

Gilbert Public Library 2009 – 2014 Strategic Plan

Adopted by the Library Board:
December 7, 2009

THE PLANNING PROCESS:

The Gilbert Public Library completed a comprehensive strategic planning process between April and August 2009. This process was made possible through financial support from the Arrowhead Library System. Composition of the Planning Team included representatives from the Library Board, Library Foundation, city officials and library staff.

A community-based process was utilized, which centered on answering the questions: 1) *What are the pressing needs in our community?* and, 2) *What is the library's role in helping to address those needs?* Major steps included conducting a focus group with community leaders, reviewing community demographic data and library statistics, discussing organizational values and mission, identifying service priorities, and developing detailed action plans for the first year of implementation. In addition, indicators were established to track progress toward achieving the library's new goals.

The plan submitted to the Library by Whitney Crettol Consulting was revised by the Library Board in November 2009 and approved in December, 2009.

The resulting strategic plan is intended to guide the library for the next five years, with action plans to be revised annually.

WHAT WE FOUND:

Several themes emerged through our environmental scan process. First is the community's concern for its young people. A need was expressed for more constructive youth activities in the community. More engagement between younger and older generations is also valued. According to library staff, circulation of books by the upper elementary and young adult age group is disappointingly low.

There is also a great need for public access to technology, as well as help gaining the knowledge required to use it. Usage of the library's public access computers has increased dramatically over the past five years. Because circulation of print materials is down, the Library experiences some tension between providing technology and encouraging reading.

A number of concerns were also expressed about the Library's physical facility – including lack of space, aging structure and systems, inadequate funding for maintenance, and parking. A facility study was conducted in 2006. This study suggested that costs of renovating the current structure would probably be more expensive than building a new facility. In 2009 the community of Gilbert continues to struggle with the costs of utilities for the Community Center building. Community members feel very attached to their Community Center and the current location of the Library. Conversation regarding the Community Center building and the Library began in Fall, 2009 and is expected to continue throughout the next five years, hopefully with productive resolution by 2014.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES:

Community Connectedness –

The Library is a welcoming place that acts as a community hub, providing opportunities for social interaction and sharing knowledge. We solicit input from the community and are responsive to local needs.

Intergenerational Access –

Children and adults alike are encouraged to utilize the library, with special emphasis on activities that integrate community members across generational lines.

Unbiased Information –

Open access to information is important in developing capable citizens. The Library maintains a broad range of materials and technology that cover current issues in a balanced, unbiased way.

Lifelong Learning –

We value literacy and promote continued learning throughout each individual's lifetime.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Gilbert Public Library's Mission is to provide community members with access to resources and services which can enrich and fulfill their cultural, civic, intellectual and recreational needs. (Adopted March, 2000)

LIBRARY GOALS (In order of priority):

- 1. Young children will be excited about reading and learning.**
- 2. Community members will be able to find, evaluate and use information.**
- 3. Community members will explore topics of personal interest to enhance their leisure time and continue to learn throughout their lives.**
- 4. Community members will enjoy a safe, welcoming and accessible space adequate to support a variety of activities.**
- 5. The Library will be adequately funded according to state and professional standards.**

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Goal 1 (Children)

- ✓ Number of 3rd – 6th grade participants in the Summer Reading Program.
- ✓ Number of child care providers who participate in Library outreach activities.
- ✓ Number of children participating in weekly storytimes, Readdog program and similar.

Goal 2 (Understand How to Find, Evaluate & Use Information)

- ✓ Number of participants in technology series and other information literacy programs.
- ✓ Survey of above participants regarding comfort level and ability to find, evaluate, and use information on their own.
- ✓ Number of tutorial users.
- ✓ Number of hours of staff participation in technology training.

Goal 3 (Lifelong Learning / Stimulate Imagination)

- ✓ Number of participants in the adult reading programs.
- ✓ Number of participants in other youth and adult programming.
- ✓ Number of community members who participate in selection of materials.

Goal 4 (Space)

- ✓ Number of community members who participate in planning for the future of library space.
- ✓ Amount of funds raised for improvement of library space.
- ✓ Improved cost effectiveness of operation of library space.

Goal 5 (Funding)

- ✓ State funding requirements (MOE) met by City of Gilbert.
- ✓ Supplemental funds received (grants, donations, Friends, etc.)

