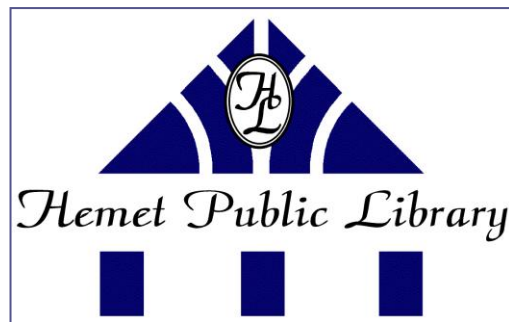


# Performance Audit

## Report of Findings and Recommendations

Prepared for the Hemet Public Library



August 17, 2009

Jeanne Goodrich Consulting

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PERFORMANCE AUDIT PURPOSE & METHODOLOGY

This performance audit is designed to review and evaluate current library operations, compare current library operations, staffing, and budget with similar public libraries, provide recommendations for performance and outcome measurements for the library, and provide an assessment of how efficiently the library is operating with available resources.

The audit was conducted by gathering and reviewing background information such as the budget, performance measurements and statistics, various reports, surveying staff members regarding their work activities, processes, and opinions, touring the library and observing work processes and activities, and meeting and talking with a number of staff members and the Library Director.

### OVERALL ASSESSMENT

#### HIGH RETURN ON INVESTMENT; HIGH LEVEL OF EFFICIENCY

The Hemet Public Library provides a return on investment of over \$5 for every tax dollar invested in its collections and services. This figure was computed using very conservative methodology and is deemed highly credible. In addition, the library is a key community institution in support of children and families, education, community building, the free and open exchange of ideas, the joy and utility of reading, and the pursuit of worthwhile leisure activities. There is no way to compute a monetary value but these intangible benefits are understood by both the community at large and library users and are reflected in the regard held for the staff and services of the Hemet Public Library.

The library is staffed by dedicated, customer service oriented employees and managers who have worked and are continuing to work to ensure that the highest level of service is provided in the most efficient manner possible. Despite nearly debilitating cuts in hours and staffing, the library continues to provide a remarkable array of services and a broad selection of library materials, all geared to meet the identified needs of community members.

When compared to similar public libraries, the Hemet Public Library employees provide far more services per staff member and rank well above others in the circulation of library materials and the relevance of library collections despite being open fewer hours, having fewer paid staff, and having a lower operating budget. They have adopted a number of technological solutions to handle their growing workload, have found ways to utilize a large number of community volunteers to complement paid staff, and have developed a service model that supports customer self-sufficiency without sacrificing quality customer service.

The library is well managed, despite having few employees other than the Library Director with supervisory responsibilities. Annual goals and performance measurements are identified, tracked, and reported upon. Everyone on staff works serving the public, so everyone contributes to handling the workload and providing the high level of customer service the library prides itself upon and that the community appreciates.

Only a small number of deficiencies or inefficiencies were identified. The library is basically a model of best practices, especially for a medium-sized library with a very small number of paid staff members and a constricted number of public service hours.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Revise library performance measures to raise objectives if the library is currently achieving or exceeding levels set. For example, 70% of the community rated the library as good or better in the community survey. Library users should rate the library even higher, since they are familiar with its services.
- Remove the performance measure that addresses the percentage of usage of available computer time since the library is basically using 100% of its capacity.
- Add a performance measure that addresses turnover rate (circulation divided by library holdings) because this is a key measurement of collection relevance. If a library has a high turnover rate it means that its collections are desirable to its customers.
- Conduct a customer survey. The goal of administering a customer satisfaction survey has been on the list for a couple of years but hasn't yet been met. It's imperative that the library ask its customers how it's doing and how it could improve its services. The qualitative data gathered will serve as a complement to the quantitative data already gathered and analyzed.
- Set a goal of 85%-90% of respondents to the customer survey indicating that the library does an excellent or good job providing services.
- Continue to compute the tangible benefits the library provides to the community and publicize them. The library has a compelling story to tell and represents very positive return on the taxpayers' investment in it.
- Continue to track and compare Hemet Public Library key performance measurements with those of comparable public libraries.
- Identify, track, and compare key productivity measurements, such as circulation and reference per FTE.
- Continue to keep performance and trend statistics. Calculate percentage changes as an additional way to analyze data.
- Continue to proactively seek out technological solutions to issues raised by increasing workload and decreasing paid staff. Communicate why solutions are being sought, what solutions are to be adopted, and include staff in discussion of implementation. With so

much happening within the reduced schedule, staff members are sometimes left wondering about the changes that are being considered or that have been implemented.

