



ISSUED BY THE ARROWHEAD LIBRARY SYSTEM  
JUNE, 2005

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## INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2004, the Arrowhead Library System embarked on an extended planning process. The purpose of this process was to examine the current overall functioning of the organization as well as to determine future service focus areas. To support its efforts, ALS retained the consulting services of Carolyn Bacon of Bacon & Associates, Inc. to design and facilitate the planning process and John Schamber of MarketLine Research, Inc. to conduct the regional market research.

The first major phase of this work included doing relevant research. This research included: clarifying organizational mandates (review of relevant state and local legislation, ordinances or charters that impact ALS), reviewing key regional demographic data, identifying key ALS stakeholders and conducting a stakeholder analysis, and conducting market research to understand the regional needs on a larger basis. Through these steps, both the internal and external environment of ALS were assessed and considered. All elements of the research were reviewed by the ALS Strategic Planning Coordinating Team and the ALS Board of Directors at a two-day retreat in July of 2004 and used as the foundation for the creation of strategic priorities.

The following Perspectives Report is a summary of the key research findings from the focus groups and the Member Library surveys.

### INVOLVED PEOPLE

Two groups were established to support the planning process: the Strategic Planning Executive Team and the Strategic Planning Coordinating Team. The teams were made up of the ALS management team, ALS staff, ALS Board of Directors, and Member Library Directors.

Membership included:

#### ALS Staff

Jim Weikum – Director  
Shari Fisher – Business/Finance Manager  
Mark Koukol – Application Support Librarian  
Rebecca Patton – Public Library Consultant  
Roxanne Reed – Mail-a-Book Clerk  
Jennifer Rudolph – Processing Clerk  
Brad Snelling – Technical Services Librarian

#### ALS Board

Carol Hauck  
Marge McPeak

### Member Library Directors

Diane Adams – International Falls Public Library  
Audrey Evers – Hoyt Lakes Public Library  
Beth Kelly – Duluth Public Library  
Mary Lukkarila – Cloquet Public Library  
Nancy Maxwell – Virginia Public Library  
Terry Moore – Hibbing Public Library  
Pat Perry – Bovey Public Library

### METHODOLOGY

#### **1. Stakeholder Focus Groups**

Stakeholder groups were our primary methodology to conduct a dialogue with key “public decision makers”, ALS Board members, ALS Member Library Directors and ALS staff about the future of ALS. A basic SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) was used for the heart of the focus group. Additionally, we sought perspectives on the future role and services of libraries. In the end, a total of more than 150 people participated in focus groups. *See appendix for questions used.*

#### Key Public Decision Makers

Key “public decision makers” included elected officials, schools, other types of libraries, member library board members, public leaders and other interested individuals.

Over 402 invitations were sent out to key public decision makers to participate. *See appendix for questions used.*

Sessions were held at:

ALS  
Cloquet  
Duluth  
Grand Rapids  
Hibbing  
Silver Bay  
International Falls

#### ALS Board of Directors

Two sessions were held with the ALS Board of Directors. *See appendix for questions used.*

#### ALS Member Library Directors

Two sessions were held with the ALS Member Library Directors. *See appendix for questions used.*

### ALS Staff

Two sessions were conducted with the ALS staff.  
*See appendix for questions used.*

## **2. Survey**

A survey was developed and distributed to all Member Library employees. A total of 52 employees participated in the survey process.  
*See appendix for survey questions.*

## **3. Demographic Research**

Rebecca Patton used the following sources to gather relevant demographic data:

<http://www.epodunk.com>

<http://www.demography.state.mn.us>

Census 2000: Race Population by County

Minnesota's Children in the 2000 Census by Barbara Ronnigen  
Population Under 18 Years of Age in 2000

Census 2000: Population Over 65 by County in Minnesota, Language Spoken in the Home

Minnesota's Public Library Report 2003

ALS bookmobile and Mail-A-Book Statistics 2003

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Overall, all groups expressed great support for ALS. The public groups are particularly satisfied with the staff and services of their member library.

When looking to the future, all groups spoke of the need to reach out to youth, despite the fact that the region has a growing aging population that will need to be served. The public believes it is critically important that the library and ALS be "patron focused" when making all decisions - which means they will need to have methods in place to keep a pulse on the needs of the public. Additionally, the public is very open to the library and ALS thinking in dramatically different terms about how it delivers services. The groups we spoke to are very willing to depart from the historic methods of delivery.

On the flip side, the ALS Staff and Board and member library Directors have serious concerns about things changing too dramatically. This is primarily driven by a concern that it will result in a reduction of current services that they (and patrons) value highly. There were some creative ideas about service delivery but this feeling about "change" will create some challenges in the planning process.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

**ALS STRENGTHS – COMPARISON ACROSS ALL GROUPS**

Theme	Group				
	Public	Directors	ALS Staff	Board	Staff Survey
Staff	✓ (ALL)	✓	✓	✓	✓
ILL	✓ (ALL)	✓	✓		✓
Programs	✓ (ALL)		✓	✓	✓
Being part of a system	✓ (6 OF 7)	✓		✓	✓
Computer access	✓ (6 OF 7)				
Direct services	✓ (5 OF 7)	✓	✓	✓	✓

**ALS WEAKNESSES – COMPARISON ACROSS ALL GROUPS**

Theme	Group				
	Public	Directors	ALS Staff	Board	Staff Survey
Funding	✓ (ALL)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marketing	✓ (4 OF 7)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Federated System		✓	✓		✓

**ALS OPPORTUNITIES AN THREATS – COMPARISON ACROSS ALL GROUPS**

Theme	Group				
	Public	Directors	ALS Staff	Board	Staff Survey
Funding	✓ (ALL)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Demographics	✓ (ALL)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internet	✓ (ALL)	✓		✓	
Barnes & Noble Model	✓ (ALL)		✓		
Current political environment and societal attitudes	✓ (5 OF 7)	✓	✓	✓	
Marketing	✓ (5 OF 7)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Taxation disparities	✓ (5 OF 7)				
Regional economy	✓ (5 OF 7)	✓	✓	✓	
Technology	✓ (4 OF 7)	✓	✓		✓

## **FOCUS GROUP THEMES**

### **Group #1 - Key Public Decision Makers**

#### ***“What are the strengths of the Arrowhead Library System?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question. It should be noted that while we encouraged public groups to focus on the Arrowhead Library System, we found that they often were commenting on their member library.

#### **Theme 1**

##### **Staff**

In the public groups, these comments referred primarily to member library staff. Specifically, member library directors were called out as particularly valuable. Staff were described as flexible, helpful, friendly and very service oriented.