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

<i>Implementation Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Present strategic plan to Library Board for adoption.	December 2009
2. Communicate the new plan to stakeholders and the public.	January 2010
3. Discuss strategic plan progress as regular agenda item at Library Board meetings.	Monthly
4. Compile progress indicator data for annual review with Board/Staff meeting to discuss successes and challenges and suggested revisions.	Annually 2010 - 2014 (November)
5. Staff develop action plans for the next year.	Annually 2010 - 2013 (November)
6. Full round of strategic planning.	Fall 2014 (New plan in place by January 2015)

Appendix A:

YEAR 1 Action Plans September 2009 – December 2010

GOAL # 1: Young children will be excited about reading and learning.

Strategy A: Children's Programming		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Child Care Providers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact providers in service area to offer outreach. ▪ Conduct outreach story times. 	Amy Amy	January 2010 Ongoing
2. Add kinetic/play component to weekly preschool story time.	Amy	September 2009 (Weekly)
3. Add evening "pajama" story times.	Amy (Volunteers)	December 2010 (Monthly)
4. Arrange 3 sessions of Reading Dog visits.	Amy (Volunteer & canine)	September 2009 - December 2010 (3) 8-week sessions
5. Movie Nights targeted toward families with young children.	Chris & Tyler	Monthly
6. Schedule a professional performance (e.g. puppeteer).	Amy	December – May 2010 (1 Performance)
7. Summer Reading Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a new approach to the SRP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Put more emphasis on reading – Focus on drawing 3rd-6th graders to the program. – Promotion/outreach to parents, not just children. ▪ Conduct summer program. 	Amy (SRP Consultant)	March 2010
	Amy (Staff)	June – August 2010

Strategy B: Children's Materials		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Story Kits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talk to Coleraine Library about how they are funding/implementing story kits. ▪ Secure funding. ▪ Create 3 story kits for circulation to Family Child Care providers. 	Amy Amy Chris & Tyler	January 2010 September 2010 March 2010 – 1 kit August 2010 – 2 additional kits
2. Guest Selectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop Guest Selectors process to engage groups of parents, teachers, and children in the collection development process. 	All Staff	January 2010

Strategy C: Children's Space

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Auditorium: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Develop a collaborative committee of users to better coordinate scheduling of Community Center space.	Amy	March 2010

Strategy D: Connecting with Parents

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Approach elementary school about opportunities to promote library use (e.g. during parent-teacher conferences).	Amy	January 2010
2. Connect with Head Start and ECFE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Explore how the library can serve their parent groups.▪ Provide services as determined above.	Amy Amy (Volunteers)	March 2010 December 2010
3. Contact and join the Quad Cities Early Childhood Coalition to explore collaborative opportunities for reaching the parent audience.	Amy	September 2009 (completed)
4. Refer all patrons with young children to Imagination Library.	All Staff	Ongoing

GOAL # 2: Community members will be able to find, evaluate and use information.

<u>Strategy E: Technology Programming</u>		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Establish a subject-oriented bi-monthly technology series (e.g. database use, software, websites, social networking).	Chris	Monthly Beginning January 2010
2. Participate in ALS and web training on technology topics (check webinar offerings monthly).	All Staff	December 2010
3. Social networking: Establish presence on social networking sites (e.g. Twitter, Face book)	All Staff	March 2010

<u>Strategy F: One-to-One Assistance</u>		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Tutorials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact Virginia Reference Librarian about their approach to tutorials. ▪ Train other staff on how to develop tutorials. ▪ Develop and/or link tutorials to our website. 	Chris Chris Chris (Amy & Tyler)	January 2010 March 2010 April 2010
2. Home School families contacted. plan for individual assistance completed, on-going help	Amy	January 2010 contact On-going assistance
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<u>Strategy G: Other Programming</u>		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Develop a Gifted & Talented group for youth focused on information literacy (also future potential as Advisory Group).	Amy	June 2010
2. Develop 2010 plan for additional non-technology based information literacy programming for adults.	All Staff	March 2010
3. Develop 2011 plan for additional non-technology based information literacy programming for adults	All Staff	December 2010