- The library is doing many things right. However, the reason for changes in processes or service models is not always clear to employees. Extra care must be taken to communicate what changes are taking place and why.
- Study all steps and tasks of various activities to identify additional ways to streamline and simplify activities. Use the methodologies and forms in *Staffing for Results* as resources for this analysis. Use the impact on the end user as the criterion for success.
- Specify and purchase two or three automated bin sorters to go with the RFID enabled book drop return. Reconfigure circulation workroom to accommodate sorters and redesign work processes to minimize duplicate handling and the easy identification of exceptions and holds.
- Redesign the materials receiving area so that it is out of the main work room traffic flow and so that people unpacking and receiving materials have enough room to handle incoming materials. Consider using the large conference table as the receiving work surface.
- Use the methodology and forms in *Staffing for Results* as the basis for staff analysis of work space and materials work flow. Work through all identified work flow and cluttered space issues. Request supplemental funding from the library budget or Friends so that a special team can be paid to declutter staff work areas.
- Set an ambitious but attainable target of 90% of circulation going through self-check machines. Identify ways to reconfigure the circulation desk so that library customers are cued to check materials out themselves. Train staff and volunteers to assist and train customers so that they know how to use self-check. Publicize self-check as a positive alternative to staff assisted checkout, citing the benefits and convenience of this preferred alternative.
- Define standard check in procedures as behind the scenes, behind the desk activities so that staff are not seen as the preferred check out option. This will provide both a more efficient way to handle check ins and holds materials and serve as an encouragement for customers to handle check outs without staff intervention.
- Determine the amount of magazine and newspaper processing necessary, with an eye towards minimizing the amount of staff time spent on this activity. Actively question each step in the current processing routine.
- Review current loan policies. Is it still necessary to limit the number and types of materials checked out? Is it necessary to limit the number of renewals at the current level? What would the customer service and convenience impact be of making these policies more liberal?
- Continue to proactively seek out technologies that can expand the ways that the library interacts with users and that allows library staff to interact with users in the most meaningful, value added ways. Adopt technologies that promote services that users want

and that help staff manage workload. For example, many users want the ability to pay fines and fees online with a debit or credit card. Libraries that have adopted this service have found that their revenue from these sources has gone up.

- Review the current approach to programming for each age grouping. Look at ways to maximize the impact of programming and the relationship of programming to the library's service priorities. Monitor and track the average number of attendees at programs to determine the "bang for the buck" return on investment of staff time on various types of programs. Set an attendance level that makes sense (for example, ten or more attendees) and review average attendance of programs as part of the program evaluation process.
- Use the coverage calculator provided to determine what levels of coverage can be provided by currently budgeted staff positions. Experiment with various assumptions.
- Use change management guidelines to manage changes that the library will have to make to deal with constricted public service hours, increased workload, and reduced staff. Identify best ways to communicate issues and changes and test for staff understanding of changes and rationale for them.
- Consider various communications methods, including:
  - Use of whiteboard to communicate late-breaking changes in policies, procedures, processes
  - Brief morning huddle before opening to identify major issues, expected visitors, staffing issues, issues carried over from previous day, etc.
  - Use of Employee Assistance Program or community resources to help with internal communications issues, facilitation of problem solving sessions, etc.
  - Use of email and/or staff intranet to communicate policies, changes in procedures, software upgrades, problem identification and resolution, etc. All staff, including part time staff should have access to email communications and any websites or intranet sites used for library information and communication.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT PROJECT

Jeanne Goodrich Consulting was hired by the City of Hemet to review and evaluate current library operations, compare current library operations, staffing, and budget with similar public libraries, assist in developing performance and outcome measurements for the library, and provide an assessment of how efficiently the library is running with available resources.

Specific deliverables will include a written report with findings and recommendations, suggested performance and outcome measurements and metrics, analytical tools to be used to compare the Hemet Public Library (HPL) with other comparable public libraries, recommendations for resolving any perceived inefficiencies in operation, and a presentation of the findings and recommendations to the Hemet City Council and the Library Board.