#### **Theme 2**

##### **Inter-library Loan (ILL)**

All public groups identified ILL as a real strength of the system. Many recognized that ILL comes as a result of a being a member of ALS and many stated that if there was ever a time where ALS services needed to be prioritized, ILL needs to be right near the top.

#### **Theme 3**

##### **Programs**

Again, all public groups cited programs as a real strength – however, it wasn't always clear if it was member library or ALS programs. They especially value the children's programs, the summer reading program and other adult programs such as the author series.

#### **Theme 4**

##### **The advantages that come with being a part of a larger system**

Six of the seven public groups spoke of the value that comes with being a part of a larger system. They talked about positives that come for member libraries when there is “connectivity” and cooperation across the region. Specifically – ILL, the ability to use one's library card in other libraries, and the professional network between librarians.

#### **Theme 5**

##### **Computer access**

Six of the seven public groups spoke of the importance of the availability of computer access provided by their member library. We heard about the great demand for terminals – and that the computers were always in use. In many cases, the role of ALS with technology was invisible to them.

## **Theme 6**

### **Direct services**

Four of the seven groups spoke of the importance of Mail-a-Book and the Bookmobile. One might expect that there would be greater recognition of the importance of these services, but it should be noted that we didn't intend for the public groups to serve as a representative sample of Bookmobile and Mail-a-Book users. The input from those groups was well represented in the market research.

### ***“What are the weaknesses of the Arrowhead Library System?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

## **Theme 1**

### **Funding**

All groups spoke of funding as real and current problem. Many spoke of staff cuts and shorter hours in their member libraries. They also spoke of wanting more titles and more books on tape/CDs. Please note: this also emerges as an important theme in the “opportunities and threats” question.

## **Theme 2**

### **Marketing**

Four of the seven groups spoke of marketing as a weakness. Underneath that observation, they noted that non-users and elected officials lack a real awareness of all that goes on at the library (types and quantity of services, programs, etc.). We also heard about how especially important it is for elected officials to understand the funding process and the more “invisible” benefits that come from ALS.

### ***“From your perspective, what are some of the most important opportunities and threats library services should be aware of and maximize (opportunities) or minimize (threats)?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question. In a typical SWOT analysis the discussion of “opportunities” and “threats” often merge into one. It is often true that one person's threat might be another's opportunity. Therefore, no matter what the take is on the following opportunity and threat themes, ALS must be aware of and thoughtful about all of them.

## **Theme 1**

### **Funding**

All groups fear future funding cuts for libraries. They spoke of the loss of media specialists in schools that creates even greater pressures on libraries. Many fear additional cuts in hours and staff. Some had creative ideas about creating new funding streams.

## **Theme 2**

### **Regional Demographics**

All groups made the observation that regional demographics show several challenging trends: the population is aging and young people are leaving.

## **Theme 3**

### **Impact of the Internet**

Many, of course, spoke of the value the Internet has brought society. However, many talked about some of the real challenges associated with it as well: questionable quality of information and the perception that the Internet will make libraries irrelevant.

## **Theme 4**

### **Barnes and Noble Model**

All groups talked about the possible opportunity in libraries modeling themselves in some way after successful bookstore chains. This includes assuring pleasant environments, great displays, and coffee shops.

## **Theme 5**

### **Current Political Environment**

Five of the seven groups expressed concern about a perception that the current political environment has become more restrictive of personal rights (filtering, Patriot Act). They also talked about the increasing competition for taxpayer dollars.

## **Theme 6**

### **Marketing**

Five of the seven groups believe it's critically important that an effort get started around informing the public of the array of services offered at the library. The suggestion was made that elected officials be the first priority – they need to understand what libraries have to offer, their role in society, how they're funded, etc.

## **Theme 7**

### **Societal Attitudes**

We heard about the perception that people have less time to read, have a "quick fix" mentality and that youth are overly involved in a variety activities and don't have time to visit the library. Additionally, we heard about the perception that people only look out for themselves versus a concern for the public good.

## **Theme 8**

### **Taxation disparities**

Five of the seven groups talked about the fact that rural users pay little (in comparison) for the use of the library and suggested that this funding formula should be reviewed.

## **Theme 9**

### **Regional Economy**

Many talked about the tough times the region has faced in the advent of the decline in the mining industry.

## **Theme 10 Technology**

Technology advances were seen to be a double-edged sword. The positive: exciting possibilities and all kinds of emerging new formats. The negative: it's costly to keep up and there is an ever-widening gap around between the "haves" and "have nots."

## **Theme 11 Use of Volunteers**

There is a prevalent belief within the public groups that volunteers can fill the gaps that might come with funding cuts.

### ***"What should library services look like in 3-5 years?"***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

## **Theme 1 Provide Customer Oriented Services**

Libraries should understand and solicit customer needs, provide increased accessibility, consider creative and different delivery methods (kiosks), be comfortable and less institutional and have a strong service orientation.

## **Theme 2 Responsive to Technology Trends**

Many spoke of the need for libraries to stay current with technology trends, but recognized that it's likely too expensive for libraries to be on the cutting edge of technology. However, it is critical that libraries don't get behind with technology trends. Wireless environments in libraries are desired.

## **Theme 3 Be a Responsive, Nimble and Open Organization**

The public groups were very open to libraries being open to dramatic change. We heard about the need to do more with less, to be open to changing delivery methods, to evolving the role of the librarian and to listening carefully to the youth.

### ***"What are some of the key partnerships library services be exploring to assure future success?"***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

## **Theme 1 Schools**

## **Theme 2 Social Service Groups**

## **Theme 3 Workforce Centers**

**Theme 4  
Youth Focused Groups (4-H, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts)**

**Theme 5  
Donors**

**Theme 6  
Business**

**Group #2 – ALS Board of Directors**  
***“What are the strengths of the Arrowhead Library System?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

**Theme 1  
Staff**

The dedication and talent of the Director and staff was mentioned as a particular strength. Lots of support for the graphics department due to the quality of the products.

**Theme 2  
Programs**

The Board spoke highly of the summer reading program and family nights at the library.

**Theme 3  
The Board**

The Board views themselves as a strength for ALS because they are willing to challenge each other, express diverse opinions, and demonstrate involved and thoughtful participation.

**Theme 4  
Training and Workshops**

**Theme 5  
Being a Federated System**

Many on the Board cited the positives that come with being a federated system – primarily, the freedom that member libraries have to assure they are able to meet the specific needs of their communities.

***“What are the weaknesses of the Arrowhead Library System?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

**Theme 1  
Size of the Region**

The sheer size of the region creates difficulties: it is expensive and logistically difficult to cover the needs of the area.

## **Theme 2**

### **Mission**

Current mission lacks clarity and needs re-evaluation.