GOAL # 3: Community members will explore topics of personal interest to enhance their leisure time and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Strategy H: Adult & Youth Programming		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
4. Adult Winter Reading Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact other small libraries that have conducted such programs for ideas, and gather ALS resources. ▪ Develop program plan. ▪ Conduct winter reading program as per plan. 	Tyler	December 2009 December 2009 Winter 2010
5. Organize twice annual intergenerational theater productions (all ages).	Amy (Theater Assistant, Volunteers)	Winter School Break & Summer School Break
6. Expand variety of adult programming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey adults about topics of interest. ▪ Develop 2010 monthly adult program plan. ▪ Marketing of programs. ▪ Conduct monthly programs as per plan. ▪ Develop 2011 monthly adult program plan. 	Amy Amy Amy Amy	January 2010 December 2009 January – December 2010 January – December 2010 December 2010
7. Develop specialty programs with Gilbert groups (e.g. Scouts).	Amy	Quarterly – beginning December 2010
8. Gaming events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact other libraries that have conducted gaming events for ideas. ▪ Organize 2 gaming events, utilizing ALS equipment. 	Chris & Tyler Chris & Tyler	December 2009 By December 2010

Strategy I: Displays & Exhibits		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Secure funding and arrange for one traveling exhibit to be displayed in the auditorium.	Amy	December 2010 (1 Exhibit)
2. Displays: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit local collections and artwork to be featured in display case and/or above bookcases on a rotating basis. ▪ Develop calendar and manage quarterly display rotation. 	All Staff Amy	Ongoing Quarterly - Beginning January 2010

Goal #4: Community members will enjoy a safe, welcoming, cost effective and accessible space adequate to support a variety of activities.

Strategy J: Develop Community Involvement in the Future of the Library Space		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Create and disseminate publicity to encourage community involvement.	Amy	January 2010
2. Develop a Community Committee to work on planning and fund raising.	Amy and Board	March 2010, committee meets monthly

Strategy K: Library Staff will Continue the Tradition of Welcoming Service and Effective Use of Existing Space		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	
1. Library Service will consistently be friendly and polite	All staff	
2. Library Programming will use the existing space to the fullest extent	All staff	

Goal # 5: The Library will be adequately funded according to state and professional standards.

Strategy L: Maintenance of Effort will be Maintained.		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. City Council will have a good working relationship with the Library and remained informed about MOE issues	Amy	December 2010

Strategy M: Supplemental Funding will be pursued.		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Friends Group will be created	Amy	March 2010
2. Grant Funding will be pursued	Amy	On-going
3. Gilbert Public Library Foundation will be informed of relevant needs	Amy	April and October 2010

Appendix B:

Community Focus Group – Summary

April 2009

Community Focus Group – Summary of Responses

Gilbert Public Library

4-30-09

A total of 8 community members participated in the focus group. Representation included local business, elected officials, youth, news media, civic groups, and the faith community.

ELEMENTS OF A COMMUNITY VISION

Participants first imagined a time in the future when the community has achieved its full potential and everyone is proud to call it home. They then answered the question: *What does that success look like, and for whom?*

Who	Result
Children	Excited to begin school and ready to learn.
Children	Indoor “playground” to use in winter.
Children	Vibrant renewed school district.
Teens	Have information to research careers / have a career goal.
Teens	Constructive things for teens to do locally that encourage independence.
Adults	Continuous learning; ability to re-train for new jobs.
Working Age / Whole Community	Larger employer in town; 4-lane road with access.
Whole Community	Modern, vibrant, energizing community center to be used for social gatherings and entertainment.
Whole Community	<i>Local</i> community education programming.
Whole Community	Popular entertainment (e.g. water park, Brag-game-rights).
Whole Community	Finished parks with more equipment and flowers.
Whole Community	Downtown that is more developed and provides local access to goods.

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY TODAY

Considering the community’s current situation, participants were asked to identify: 1) conditions that could help the community move toward the vision outlined above (strengths & opportunities), and 2) conditions that might impede progress toward that vision (weaknesses & threats).

Strengths/Opportunities

- + Iron Range Resources.
- + New mining enterprises may lead to boom and growth.
- + Easy to walk in town, good sidewalks.