This performance audit was undertaken at a time when the library had undergone a reduction of 30% of its operating budget over the last two years, with additional reductions slated to take effect on July 1, 2009. In order to respond to this severe cut, the library had already downsized its staff, reduced its hours (from an already low 44 hours a week to 38 hours a week, providing only four open days weekly), reengineered a number of work processes, reevaluated services, and reduced its expenditures on library materials. Within this context, the Library Director wanted an objective evaluation of library operations.

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### PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The consultant reviewed background information provided by the library, including available service and output statistics, the budget, staffing allocations and job descriptions, the union contract, and various reports. In addition, survey forms were prepared and distributed to all staff members. The survey asked for details about how each employee spent his or her time, requested information about work space and equipment, and asked for the employees' opinions on work flow and work activities. An extraordinary 100% return rate meant that the consultant was able to hear, through the submitted surveys, from every staff member.

This background information provided a beginning context for two days spent on site, conducting interviews with the Library Director and supervisors, meeting and talking with staff members, observing work processes and activities throughout the library, and observing staff and volunteer interactions with library customers.

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The consultant was impressed with the openness and positive approach to the project evinced by the Library Director, supervisors and staff members. Library employees provided requested

information and thoughtful comments and suggestions. Background information and statistical data was provided in a timely and thorough manner, which contributed greatly to the consultant's ability to grasp context and work environment.

## THE HEMET PUBLIC LIBRARY

Founded by visionary local women in 1908, the Hemet Public Library has been tax supported by city residents since 1910. It is one of eight independent city libraries in Riverside County which, along with the Riverside County Library and the Beaumont Library District, provide services to people



throughout the county. The library serves approximately 74,000 people over a 26 square mile service area, through one 52,000 square foot facility, located in downtown Hemet.

The library provides a broad array of library services, from the traditional loaning of books and audiovisual materials, answering of questions, and provision of children's programming to the "new basic" services of public PCs, book discussion groups, and free wireless access for those who bring their own laptops to the library. In addition, HPL offers adult literacy and Families for Literacy programs for English speaking adults and their families (tutoring is provided by trained volunteers) and a local history collection and services through the Heritage Room (staffed by volunteers from the local historical society).

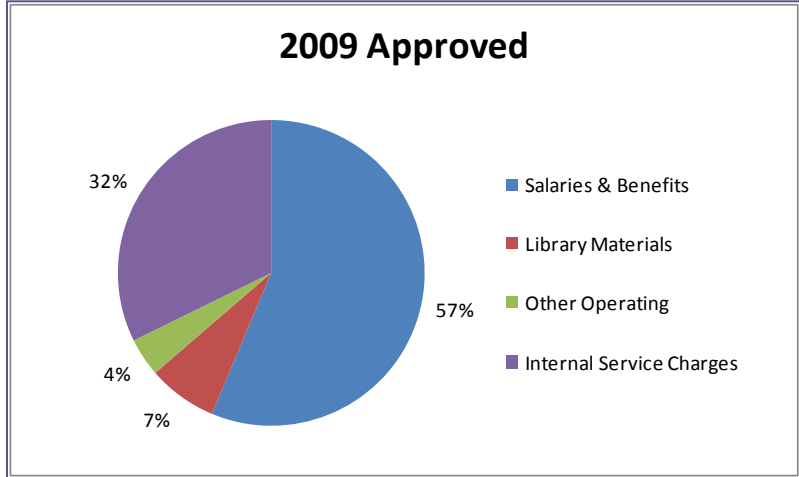
The library is a department of Hemet city government. Library services are planned, managed, and provided by 10.5 full time equivalent (FTE) staff members and a large cadre of volunteers (29,053 hours of volunteer time was donated in FY 09, equivalent to 14 FTE).<sup>1</sup> A five person Library Board advises the City Manager and City Council regarding library policies, budget, facilities, and community needs in support of providing quality library services.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of paid staff has been dropping over the last couple of years. In FY 08 the library employed 15.97 FTE. This number fell to 13 FTE by the end of FY 09 and was reduced again at the beginning of FY 10 to the present 10.5.