## **Theme 3**

### **Employee Morale**

There are periods of dissatisfaction for some groups of employees.

## **Theme 4**

### **Funding**

The Board feels that they are at the vagaries of the Legislature and find this very frustrating.

***“From your perspective, what are some of the most important opportunities and threats library services should be aware of and maximize (opportunities) or minimize (threats)?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question. With few exceptions, the Board described the following themes in the same way the public groups did. In those cases, no further description has been added.

## **Theme 1**

### **Funding**

Comments similar to the public group.

## **Theme 2**

### **Regional Demographics**

Comments similar to the public group.

## **Theme 3**

### **Regional Economy**

Comments similar to the public group.

## **Theme 4**

### **Marketing**

Comments similar to the public group.

## **Theme 5**

### **Societal Attitudes**

The Board believes that people are reading less, there is a growing restriction of personal freedoms and that the attitude of “no new taxes” are all real threats to ALS.

## **Theme 6**

### **Internet**

Again, the Board sees lots of positives from the Internet, but worry about a resulting attitude that there isn't a need for books and libraries.

## **Group #3 – ALS Member Library Directors**

### ***“What are the strengths of the Arrowhead Library System?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

#### **Theme 1**

##### **Being a Part of a System**

Directors cited the economies of scale that come with being a part of a larger system as a real positive. Specifically, they stated their participation in ALS makes the Internet and filtering affordable. The smaller libraries said ALS services are absolutely critical to their survival.

#### **Theme 2**

##### **ILL**

Comments similar to the public group.

#### **Theme 3**

##### **Staff**

Specifically mentioned grant writing, the print shop, automation assistance, and training. They spoke of the capable leadership, the responsive of all staff and the willingness to come out to the smaller libraries.

#### **Theme 4**

##### **Direct Services**

Directors spoke very positively about the delivery services. Many mentioned Mail-a-Book and the Bookmobile.

#### **Theme 5**

##### **Federated System**

Directors like the autonomy that comes with being a part of a federated system.

### ***“What are the weaknesses of the Arrowhead Library System?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

#### **Theme 1**

##### **Size of the Region**

The directors talked about the difficulty of reaching some of the more remote libraries, the difficulty in getting diversity of representation across the region on the Board and in ALS groups, and the perception that libraries that are closer to ALS receive more benefits.

#### **Theme 2**

##### **Federated System**

While some saw this as a strength, others viewed it as a weakness. They spoke of the lack of cooperation between libraries and the “willfulness” of some staff/libraries.

#### **Theme 3**

##### **Lack of Awareness of ALS**

Directors believe that public decision-makers don’t understand the benefits of ALS. Additionally, the fact that ALS is often “transparent” is both a strength and weakness.

***“From your perspective, what are some of the most important opportunities and threats library services should be aware of and maximize (opportunities) or minimize (threats)?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

**Theme 1**

**Funding**

Comments similar to the public group.

**Theme 2**

**Current Political Environment/Societal Attitudes**

Comments similar to the public group.

**Theme 3**

**Regional Demographics**

Comments similar to the public group.

**Theme 4**

**Internet**

Comments similar to the public group.

**Theme 5**

**Regional Economy**

Comments similar to the public group.

**Theme 6**

**Changing Roles of Libraries/Library Staff**

Directors spoke of the need for librarians to serve as “guides” to help patrons navigate all of the information presented through the Internet. They also expressed a concern around the public perception that volunteers can completely fill in the “gaps” that come with staff cuts.

**Theme 7**

**Technology**

Comments similar to the public group.

***“What should ALS look like in 3-5 years?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

**Theme 1**

**It Shouldn't Change Much**

Generally, Directors spoke of wanting things to stay pretty much the same. Primarily they fear the reduction of any of the services and don't want to lose anything they have today.

**Theme 2**

**More Staff**

Directors would like to see additional staff added. Specifically, more IT staff and a dedicated public relations staff to assist with marketing.

### **Theme 3**

#### **More Marketing**

Directors would like to see a regional approach to marketing that is coordinated out of ALS.

#### ***“What are some of the key partnerships library services be exploring to assure future success?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

#### **Theme 1**

##### **Schools**

#### **Theme 2**

##### **Specialized Libraries**

#### **Theme 3**

##### **Social Services**

#### **Theme 4**

##### **Workforce Centers**

### **Group #4 – ALS Staff**

#### ***“What are the strengths of the Arrowhead Library System?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

#### **Theme 1**

##### **ALS Services**

Staff cited Bookmobile, Mail-a-Book, ILL, programs, workshops, delivery and tech support as some of the most important strengths.

#### **Theme 2**

##### **Sense of Pride**

The sense of pride employees feel is very strong. They talked about ALS as the “best regional system in the state.” They believe that ALS is a seamless system and that fact that it is often “invisible” to the public reflects on a job well done.

#### **Theme 3**

##### **Flexibility**

Staff appreciates the flexibility offered them by ALS management.

#### ***“What are the weaknesses of the Arrowhead Library System?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

## **Theme 1**

### **Marketing**

Staff believes it is important to heighten the awareness of ALS. They would like to see the website, Mail-a-Book, and Bookmobile more aggressively promoted. Additionally, they believe it is critical that elected officials have a better understanding of ALS.

## **Theme 2**

### **Funding**

Comments similar to the public group.

## **Theme 3**

### **Federated System**

Staff find it difficult to get some member libraries on board with ALS initiatives – e.g. some libraries still aren't automated.

***“From your perspective, what are some of the most important opportunities and threats library services should be aware of and maximize (opportunities) or minimize (threats)?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

## **Theme 1**

### **Funding**

Comments similar to the public group.

## **Theme 2**

### **Regional Demographics**

Comments similar to the public group.

## **Theme 3**

### **Regional Economy**

Comments similar to the public group.

## **Theme 4**

### **Internet**

Comments similar to the public group.

***“What should ALS look like in 3-5 years?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

## **Theme 1**

### **Do More/Be Bigger**

Staff suggested that the future requires that they provide more of what they already provide. This will require more staff, a PR person and more technical support.

## **Theme 2**

### **More Automation**

Staff suggested that Bookmobile and Mail-a-Book should be automated, that a wireless mobile lab be established, and that Internet II be implemented.

### **Theme 3**

#### **Provide Services in Different Ways**

Staff suggested exploring multi-use buildings and drive-up windows.

