary, amortize 30-year bonds in five years then hit us with another expensive project with the excuse that it will not cause a tax increase. You must realize that this is not a vote on two new schools, but a long list of unmentioned projects and 50 years of higher taxes.

Some affluent voters are willing to pay anything in the name of public schools, but the board has forgotten that taxes are a real burden on most of us. They have no respect for the widow’s mite. Vote no until the board comes up with a responsible proposal.

Garth Jackson

Gig Harbor
Why Graham fire levy should pass

PAT JENKINS

My father has moved away and no longer is paying property taxes in the Graham Fire and Rescue district. But if he was, he'd be more than happy to write the check — and he'd be voting for the district's levy in the election that wraps up in a couple weeks.

You see, he's one of the legions of current or former residents of the fire district who know firsthand the potentially lifesaving importance of its emergency medical and fire protection services.

When my mother's health was declining about 10 years ago, my dad had to call an aid car twice to their condo. I was there on one of the occasions and witnessed the compassion and professionalism of the paramedics while dealing with my mother's condition and my emotionally distraught father. The crew provided a badly needed calmness to the situation and a comforting reassurance for my dad.

There is no doubt that the roughly 60,000 people who live in Graham Fire's service area can expect the same kind of fast, efficient and caring response whenever they need it, and for whatever reason they need it. That's why the proposed maintenance and operations levy should be approved.

I don't live in the district. It's not my tax dollars that will be collected, so people who are reluctant to vote for any kind of tax measure will disregard anything I say on this one. But it's hard for me to imagine any personal scenario in which anyone should turn away from the district's request for a maximum of $11 million over a four-year period. The yearly take, at a rate between 52 cents and 60 cents per $1,000 of assessed property value, would begin in 2015 and end in 2018.

Fire districts depend on property tax revenue to pay the bills for sending a fire truck or an aid car when they're called. Like it or not, that's the current structure for their funding. And it's some of the best-spent money I can imagine. Everybody has either needed a firefighter or emergency medical attention, or knows someone who has. You never know when you'll need help, so paying for the service now helps guarantee you'll have it later.

Graham Fire and Rescue, through the management and policies of its administrators and elected commissioners, has done a good job of living within its means and providing a level of service that the public wants and can count on. There's no doubt the district will continue that track record to the best of its ability, regardless of the outcome of the election when ballots are counted after the close of voting Aug. 5. And the district's job will be easier — and its customers will be able to rest easier — if the election result is a big yes.

Dispatch editor Pat Jenkins can be reached at editor@dispatchnews.com and 360-832-4697.
Changes to school district boundaries on horizon

Redistricting committee seeks feedback from district

Staff writer July 16, 2014 | gateline.com The Peninsula Gateway
Purdy Elementary School has the third highest population of any school in the Peninsula School District, outpaced only by Peninsula and Gig Harbor high schools.

To compare, in Oct. 2011 Purdy had 744 students enrolled. Nearby Peninsula High School had 1,407 students.

Elementary enrollment figures, mainly on the Gig Harbor peninsula, present an overcrowding problem for the district, so the boundaries are changing soon.

The Peninsula School District’s redistricting committee has been working the last few months to redraw boundaries in order to alleviate crowding at the elementary level.

The committee has had to come up with two scenarios, due to the razor thin deadline with election season.

Regardless of the outcome of the passage or failure of the funding measures, new boundaries are expected for the 2015-2016 school year.

Should one or both of the school district’s propositions on the August ballot pass, a new school will be thrown into the mix.

Still, border changes are always controversial.

“There’s going to be people that aren’t happy no matter what we do,” said Minter Creek principal Ty Robuck. “I think we can be very proud of the work we’ve done.”

Maps of the scenarios have not been made official, however, the idea is to move boundaries north to ease pressure on the elementaries nearby newly built homes in Gig Harbor North. Schools in the southern half of the Gig Harbor peninsula would likely gain students.

The crux of the discussion on July 10 was how to get the word out to the community that changes are coming.

“This is the way we do business. We get feedback, we consider it,” Morte Bridges, a consultant on the committee, said.

The committee, made up of community stakeholders, district staff and parents, chose tactics to use when educating the public on the new changes.
Ideas ranged from talking to parents on Back to School nights to grocery store booths.

Former Gig Harbor City Council member and current candidate for the Pierce County Council Derek Young gave advice on how to share delicate issues with the public.

He said the best strategy is to be honest in communicating why the issue is important. Redistricting has to be done, he said, so schools can accommodate students.

The recommendation is a pressing concern because it is scheduled to go to the school board in September for approval.

The board can be flexible with its schedule. Matt Wilkson, a school board member who is sitting on the committee, said that deadlines can be flexed.

“If more time would be needed, I don’t see that as a huge problem,” he said.

School board member Wendy Wojtanowicz, also on the committee, said there shouldn’t be too much flexibility.