- + Desirable community that is clean and safe.
- + City is supporting growth with infrastructure.
- + Have physical space for development.
- + Vibrant library with a lot of hours open.
- + Population growth, especially families moving in (or back in) to town.
- + New businesses including café, two restaurants, Delta Dental call center.
- + Nice parks.
- + Nice houses available and new construction going on.
- + Housing for elders/disabled with assisted living so can stay in the community.
- + Recreational opportunities (OHV park, campground, Mesabi Trail, pit lake).
- + Good schools with smaller class sizes.
- + July 3rd parade draws many people into Gilbert.
- + People take pride in the town, take care of their property, and try to use businesses in town.
- + Strong faith community with two very active churches, and link with Eveleth through merged church.

Weaknesses/Threats

- Lack of funding.
- Declining population.
- Missing two generations that shipped out with their families during 1980's downturn.
- Nothing is open late at night / 24 hours for tourists.
- Large aging population.
- People are not as engaged or involved.
- Fear of change.
- Town has bad reputation (“10 bars”).
- Issues of chemical dependency, child abuse, gambling and domestic violence negatively affect quality of life.
- Lack of 4-lane highway/visibility that would draw more business development.
- Parking issues downtown.
- Lack of cooperation between Quad Cities for the common good.
- Politics of scarcity makes individual communities fear that cooperation will leave them with even less than they have now.
- Downsizing of county government will eliminate services locally.

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Given where we are today, and where we want to go, participants responded to the question: *What needs to be done to make progress toward the vision?*

- More communication between generations; youth involvement in things that matter.
- Funding.
- Diversify industry / economic base beyond mining.
- Grow jobs that allow young people to stay (increased economic development and population).
- Promotion of the benefits of small communities.
- Stop being so disposable – reduce, reuse, recycle (“greening” of our community; re-prioritizing).
- Businesses provide goods that meet the needs of local people to keep them buying here.
- Add a grocery and drug store in town.
- Quad Cities build toward each other rather than outward – be continuous and really all one community (overcome parochial feelings between towns; “let’s get married”).

- Update old City infrastructure (water, electricity).
- More technological resources such as broadband and wireless.
- A new library facility.
- A single high quality magnet high school.
- Local interest, determination and leadership to create change.

LIBRARY PRIORITIES

Finally, participants were asked to vote on library priorities by answering: *What roles can the Library focus on to make the greatest contribution toward addressing community needs?*

Library "Service Responses"	Number of Votes
Create Young Readers: Early Literacy	8
Know Your Community: Community Resources & Services	8
Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National, and World Affairs	7
Succeed in School: Homework Help	6
Learn to Read & Write: Adult, Teen, and Family Literacy	6
Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth, and Other Life Choices	5
Make Career Choices: Job & Career Development	5
Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning	5
Build Successful Enterprises: Business & Nonprofit Support	4
Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness	4
Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access	4
Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical & Virtual Spaces	3
Welcome to the United States: Services for New Immigrants	3
Understand How to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Fluency	2
Get Facts Fast: Ready Reference	1
Express Creativity: Create and Share Content	1
Discover Your Roots: Genealogy & Local History	0
Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing & Listening for Pleasure	0

Appendix C:

Library & Community Profile

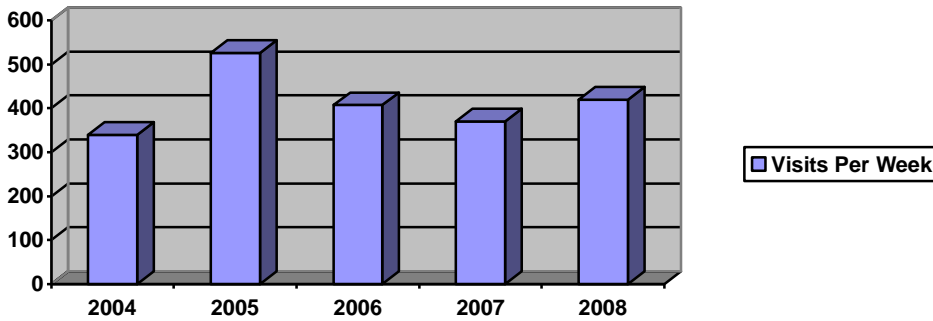
May 2009

Library & Community Profile: Gilbert Public Library

I. LIBRARY STATISTICS

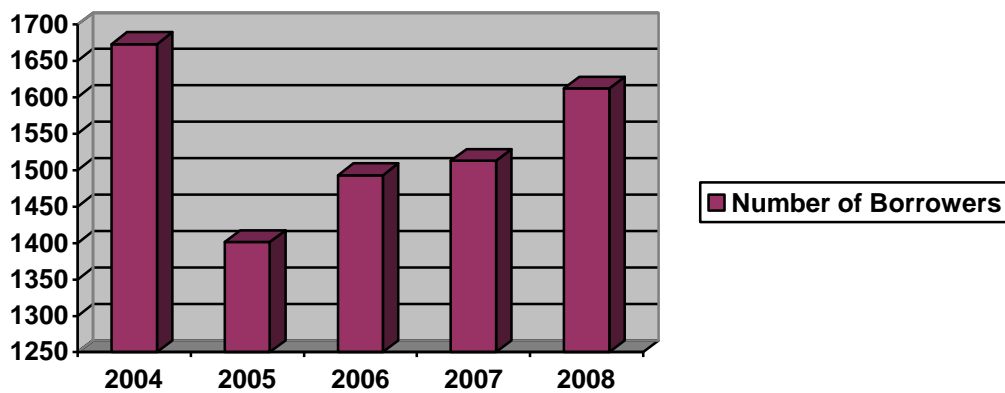
Library Traffic

The Gilbert Library has consistently been open 46.5 hours per week during the past five years. The temporary closure of the Virginia Library sharply increased traffic in Gilbert during 2005 and early 2006. Aside from that event however, average weekly visits are 24 % higher than they were five years ago.



Number of Resident Borrowers

In the past, all library card holders were maintained in the system regardless of whether they were active. In 2004/2005, ALS began purging inactive users on a periodic schedule. The significant dip in the number of borrowers at that time is reflective of the purge process. Despite a second purge taking place in 2007, Gilbert maintained a net increase and has continued to grow. According to current population estimates, over 90% of residents have library cards.