***“What are some of the key partnerships library services be exploring to assure future success?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

### **Theme 1**

#### **Schools**

### **Theme 2**

#### **Elected Officials**

### **Theme 3**

#### **Senior Services**

### **Theme 4**

#### **NCLC**

### **Theme 5**

#### **Northeast Service Cooperative**

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

### ***“What are the strengths of the Arrowhead Library System?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

#### **Theme 1 Inter-library Loan**

#### **Theme 2 Being a Part of a System**

#### **Theme 3 Delivery**

#### **Theme 4 Programs**

#### **Theme 5 ALS Staff**

#### **Theme 6 Print Shop**

### ***“What are the weaknesses of the Arrowhead Library System?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

The majority of the respondents indicated that they couldn't identify any weaknesses.

#### **Theme 1 Funding**

Comments similar to the public group.

#### **Theme 2 Member Libraries**

Member library staff indicated that other ALS libraries don't know enough about ALS functions and services, that there are too many small libraries in the system, too much disagreement amongst member libraries and that there is an overall inability to get cooperation, coordination to streamline activities.

### **Theme 3**

#### **Staff**

Member library staff indicated that there is a need for more ALS professional staff – particularly more tech support. Additionally, there was a concern that ALS doesn't understand front-line library issues.

### **Theme 4**

#### **Marketing**

Reflective of comments from all groups.

***“From your perspective, what are some of the most important opportunities and threats library services should be aware of and maximize (opportunities) or minimize (threats)?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

### **Theme 1**

#### **Funding**

Member library staff fear there will be fewer staff, reduced collections and reduced hours if more funding cuts happen.

### **Theme 2**

#### **Current Political Environment/Societal Attitudes**

See comments from all groups.

### **Theme 3**

#### **Regional Demographics**

See comments from all groups.

### **Theme 4**

#### **Internet**

See comments from all groups.

***“What should ALS look like in the future?”***

Following are the themes with sample comments from the above question.

### **Theme 1**

#### **Stronger Member Library System**

While there is a desire for member libraries to maintain their autonomy there is also a desire that all libraries get on the same system. In other words, Duluth Public Library and ALS migrate their databases.

### **Theme 2**

#### **Automation**

All member libraries in ALS are automated providing seamless service across the region.

### **Theme 3**

#### **Collection**

More and newer large print, more and newer video and audio.

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

### Projected Population Changes in the Arrowhead Region 2000 to 2010

#### Ages 0 to 14 years:

- State 1%
- Cook, Lake, Carlton, and Itasca Counties will increase 0 to 8%
- Lake of the Woods, Koochiching, and St. Louis Counties will decrease -24 to 0%
- A decline of 15% or more is projected for Koochiching County

#### Ages 15 to 24 years:

- The 15 to 24 year old population will remain concentrated in large urban counties and in counties with college and university campuses

#### Ages 25 to 44 years:

- State -1%
- Cook County will increase by 8 to 20%
- Lake and Lake of the Woods Counties will increase 0 to 8%
- St. Louis, Koochiching, Itasca, and Carlton Counties will decrease -21 to 0%

#### Ages 45 to 64:

- State 36%
- Carlton County will increase 31 to 82%
- Cook County will increase 23 to 31%
- Lake, St. Louis, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, and Itasca Counties will increase 9 to 23%

#### Ages 65 +

- State 14%
- Cook, Lake, and Itasca Counties will increase 15 to 58%
- St. Louis, Carlton, and Lake of the Woods Counties will increase -13 to 0%
- Koochiching County will decrease -13 to 0%

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center October 2002, Minnesota Population Projections 2000 to 2003.

## **Serving the Generation “Born with the Chip”**

The Next Generation, born between 1982 and 2002, is 22 years of age and younger.

They view information as information and see little difference in credibility or entertainment value.

Librarians need to:

- Encourage highly formed multiliteracy skills.
- Help them develop the ability to evaluate sources.

They expect information and entertainment to be available whenever they need it, and wherever they are.

Librarian and Libraries:

- Need to deliver good quality interactive remote information sources.
- Will be irrelevant if not accessible on the devices the NextGens use (wireless PDA's and digital phones and laptops).
- Need to have databases displayed on devices kids use.

They expect all information appliances Bdesktop, mobile telephones, and PDA's will support multitasking.

Librarians need to:

- Update Netscape and MS Internet Explorer.
- Have PC's with sound cards.
- Allow email.
- Allow Java.
- Have PC's that have the ability for streaming media.

They prefer content-rich web pages, as opposed to table-of-contents; researchers will use video game-type interfaces to find answers to questions.

Libraries need:

- Streaming media, pictures, MP-3, maps, 3-D museum objects.
- Rich visuals.

They collaborates as a core ethos, e.g., in multiplayer web games, with IM (Instant Messaging) collaborates, virtual classrooms, and chat rooms.

They are ready for “Ask a Librarian” virtual reference.

They do not distinguish between private and public domains (webcams, blogs, camera phones) and the learning environment and entertainment (gaming).

Librarians need to:

- Be integrated with the virtual environment as coach, mentor, and information advisor.
- Focus on how to improve the quality of the questions since NextGens will continue their research investigations beyond the library in a self-service environment.

They have a well-defined value system (high levels of veganism, vegetarianism, political action, environmentalism, and volunteerism).

Libraries need to:

- Have collections that balance alternative, ethnic, student, and religious viewpoints and mainstream periodicals, books, and newspapers.

They have been tested and diagnosed for physical and learning challenges; NextGens are knowledgeable about what adaptations they need to succeed.

Libraries need to:

- Have dozens of adaptive technologies stored on a central server that can be invoked with an ID card.

They will ask for help and will express dissatisfaction with services that do not meet their expectations.

Librarians need to:

- Reexamine services and look for opportunities to shift resources and change or stop doing some thing.
- Need extra sensitivity to cross-generational issues.

Source: Library Journal, May 1, 2004, pages 34-37.

## Serving Seniors

Libraries need to be working with 3 generations of seniors ages 43+.

### **Ages 79+ (GI Generation)**

- Feel cheated out of their youth.
- Are a social generation.
- Like to volunteer for the social.
- Use libraries as social centers.
- They are readers. They want written information.

#### **Need:**

- Health information.
- Personal visits at home.
- Transportation to the library.

### **Ages 61 to 78 (The Silent Generation)**

- Started Civil Rights and Feminists Movements.
- Question how we are going to pay for all the government services.
- Want to work part-time.
- Reject "Seniors Only" programs.
- Have options for activities.
- Have money.

#### **Need:**

- Health information.
- Housing information.
- Investment information.
- How to grandparent, buy toys and books for grand kids, how to tell stories to grand kids.
- Want to volunteer at meaningful job.
- Library Foundation needs to "court".

### **Ages 43 to 60 (Boomers)**

- The credit card generation.
- Will inherit.
- Want academic community.
- Want condos.
- Reject Senior Communities.