“If we go November (or) December, there’s not going to be enough time to make (boundary) adjustments,” she said.

Karen Miller: 253-358-4155 karen.miller@gateline.com Twitter: @Gateway_Karen
Tacoma gets "C" in small biz friendliness
Jul 22, 2014 - 05:34 PM | Business Examiner

A study performed by Kansas City-based nonprofit The Kauffman Foundation and Thumbtack.com has given Tacoma a "C" grade for overall friendliness to small business.

The study, drawing upon data from over 12,000 small business owners to evaluate 82 cities nationwide, found that area entrepreneurs mixed on the city’s reception to small business, though Tacoma rated highly for readiness for Obamacare.

Sixteen percent of small businesses in Tacoma said they were "very prepared" for implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the highest percentage in the country. Small business owners also rated the city third among cities in the study for ease of obtaining health insurance.

"After a two-month survey of thousands of small business owners nationwide, Tacoma wins praise from its business owners for the ease of obtaining health care," said Jon Lieber, chief economist at Thumbtack.com. "Creating a business climate that is welcoming to small, dynamic businesses is more important than ever, and Tacoma has at least part of that formula down."

Small business owners were also happy with their experience using online tools to comply with government regulations, with Tacoma finishing in the top 10 on that metric.

See the full survey findings here.
More $$ coming for Pierce jobless
Jun 30, 2014 - 02:00 PM | Business Examiner

WorkForce Central for Tacoma-Pierce County will receive a share of recently released federal funds from the U.S. Department of Labor for its Job-Driven National Emergency Grant program.

The award will bring $727,797 to Pierce County to train up to 217 workers, who lost a job through no fault of their own, for jobs in high-demand industries. It will provide training and placement services that may include apprenticeships, on-the-job and customized training, and career pathway counseling.

The organization is currently looking for employers to be part of two focus groups to better understand their hiring experiences with long-term unemployed residents and what skills the businesses are seeking.

“We will continue to build partnerships with businesses to define what they are looking for in new employees,” said Linda Nguyen, CEO of WorkForce Central, “so we then develop training that matches their needs. Getting our residents back to work is the best way to expand opportunity and help business succeed.”

For information on this and other program elements, contact Deborah Howell, CAO of WorkForce Central, at dhowell@workforce-central.org or 253-254-7618.
Jobless rate falls, updated state forecast

Jul 3, 2014 - 04:39 PM | Business Examiner

Today's federal jobs report showed payroll employment growing by 288,999 in June, and the national unemployment rate improved to 6.1 percent.

That good news caused Wall Street to surge to record levels and a closing index above 17,000 on the Dow Jones Industrials for the first time ever. The NASDAQ index also ended at a 14-year high.

From Olympia, the state Economic and Revenue Forecast Council found bright spots for its monthly update, also released this morning. While employment growth in Washington trailed the forecast in February, other historical estimates have been revised higher.

Overall housing construction is on track, but single-family permits are weak in the state. Home prices are continuing to climb and Seattle area inflation has edged up, so it now slightly exceeds the national average.

The forecast for general fund tax collections for the current two-year budget cycle was increased by $157 million. Revenue forecasts for the 2015-17 biennium grew by $238 million above the prior target and even more gain was added to the 2017-19 period, up by $313 million.

Here is a link to the complete state forecast summary, including data tables considered by the Forecast Council members.
State unemployment lowest in six years

Jul 16, 2014 - 05:24 PM | Business Examiner

Washington’s job growth accelerated in June and the unemployment rate fell to its lowest level in six years, according to preliminary, seasonally adjusted estimates by economists with the state’s Employment Security Department.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, nonfarm employment jumped 9,100, following a small gain of 1,000 new jobs (downwardly revised from 4,000) in May. At the same time, the state’s unemployment rate dropped from 6.1 percent in May to 5.8 percent. The nation’s unemployment rate was 6.1 percent.

“After a hiring lull in May, Washington employers really picked up the pace in June,” said Paul Turek, an economist with ESD. “The state’s economy is picking up momentum and the near-term job outlook is good.”

Industry sectors with the largest employment gains in June were education and health services, up 2,600; retail trade, up 2,200; leisure and hospitality, up 1,900; and wholesale trade, up 1,400. Other sectors reporting increases were professional and business services, up 900; information, up 700; manufacturing, financial services and other services, each up 500; and mining, up 100.

The primary job loss was in government, down 1,400 positions. Construction and manufacturing also lost 400 jobs each.

“Employment gains were broad and spread through all major industry sectors,” said Turek.

During the one-year period ending in June, Employment Security estimates that employers created 84,700 jobs (not seasonally adjusted).