## THE LIBRARY BUDGET

The library's FY 2009 budget is \$1,894,939. The expenditure breakdown is shown by the pie chart to the right. The percentages expended on staff (salaries and benefits) and library materials, while low by national standards, are equivalent to the percentages spent by other California public libraries in the same population grouping.<sup>2</sup>



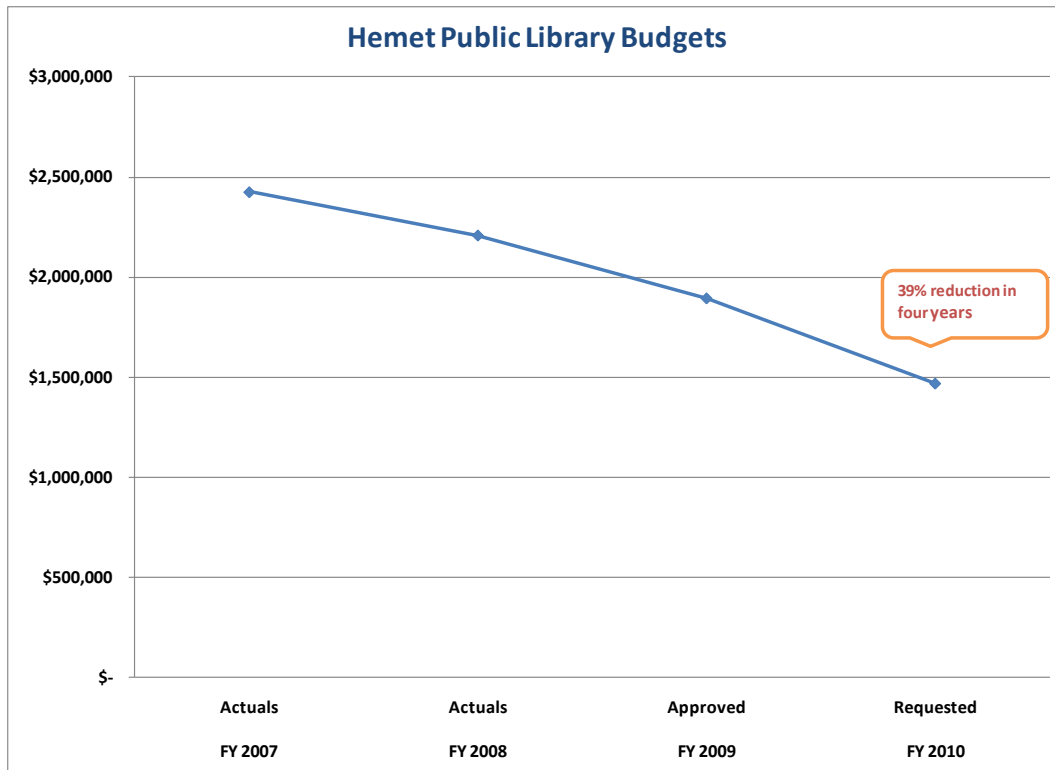
"Internal Service Charges" include telephones and other utilities, facilities maintenance provided by the City, liability insurance, emergency services, and a General Fund overhead charge, which is assessed to all city departments.

The source of the library's operating budget is the City General Fund. With the downturn in the economy and the resulting reduction in available revenue sources, the library's budget has been severely cut, as has the budget for other city services. As the chart following indicates, the library's budget has been reduced by 39% over the last four years.

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<sup>2</sup> There are twenty other public libraries in Hemet's population grouping of 70,000-100,000.





As the budgets have declined, the percentages spent on staff, materials, and other operating costs have remained basically the same.

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### NEW BUILDING = HIGHER USAGE

The library opened its new building on June 21, 2006, expanding from an 11,400 square foot building to one of 52,000 square feet. Although the top floor has never been occupied by the library, the main floor still is over twice the size of the previous building, offering substantial space for library collections and services. Since the opening, there has been a significant uptick in usage:<sup>3</sup>

- Circulation has increased 108%
- Reference has increased 81%
- The number of programs provided has increased 222%
- Program attendance has increased 68%
- Visits to the library have increased 153%
- The number of library card holders has increased 77%
- The number of PCs providing internet access has increased 111%

<sup>3</sup> These comparisons are based on FY 03 and FY 08 figures, before the current series of budget cuts kicked in.