#### **Need:**

- Travel information.
- Retirement planning.
- Health insurance information.
- Career development.
- Their input is crucial to planning programs.
- Communication by direct mail and email.

Source: Melinda Lucwiczak, Sky Senior Center, Presentation at MLA, Fall, 2003.

## **Marketing to Non-users in Minnesota**

- Inform the public about services provided by the library, particularly those beyond the core services of checking out printed materials.
- Stress the use of the Internet as a way for Greater MN residents to avail themselves of library services.
- Make building changes to increase the “user-friendliness” of library facilities and publicize the enhancements.
- Popularize the library as a place for quiet reading, study, and thought.

Source: Decision Resources, Ltd., Findings and Analysis: 2003 Minnesota Statewide Public Library Usage Study

## Diversity

English is overwhelming the prominent language spoken in the home in northeastern Minnesota. One measure of a region's diversity is language. Data provided by the State Demographic Center in the Minnesota Department of Administration identifies languages "spoken in the home" for students in each K-12 school district. In northeastern Minnesota, the only school district showing significant language diversity is Duluth, the region's only major population center. Data from the Duluth school district indicates that 117 students identified thirteen languages other than English as being spoken in the home. Thirty-nine students identified Hmong as the language spoken in their home, and 17 identified Chinese.

No other district had more than eleven students identifying languages other than English spoken in the home, and no other district had more than four students identifying any one language other than English.

At the time this data was collected, there appeared to be minimal language-based diversity, outside of the Duluth school district, in the ALS service area.

## **Market Survey Highlights**

In June 2004, the firm of MarketLine Research, Inc. conducted a telephone survey with a random sampling of 600 northeastern Minnesota residents. The ALS planning project Coordinating Team, Carolyn Bacon, and staff from MarketLine developed and refined a survey instrument to collect information concerning usage of area libraries, satisfaction with library services, and futures of library services. While the amount of data collected was considerable, some of the highlights include:

- , There seems to be a high level of awareness of ALS: 89% of respondents were aware of ALS prior to the survey and even eight out of ten respondents who identified themselves as “non-users” of ALS services in the past year were still aware of ALS.
- , Over half of the respondents either don't know or have an incorrect understanding that their library card can be used at any public library in Minnesota: 34% had an incorrect understanding of the card benefit and 20% didn't know the card is valid at other Minnesota public libraries.
- , Over two-thirds of the respondents (69%) didn't know about the ability to contact ALS electronically; only 12% of the respondents have used the online catalog from outside of a library building and are probably unaware that the catalog and other resources are accessible at home via the Internet. However, those using the online catalog and online databases were highly satisfied with those services.
- , There was a strong willingness to donate money to a public library: 71% of the respondents expressed a willingness to donate.
- , Somewhat surprisingly, respondents offered a fairly lukewarm response to what have been considered to be national trends in libraries: only 50% believed that libraries should provide “wireless access” access to the Internet; and only 48% believed that libraries should provide “digital information on demand.”
- , Customer service and customer satisfaction among by respondents who use northeastern Minnesota's public libraries was rated very high.
- , It was not possible to distinguish “library users” from “non-users” using demographic characteristics.

## **Arrowhead Library System Overview of State Grant and County Funding Charts 1988-2003**

### **State and County Funding Budget Trend**

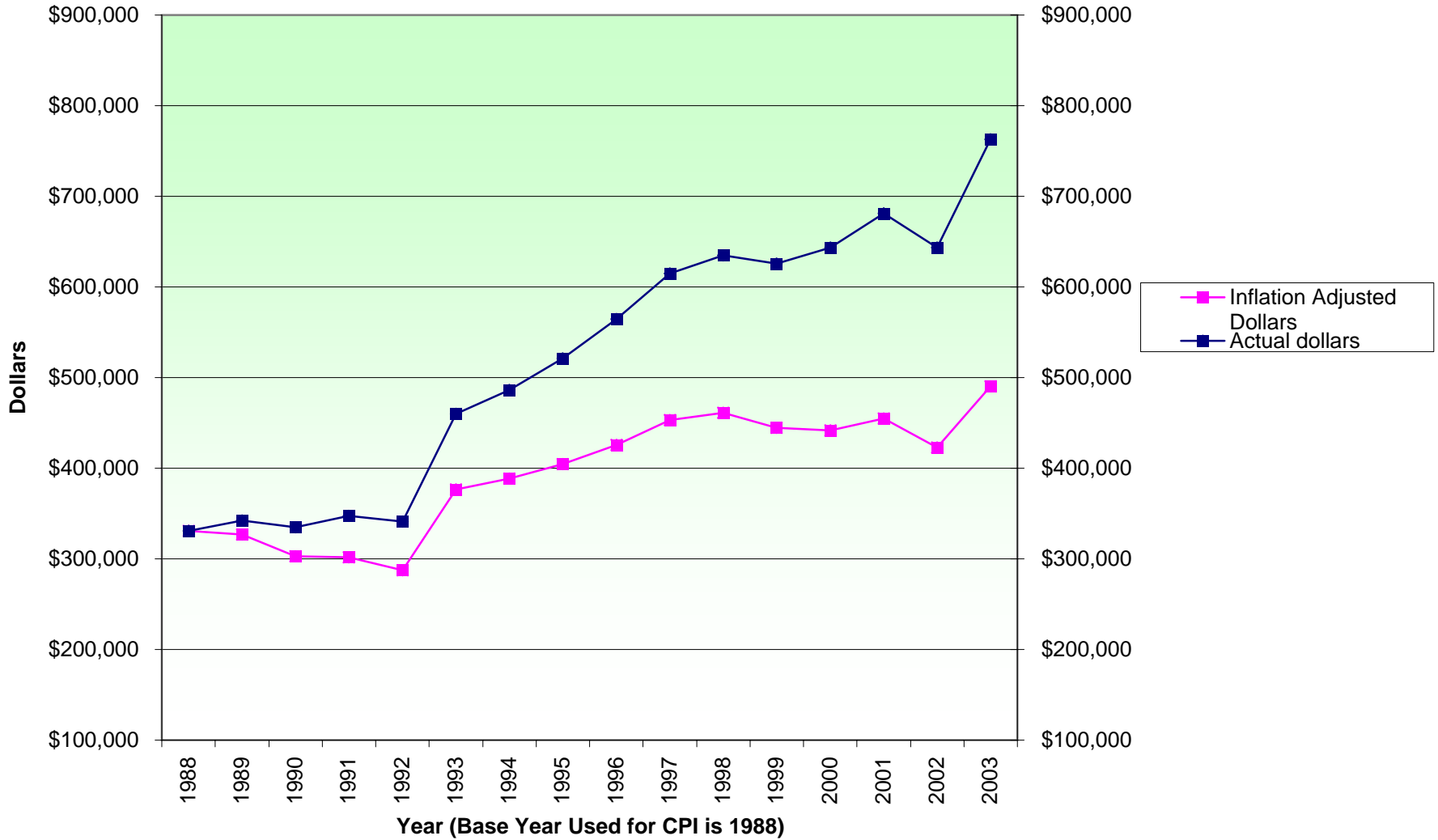
A review of county funding statistics between 1988 and 2003 shows that county funding has kept up with inflation and actually surpassed inflation (Graph A). In other words, our county dollar purchasing power (in terms of inflation) has been increasing. In contrast, a review of state funding statistics between 1988 and 2003 shows that Basic System Support (state) funding has barely kept up with inflation (Graph B). In other words, our state dollar purchasing power (in terms of inflation) has been relatively stagnant. Of the two funding sources, state funding provided 64% of the total in 1988 and 57% of the total in 2003. Of the two funding sources, county funding provided 36% of the total in 1988 and 43% of the total in 2003. If this trend continues into the future, county dollars will continue to supplant state dollars (Tables and Pie Charts C).