Meanwhile, the number of unemployed job seekers looking for work in Washington dropped 10,800 to an estimated 201,000. That includes 70,059 who claimed unemployment benefits in June. At the same time, the state labor force of nearly 3.5 million decreased by 6,400.
Bond, levy passage is investment in students
July 2, 2014 | gateline.com The Peninsula Gateway

I am writing to urge our community to support the Peninsula School District’s levy and bond on August 5. I have had the opportunity to volunteer and substitute this past year in Peninsula schools and have been extremely impressed with the students, families and staff who work hard with limited resources. Everyone from grounds staff to office staff, teachers and administrators, as well as the PTA’s strive to provide a quality education for students.

Yet our schools cannot continue to provide this excellent education without additional funding. Artondale must be rebuilt due to severe structural, electrical and ventilation problems. It’s imperative that we build another elementary school because our elementaries are overcrowded and portables have reduced playground space. District-wide, computer systems need updating and security is a concern. As one principal stated, “It’s so vital that we pass this levy and bond to keep up the investment in Peninsula’s facilities — just like we would with our homes.”

Our community gives great support to parks and museums. We need to give this same support to our children. We need to let students know that we care about them and their education by providing adequate space, secure facilities and well-maintained schools. Peninsula schools have worked to build trust and financial transparency. Please, let’s all do our part and VOTE YES TWICE to support students on August 5. Thank you.

Joan Storkman

Gig Harbor
CPTC gets funding for aerospace programs
Jul 08, 2014 - 05:37 PM | Business Examiner

Clover Park Technical College is one of 21 state community and technical colleges selected to receive funding to grow high-demand aerospace programs, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges announced.

The annual funding will focus on two aerospace and advanced manufacturing programs at CPTC beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. A new mechatronics program received funding of $189,097, with the target goal to increase capacity by no fewer than 24 full-time equivalent students. The material science program received funding of $414,064, with the target goal to increase capacity by no fewer than 53 full-time equivalent students.

"The investment by the SBCTC and Washington State Legislature in Clover Park Technical College's aerospace training programs will guarantee our students will be prepared to join a skilled workforce to meet the industry demands upon completion of the program," said Dr. Joyce Loveday, vice president of instruction at CPTC.

Program outcomes will be monitored and future funding will depend on CPTC meeting the stated program capacity.

CPTC announces first bachelor's program
Jul 10, 2014 - 04:46 PM | Business Examiner

Clover Park Technical College will offer the school's first bachelor's degree program, with a bachelor of applied science in manufacturing operations degree set to debut in the fall quarter of 2014.

"Students now have the choice to continue their education at Clover Park after earning their two-year degree," said Dr. Joyce Loveday, CPTC's vice president for instruction. "The bachelor's degree program will further prepare and equip our students to move up in the workforce as leaders in the manufacturing industry."

The BASMO degree is a six to eight quarter program designed for students who already have a manufacturing-based associate's degree (or equivalent) and is ideally suited for those already in the manufacturing industry who want to advance in their careers into supervisory and management roles.

Students will learn about operations management tools and techniques, develop core business skills and apply them to solve problems in the manufacturing industry.

The program's structure of web-based instruction with study groups, meetings with faculty and program gatherings is designed to meet the educational needs of working adults. The program is approximately six to eight quarters in length and will begin Sept. 22.

"Students can extend their understanding and develop their research skills through guided study in specialized areas," said CPTC's Director of Bachelor Degrees and New Program Development, Dr. Steve Addison."
Lewis County still a ‘distressed’ area
Jun 30, 2014 - 02:32 PM | Business Examiner

A new federal listing released today shows Lewis County to be the only South Sound area still designated “distressed” for high unemployment or “under-served” in terms of financial institutions serving middle-income residents.

The Board of Directors for Federal Reserve System, along with FDIC and the Office of the Comptroller of Currency issued the comprehensive national listing of areas where revitalization or stabilization efforts will receive Community Reinvestment Act consideration as “community development.”

The designations continue to reflect local economic conditions, including triggers such as unemployment, poverty, and population changes.

The criteria for designating these areas are available on the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council website. The complete list of census tract designated “distressed” areas is also available on the FDIC website.

New listings, pending home sales up slightly in Pierce Co.
Jul 3, 2014 - 05:18 PM | Business Examiner

The Northwest Multiple Listing Service is observing that listing activity in the Puget Sound region perked up slightly in June — a small but encouraging possible indicator of a brisk market through the summer.

In Pierce County, there were 1,699 new listings (residential and condominium listings combined) in June, up from 1,572 during the same month in 2013. There were 1,555 pending sales, up 2.1 percent from June of last year.

Closed sales in Pierce County, however, declined last month compared to 2013, with 1,085 sales closing in June 2014 compared to 1,118 in June 2013 — a 2.95 percent decrease.

Still, within the entire four-county Puget Sound region (described by the NWMLS as King, Snohomish, Pierce and Kitsap counties), experts are optimistic for the coming months; J. Lennox Scott, chairman and CEO of John L. Scott Real Estate, said he expected a “red hot summer selling season,” crediting lower interest rates with fueling what he described as a "mini power surge of sales."