- The number of users of PCs with internet access has increased 124%

At the same time,

- The service population has increased only 19%
- Staffing has increased only 2% (from FY 03 to FY 08; the current staffing level is now 33% lower than it was BEFORE the much larger building)
- Circulation per staff FTE (full time equivalent) has increased 104% (again, this figure will be even higher in FY 09 and later years, due to additional cuts in staffing)



## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### VALUE FOR RESIDENT INVESTMENT

#### EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Citizens and policy makers want accountability from the service providers in which they invest taxpayers' money and from whom they receive public services. They also want to understand what they are buying with their investment. They want service providers to be willing and able to tell them what they do, how they do it, and how much it costs. They want to feel confident that the service is being provided in a cost effective manner.

Management literature often makes the distinction between “effectiveness” which is doing the right thing and “efficiency” which is doing things right.<sup>4</sup> Too often the jump is made immediately to efficiency before contemplating what effectiveness means.

#### DETERMINING THE RIGHT THINGS TO DO

The Hemet Public Library's mission is captured in the following statement:

The Hemet Public Library exists to provide the community with the materials and services necessary for self-education, informed decision making, and recreation. A primary goal is to provide materials of use and interest to the many diverse segments of the community, in all appropriate formats.

While the library does not have a formal, written strategic plan, it has identified and articulated its priority service areas:

- **Current Topics and Titles:** The Hemet Public Library helps fulfill the community's appetite for information about popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences.
- **General Information:** The Hemet Public Library helps meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school and personal life.
- **Lifelong Learning:** The Hemet Public Library helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities.

<sup>4</sup> Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1993), 45.

- Reference and Community Information: The Hemet Public Library addresses the need for information related to business, careers, work, entrepreneurship, personal finances and obtaining employment.
- Curriculum Support: The Hemet Public Library provides materials which enhance and support students at the elementary and secondary levels in order to enrich the educational resources available to young people, and to promote lifelong use of public libraries.

These statements provide a picture of what the library is trying to accomplish, based on its understanding of the community and its needs.

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#### HOW IS THE LIBRARY DOING?

Several tests can be conducted to ascertain whether or not the library is meeting its effectiveness goals:

- Does the library develop an annual work plan, as reflected in its annual budget, which correlates with its mission and service priorities?  
Yes, the budget, the effectiveness measures in the budget, and the library's annual goals are clearly linked to the library's mission and priorities.
- Does the Library Director use the plan or is it simply placed on the shelf?  
Yes, the plan is used and progress on achieving goals is reported on annually to the Library Board of Trustees, the City Manager, and the City Council and publicly through the library's annual report.
- Are the effectiveness measures in the budget document being met?  
Effectiveness measures are developed and tracked as part of the City's annual budget process. Performance objectives are set for the current budget year and level of accomplishment is noted for the three previous budget years. The Library Director and the City Manager confer regarding the performance measures to ensure that appropriate effectiveness measures are set.
- Does the library test its assumptions about community needs and the library's service priorities? Does the library measure both qualitatively (by asking library users or community members their satisfaction with library services, for example) as well as quantitatively (by measuring the number of outputs, such as circulation or questions answered, for example)?  
Yes, the library tracks a number of key performance measurements and does incorporate qualitative measurements into its measurement process. It pays

attention to demographic information and adjusts library services and collection development priorities accordingly.

- Are Hemet residents satisfied with the services provided?  
A survey was conducted in July of 2008 to ascertain support for a city utility tax measure. Several questions were specifically asked about the library, including the level of satisfaction with the Hemet Public Library. Seventy percent of respondents indicated that the library did an excellent or good job providing services. Unfortunately, 18% didn't know or didn't have an opinion about library services.
- Are library users satisfied with the library materials and services provided?  
The 2008 goals included "Investigate ways to measure user satisfaction with library services—such as use of pop-up surveys, or user satisfaction forms. The Library Director, staff, and City Manager worked together to establish a user satisfaction target. It doesn't appear that this survey work has yet taken place. The goal carries over to the 2009 goals list.

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## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

A number of studies have been conducted over the last several years designed to determine the economic impact of public libraries in their communities.<sup>5</sup> One of the most recent and comprehensive was conducted by the public policy and taxation research firm of Levin, Driscoll & Fleeter for nine public library systems in southwestern Ohio. The economic benefits study, *Value for the Money: Southwestern Ohio's Return from Investment in Public Libraries*, released in June, 2006, provides a solid methodology for quantifying the economic return from library services. The researchers were scrupulous in developing a conservative valuation approach that would provide a fair statement of the direct benefits that a local community receives from its public library.