Summary by Shari Fisher

Note – this comparison does not take into consideration any regional library telecommunications aid received from the state to help defray Internet access costs for ALS headquarters and member libraries.

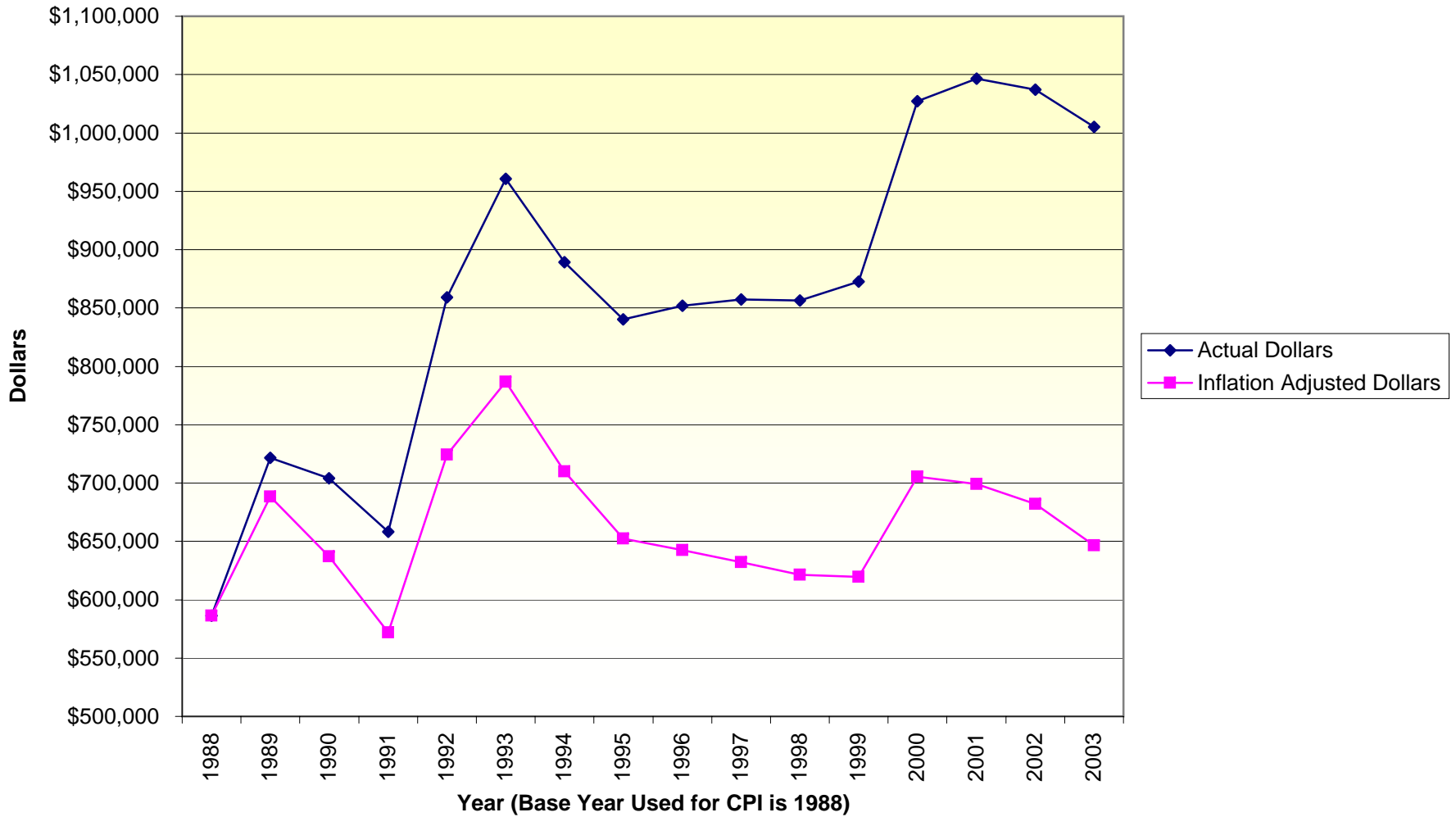
# Arrowhead Library System

## County Tax Receipt Dollars 1988-2003 Actual Dollars Contrasted with Inflation Factor Dollars



### Arrowhead Library System

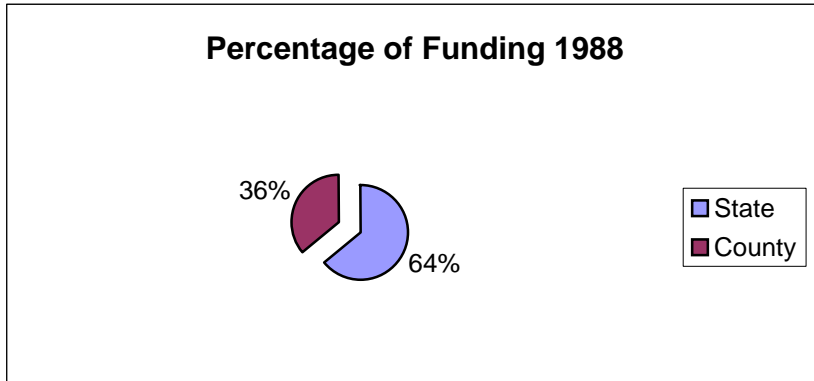
#### State Grant 1988 - 2003 Actual Dollars Contrasted with Inflation Factor Dollars



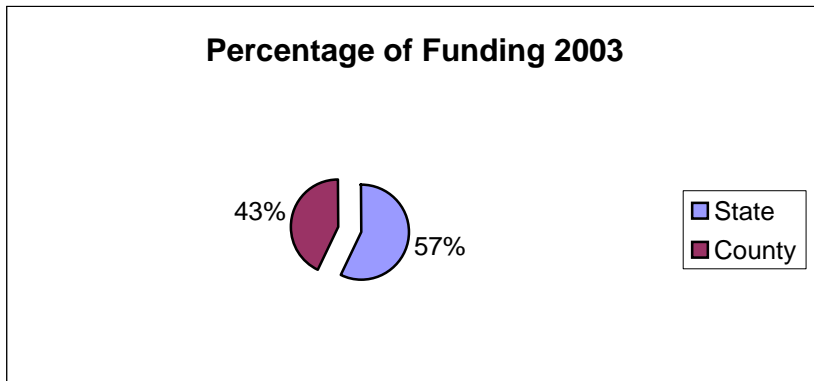
The United States Department of Labor CPI Statistics were used.