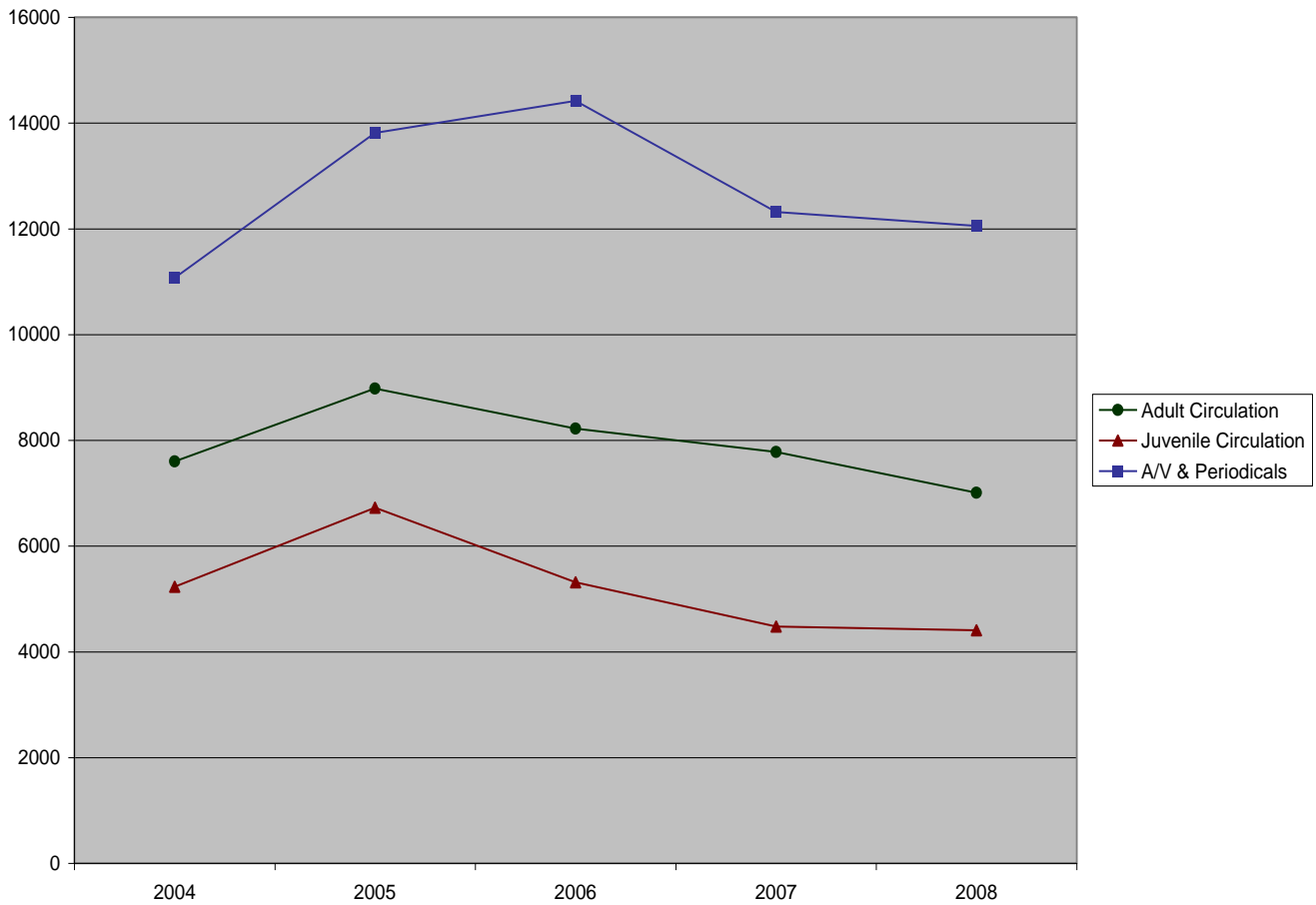
Collection Size

Type of Material	2004	2008	Change
Print	14,798	13,670	- 1,128
Audiovisual	1,130	1,561	+ 431
Serial Subscriptions	48	50	+ 2
Other	100	62	- 38

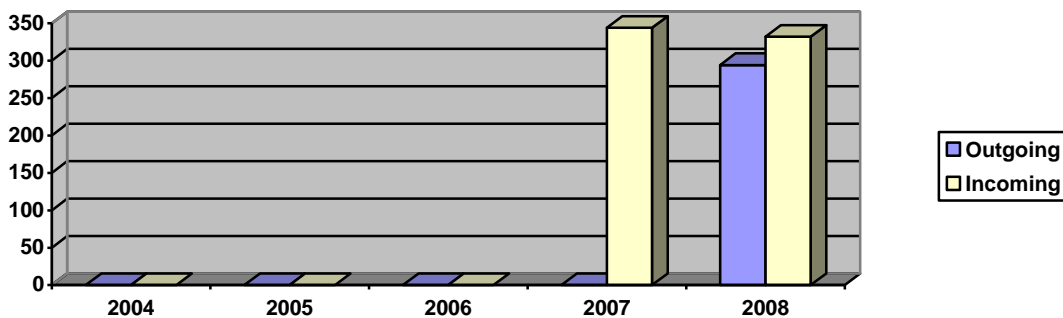
An April 2009 review of last check-out date identified 2,128 items in the library’s collection that have not circulated during the past three years. Of these items, approximately 45% are classified as juvenile and 55% are adult materials.

Circulation

Gilbert’s overall circulation trend appears to indicate relatively stable usage over the past five years, but there is some underlying variability. Both adult and juvenile circulation increased during the Virginia library closure, but have steadily declined since then. Circulation of juvenile materials has experienced the greatest drop (16%). However, total circulation for 2008 was just 2% below the 2004 level. This is due to strong usage in audiovisual materials and periodicals which account for over half of the library’s circulation.



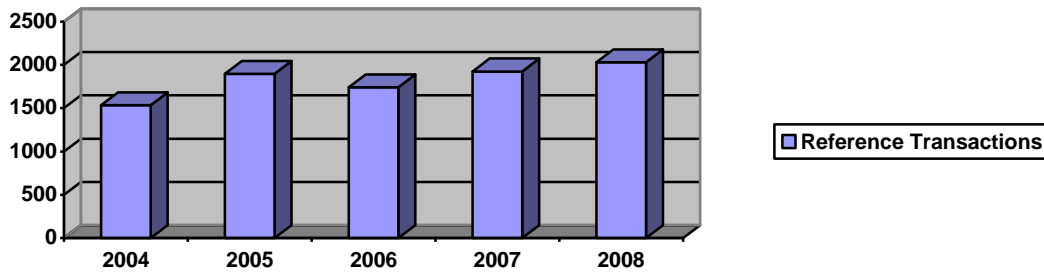
Inter-Library Loans



Historical data is not available to determine trends in inter-library loan activity.