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## DIRECT BENEFITS: 5 TO 1 RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Noting that public libraries are similar to other municipal services such as parks, schools and police protection because their benefits serve the residents who live within the services area of these public goods, the researchers selected the "return on investment" approach to their economic analysis. This approach estimated the value returned to a community for each dollar invested by the community. Of the various methods available for determining libraries' value, the "consumer surplus" method was chosen as the most accurate and appropriate. The consumer surplus method refers to actual costs of counterparts to library services in the local marketplace.

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<sup>5</sup> The Library Research Services at the Colorado State Library provides links to these studies at their website [http://www.lrs.org/topics.php#Economic Impact of Library Services](http://www.lrs.org/topics.php#Economic_Impact_of_Library_Services).

In FY 2008/2009, the residents of Hemet invested \$1,553,850 in General Fund monies to provide library services.<sup>6</sup> Using the valuation methodologies of the Ohio study, the direct benefits (the value of a loaned item or a service such as a program or computer use) of the services provided by the Hemet Public Library can be computed.<sup>7</sup>

<b>Library Service</b>	<b>Estimated Value</b>
Circulation	\$4,422,025
Reference Services	\$210,000
Computer Use	\$927,984
Programs	\$46,110
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,606,119</b>

Computations based on FY 2008/2009 statistics.

This represents a Return on Investment of \$3.61 for every \$1.00 tax dollar invested in library services. The application of a conventional economic multiplier raises the total benefit for library services in Hemet to \$8,349,754 or a total return of \$5.37 for every dollar invested. The “household consumption multiplier” is used because the library materials and services provided by the library frees up \$8.35 million for households to spend on other items, activities, or services.<sup>8</sup>

Although other library studies have attempted to quantify the impact of public libraries on patronage and spending at local businesses and the benefits businesses, job seekers and personal investors receive from their use of library services and resources, no attempt is made here to do that. However, it’s important to note that there is tremendous value derived from the use of the information provided by library materials and services. For example, a library customer could both save the cost of purchasing expensive investment tools and profit from making a successful personal investment based on the information gleaned from the tools. A job seeker could use the library as a place to research job openings using the library’s public computers, borrow books on resume writing and job interview preparation, research the employer’s financial statements using print and online reference sources, with a librarian’s assistance, and actually apply for the job. A book about installing a wireless network could save a local business owner the cost of hiring someone else to do it or the time lost if the business owner tries to do it without adequate information.

There is no method available to estimate the value of the information or entertainment provided by library materials. However, the fact that library materials are well used (circulation per capita

<sup>6</sup> The approved budget for FY 2009 was \$1,894,939. The city's General Fund provided 82% of this budget.

<sup>7</sup> The full report, Levin, Driscoll & Fleeter, *Value for Money: Southwestern Ohio’s Return from Investment in Public Libraries* (Columbus, 2006) which includes detailed explanations of the formulae used and the basis for them, can be found at <http://9libraries.info/>.

<sup>8</sup> The multiplier of 1.4894 was used, the same household consumption multiplier used for the Ohio study.

is 6.57), library computers are used almost to capacity (97% of total available computer hours were used in FY 2008), and that over two-thirds of Hemet residents are satisfied with the library appears to imply that they receive value from them.

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## INDIRECT BENEFITS

The Hemet Public Library also provides a number of services to Hemet residents that cannot be readily quantified. In economic theory there is the concept of externality, the idea that activities have spill-over or side-effects. Some externalities can be negative (such as pollution caused by a local rendering plant) or positive. The precept behind public support of libraries is that they have a positive external effect. As the Ohio study notes “Some of these externalities include improvement in the level of literacy, deepening of job skills related to the ability to use information, promotion of understanding and tolerance among diverse groups in the population, and an overall enhancement in the level of civility and cultural awareness in society. In addition, the fulfillment of the library’s role in the education of the public fosters an informed citizenry and promotes the republican form of government...”<sup>9</sup>



The many programs and specialized services that the library provides are an example of the positive externalities related to the library’s role in the community. Programs and activities for children include weekly programs for babies, toddlers and preschoolers, and family story times. The Summer Reading Program keeps reading skill levels up during the summer months and instills a love of reading for pleasure and personal fulfillment. Programs are also provided for teens and adults. Book discussion groups are popular and held on a regular basis. Access to online book discussion groups is also provided, through the library's webpage, as are homework assistance, test preparation services, 24/7 online reference assistance, and access to full text magazine databases. The library's Heritage Room provides access to local history and genealogy materials and training on using genealogy software. The library also provides adult and family literacy services, which include recruiting and training volunteer tutors and adult learners, selecting appropriate materials to support literacy training and new readers, and providing support and guidance for both tutors and learners.