Arrowhead Library System  
 State and County Funding Comparison 1988 and 2003

1988		
<b>State</b>	\$ 586,443.00	63.92%
<b>County</b>	\$ 331,035.00	36.08%
	\$ 917,478.00	100.00%



2003		
<b>State</b>	\$ 1,005,322.00	56.86%
<b>County</b>	\$ 762,628.00	43.14%
	\$ 1,767,950.00	100.00%



# Appendix



## **Arrowhead Library System**

### **Public Decision Makers Focus Group Questions**

1. From your perspective, what are the strengths of the current library services?
2. From your perspective, what are the weaknesses of the current library services?
3. From your perspective, what are some of the most important opportunities library services should be aware of and maximize (3-5 year timeframe)?
4. From you perspective, what are some of the most important threats library services should be aware of and attempt to minimize (3-5 year timeframe)?
5. What should library services look like in 3-5 years?
6. What are some of the key partnerships library services should be exploring to assure future success?
7. What else do you want to tell us that you haven't had a chance to mention?

## **Arrowhead Library System Board Focus Group Questions**

1. What are your expectations for the strategic planning process? What would happen (the result for you to believe it has been successful)?
2. What are your hopes and dreams for the Arrowhead Library System?
3. What are some of the greatest threats to the ALS that we need to be aware of? (external)
4. What are some of the greatest opportunities for the ALS upon which we should capitalize? (external)
5. What are some of the greatest strengths of the ALS? (internal)
6. Some of the most significant weaknesses? (internal)
7. How/when would you like to be kept “in the loop” about the planning process?
8. What else should we be aware of/thoughtful about as we do this planning work?

## **Arrowhead Library System** Library Director Focus Group Questions

1. From your perspective, what are the strengths of ALS services?
2. From your perspective, what are the weaknesses of ALS services?
3. From your perspective, what are some of the most important opportunities ALS should be aware of and maximize and some of the most important threats ALS should be aware of and attempt to minimize (3-5 year timeframe)?
4. What should ALS look like in the next 3-5 years?
5. What do you envision for the future in your communities and how will that (envisioned future) affect ALS as a whole?
6. What should ALS look like in 3-5 years?
7. What are some of the key partnerships ALS should be exploring to assure future success?

## **Arrowhead Library System** **ALS Staff Focus Group Questions**

1. From your perspective, what are the strengths of ALS services?
2. From your perspective, what are the weaknesses of ALS services?
3. From your perspective, what are some of the most important opportunities ALS should be aware of and maximize and some of the most important threats ALS should be aware of and attempt to minimize (3-5 year timeframe)?
4. What should ALS look like in the next 3-5 years?
5. What are some of the key partnerships ALS should be exploring to assure future success?



<b>ALS Service/Program Description</b>	
	<p><b>Administrative Services</b>            (Helping libraries find alternative funding sources such as grant sources and grant writing assistance; lobbying efforts; providing professional and legislative information; being a liaison for information/idea sharing and problem solving within the region, with other regions and agencies.)</p>
	<p><b>Best-seller Program</b></p>
	<p><b>Consulting Services</b>            (Consulting/Advice from ALS professional and technical staff.)</p>
	<p><b>Coordinating and/or Supporting Library Programs</b>            (Examples: Kids Stuff, Summer and Winter Reading Programs, etc...)</p>
	<p><b>Coordinating Regional Automation Project</b>            (This includes all technical and application support for the Horizon system as well as coordinating OCLC and CatExpress services. It also includes providing library patron cards and hosting COMPASS meetings.)</p>
	<p><b>Crossover Reimbursements</b></p>
	<p><b>Delivery Services</b></p>
	<p><b>General Book Collections</b>            (This includes large print collections, and regular print fiction and non-fiction available to member libraries.)</p>
	<p><b>ILL (Inter-library loan) Services</b></p>
	<p><b>Non-print Collections</b>            (This includes Bi-Folkal Kits, Story-telling Kits, Ironworld Discovery Kits, Described Videos, etc... This does <b>not</b> include the rotating video and audio book collections.)</p>
	<p><b>Other Technical Support and Services</b>            (This includes technical support not related to regional automation or PC repair. Examples include: troubleshooting telecommunications and networking problems; coordinating filtering project (iPrism); coordinating e-rate; joint purchase of Biography Resource Center.)</p>
	<p><b>PC Support and Repair</b></p>
	<p><b>Print Shop Services</b></p>
	<p><b>Providing E-mail and Internet Access to Member Libraries</b></p>
	<p><b>Training and Workshops for Member Library Staff</b>            (This includes providing registration fees for conferences/programs. It also includes the ALS Professional Collection which supports training.)</p>
	<p><b>Video and Audio Book Rotations</b></p>

## **Arrowhead Library System**

- 17,000 Square Miles
- 7 Counties
- 29 Public Libraries
- 1 Library serves a population of 86,918
- 1 Library serves a population of 20,635
- 3 Libraries serve a population of 9,157 to 17,071
- 2 Libraries serves a population of 4,960 to 6,606
- 7 Libraries serve a population of 2,052 to 3,739
- 7 Libraries serve a population under 1,999
- 7 Libraries serve a population under 999
- 1 Library serves a population of 80
- 7 School Districts, 1 Charter School, 1 Special Library on Automated Catalog
- 5 Libraries not automated on Integrated Library Catalog

## Carlton County

860 Square Miles

### Total Population 31,671

- White 29,057
- American Indian and Alaska Native 1,644
- Black or African American 308
- Hispanic 266

24.0 % to 26.2% of population under age 18

- Poverty rate for children is 5.0% to 10.0% percent

12.1% to 17.8% of population age 65 and older

### Language Spoken in the Home

- English

### 3 Libraries

- Cloquet *circulation 146,586*
- Moose Lake *circulation 49,235*
- Carlton *circulation 10,244 not automated*