Reference Requests

The number of reference transactions has increased since 2004, despite a decreasing national trend.

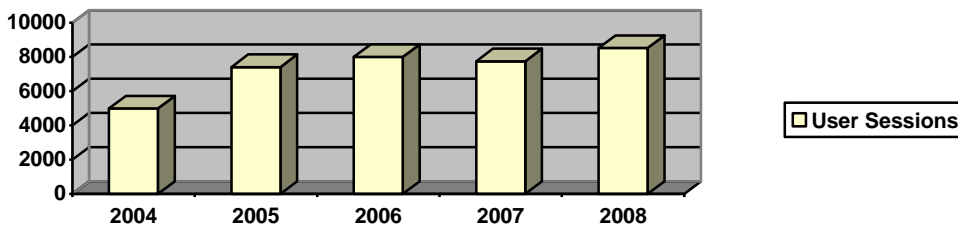


Programs

Participation in library programming has increased dramatically in recent years. In 2008, the number of children’s programs was double that offered five years earlier and attendance was nearly triple. And, although the library is sponsoring fewer adult programs, adult attendance has also tripled. The library’s involvement in the Gilbert Centennial further boosted program attendance last year.

Target Audience	Number of Programs	Type of Programs	2008 Attendance
Adults	11	Author visits & Centennial exhibit	1,697
Children	57	Weekly preschool story times, children’s performers, Centennial activities (e.g. arts & crafts)	1,908
Total Attendance:			3,605

Public Computer/Internet Usage



Public computer usage has increased 70% over five years. One terminal was added during this time, for a current total of eight public access computers. Wireless is not available due to the small number of requests for this service. The Library has a website, but it is not known how frequently it is accessed.

Operating Expenditures

Year	Staffing	Collection	Other	Total
2004	\$ 90,528	\$ 16,500	\$ 9,833	\$ 116,861
2008	\$ 82,991	\$ 16,968	\$ 24,147	\$ 124,106

The staffing level in 2008 was 2.5 FTEs, but has been reduced to 2.1 FTEs this year. Staff includes one full-time Librarian and two part-time BA level staff.

II. COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Gilbert has experienced a decrease in population since 1990. Below are some key demographic indicators [Figures taken from the 2000 U.S. Census unless otherwise noted].

Time of Count	Number of Residents	Change from Previous Period
1990 Census	1,934	
2000 Census	1,847	- 87
2007 Estimate	1,754	- 93

Race

Although the vast majority (98%) of Gilbert's residents are Caucasian, the town is becoming slightly more diverse. The 2000 Census recorded 32 people of color, compared to 18 in the previous count. In addition, 7 individuals identified themselves as Hispanic.

Age

Age Group	Number of Residents	Percentage of Total Population
Children 0-17	389	21 %
Adults 18-64	1,059	57 %
Adults 65 & over	399	22 %

Education

Gilbert is home to two of the Eveleth-Gilbert District schools. The District's 2007 graduation rate was 90.2 % [Source: MN Department of Education]. There are also nine children being home-schooled in the district. Only 15 % of the adult population (age 25 & over) has a bachelor's degree or higher.

School	Number of Students [April 2009]
Elementary Pre K – 6	208
Jr. High School 7-8	193
Total Students:	401

Income

In 2007, the average wage of \$ 34,684 in St. Louis County was nearly \$ 8,000 below the state average [Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics]. The County also has a high unemployment rate which just reached 10.1 %, compared to 8.2 % in Minnesota overall [March 2009, DEED]. The 2000 Census indicated that 13.2 % of Gilbert's residents, or 244 individuals, were living below the poverty line.

Housing

Housing Type	Percentage of Total
Owner-occupied	76 %
Rental	17.6 %
Vacant housing units	6.4 %

In 2000, the City's median assessed home value was \$ 46,100, and average rent was \$ 335.