9 Bookmobile Stops *circulation 3,720*

359 Mail-A-Book Households *circulation 6,017*

Sources: <http://www.epodunk.com>; <http://www.demography.state.mn.us>, Census 2000: Race Population by County, Minnesota's Children in the 2000 Census by Barbara Ronnigen, Population Under 18 Years of Age in 2000, Census 2000: Population Over 65 by County in Minnesota, Language Spoken in the Home; Minnesota Public Library Report 2003; ALS, Bookmobile and Mail-A-Book Statistics 2003.  
6/23/04

## Cook County

1,460 Square Miles

### Total Population 5,168

- White 4,623
- American Indian and Alaska Native 392

20.3% to 24.0% of population under age 18

- Poverty rate for children is 10.0% to 15.0%

12.1% to 17.8% of population age 65 and older

### Language Spoken in the Home

- English

1 Library

- Grand Marais *circulation 59,308*

0 Bookmobile Stops

76 Mail-A-Book Households *circulation 1,102*

Sources: <http://www.epodunk.com>; <http://www.demography.state.mn.us>, Census 2000: Race Population by County, Minnesota's Children in the 2000 Census by Barbara Ronnigen, Population Under 18 Years of Age in 2000, Census 2000: Population Over 65 by County in Minnesota, Language Spoken in the Home; Minnesota Public Library Report 2003; ALS, Bookmobile and Mail-A-Book Statistics 2003.

6/23/04

## Itasca County

2,665 Square Miles

### Total Population 43,992

- White 41,632
- American Indian and Alaska Native 1,497
- Asian 120
- Hispanic or Latino 263

24.0% to 26.2% of population under age 18

- Poverty rate for children is 10.0% to 15.0%

12.1% to 17.8% of population age 65 or older

### Language Spoken in the Home

- English

### 6 Libraries

- Grand Rapids *circulation 182,465*
- Coleraine *circulation 15,875*
- Keewatin *circulation 8,541*
- Calumet *circulation 5,227 not automated*
- Bovey *circulation 4,068*
- Marble *circulation 3,290*

18 Bookmobile Stops *circulation 8,794*

681 Mail-A-Book Households *circulation 17,528*

Sources: <http://www.epodunk.com>; <http://www.demography.state.mn.us>, Census 2000: Race Population by County, Minnesota's Children in the 2000 Census by Barbara Ronnigen, Population Under 18 Years of Age in 2000, Census 2000: Population Over 65 by County in Minnesota, Language Spoken in the Home; Minnesota Public Library Report 2003; ALS, Bookmobile and Mail-A-Book Statistics 2003.

## Koochiching County

3,102 Square Miles

### Total Population 14,355

- White 13,798
- American Indian and Alaska Native 309

20.3% to 24.0% of population under age 18

- Poverty rate for children is 15.0% to 27.7%

17.8% to 22.0% of population age 65 and older

### Language Spoken in the Home

- English

1 Library

- International Falls *circulation 84,911*

8 Bookmobile Stops *circulation 2,291*

271 Mail-A-Book Households *circulation 5,718*

Sources: <http://www.epodunk.com>; <http://www.demography.state.mn.us>, Census 2000: Race Population by County, Minnesota's Children in the 2000 Census by Barbara Ronnigen, Population Under 18 Years of Age in 2000, Census 2000: Population Over 65 by County in Minnesota, Language Spoken in the Home; Minnesota Public Library Report 2003; ALS, Bookmobile and Mail-A-Book Statistics 2003.

## Lake County

2,099 Square Miles

### Total Population 11,058

- White 10,836

20.3% to 24.0% of population under age 18

- Poverty rate of 5.0% to 10.0%

17.8% to 22.0% of population age 65 or older

### Language Spoken in the Home

- English

### 2 Libraries

- Two Harbors *circulation 69,109*
- Silver Bay *circulation 48,997*

1 Bookmobile Stop *circulation 231*

123 Mail-A-Book Households *circulation 2,905*

Sources: <http://www.epodunk.com>; <http://www.demography.state.mn.us>, Census 2000: Race Population by County, Minnesota's Children in the 2000 Census by Barbara Ronnigen, Population Under 18 Years of Age in 2000, Census 2000: Population Over 65 by County in Minnesota, Language Spoken in the Home; Minnesota Public Library Report 2003; ALS, Bookmobile and Mail-A-Book Statistics 2003.

## Lake of the Woods County

1,296 Square Miles

### Total Population 4,522

- White 4,396

24.0% to 26.0% of population under age 18

- Poverty rate for children is 5.0% to 10.0%

12.1% to 17.8% of population age 65 or older

### Language Spoken in the Home

- English

1 Library

- Baudette Public Library *circulation 14,359*

0 Bookmobile Stops

193 Mail-A-Book Households *circulation 2,426*

Sources: <http://www.epodunk.com>; <http://www.demography.state.mn.us>, Census 2000: Race Population by County, Minnesota's Children in the 2000 Census by Barbara Ronnigen, Population Under 18 Years of Age in 2000, Census 2000: Population Over 65 by County in Minnesota, Language Spoken in the Home; Minnesota Public Library Report 2003; ALS, Bookmobile and Mail-A-Book Statistics 2003.

## St. Louis County

6,225 Square Miles

### Total Population 200,528

- White 190,211
- American Indian and Alaska Native 4,074
- Black or African American 1,704
- Hispanic or Latino 1,597
- Asian 1,333

20.3% to 24.0% of population under age 18

- Poverty rate for children is 10.0% to 15.0%

12.1% to 17.8% of population age 65 and older

### Language Spoken in the Home

- English
- Hmong

### 15 Libraries

- Duluth *circulation 972,650 automated on Gaylord Polaris*
- Virginia *circulation 202,500*
- Hibbing *circulation 147,283*
- Ely *circulation 55,300*
- Babbitt *circulation 39,365*
- Aurora *circulation 35,087*
- Gilbert *circulation 25,448*
- Hoyt Lakes *circulation 23,920*
- Cook *circulation 23,600 not automated on an integrated library system*
- Eveleth *circulation 21,464*
- Chisholm *circulation 20,669*
- Mountain Iron *circulation 12,498*
- Buhl *circulation 8,298*
- McKinley *circulation 1,945 not automated*
- Kinney *circulation 293 not automated*

36 Bookmobile Stops *circulation 29,930*

1,392 Mail-A-Book Households *circulation 25,449*

Sources: <http://www.epodunk.com>; <http://www.demography.state.mn.us>; Minnesota Public Library Report 2003;  
ALS, Bookmobile and Mail-A-Book Statistics 2003. 6/23/04