All of these activities are designed to promote reading and learning and are consistent with the library’s role as a community center, a place where people can come together to socialize, learn, and discuss issues of community concern. There is no way to assign a direct benefit to these activities, but the impact on the community is enormous and clearly valued by community residents.

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<sup>9</sup> Levin, Driscoll & Fleeter, 25.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Revise library performance measures to raise objectives if the library is currently achieving or exceeding levels set. For example, 70% of the community rated the library as good or better in the community survey. Library users should rate the library even higher, since they are familiar with its services.
- Remove the performance measure that addresses the percentage of usage of available computer time since the library is basically using 100% of its capacity.
- Add a performance measure that addresses turnover rate (circulation divided by library holdings) because this is a key measurement of collection relevance. If a library has a high turnover rate it means that its collections are desirable to its customers.
- Conduct a customer survey. The goal of administering a customer satisfaction survey has been on the list for a couple of years but hasn't yet been met. It's imperative that the library ask its customers how it's doing and how it could improve its services. The qualitative data gathered will serve as a complement to the quantitative data already gathered and analyzed.
- Set a goal of 85%-90% of respondents to the customer survey indicating that the library does an excellent or good job providing services.
- Continue to compute the tangible benefits the library provides to the community and publicize them. The library has a compelling story to tell and represents very positive return on the taxpayers' investment in it.

## DOING THINGS RIGHT

### COMPARISONS

There are no national standards for public libraries. The last formulaic national standards (e.g., two to four books per capita, as a book collection standard) were published over forty years ago. They were abandoned because public librarians felt that the minimums were often interpreted as ceilings rather than floors and because they didn't take into account differences among communities. Standards were replaced by community needs based planning models. As the Foreword to the first book on the new approach to public library planning declared "...what public librarians need now are not rules for sameness but tools which will help them analyze a situation, set objectives, make decisions and evaluate achievements."<sup>10</sup> Since then, public library planning has evolved through five models, each more focused than its predecessor on assessing community needs, on not taking on more than can be realistically achieved, and on matching resources with service goals.

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<sup>10</sup> Mary Jo Lynch, "Foreword" in a *Planning Process for Public Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1980), xii.



While national standards are lacking, an array of statistics are collected by each state library and reported to the United States Department of Education. Many libraries also contribute to a publication of the Public Library Association, *The Public Library Data Service Statistical Report* (PLDS). Many library managers use the information in this publication to develop a sense of how their library compares to other libraries on the basis of any number of factors.

A software product called Bibliostat Connect provides access to all statistics collected by the state libraries, the national statistics, and a few other statistical sources. Bibliostat Connect provides a researcher with a convenient way to collect, compile, and analyze public library statistics.

The availability of all this information means that the Hemet Public Library can be analyzed through a number of lenses: national, state, and regional. While such analyses can be informative, it should be remembered that every library's local situation is unique. What each community needs and wants is different, local values and standards are different, and local capacity to pay for services is different. As public library planners have said throughout the evolution of the planning process, "excellence must be defined locally—it results when library services match community needs, interests, and priorities."<sup>11</sup>

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#### NATIONAL COMPARISON

The *Public Library Data Service Statistical Report*, compiled annually by the Public Library Association, provides comparable information on a number of different measurements used by public libraries. Although the Hemet Public Library didn't participate in the data gathering, its data can be compared to the 185 public libraries in its population grouping (50,000 to 99,999) to get a rough picture of where the library stands in comparison to others.<sup>12</sup>

As the table on the following page shows, the Hemet Public Library is doing very well in selecting library materials that appeal to its users and is doing well in circulating those materials, despite lower than average public service hours and staffing to provide services.

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<sup>11</sup> Sandra Nelson, *The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Process* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2001), 1.

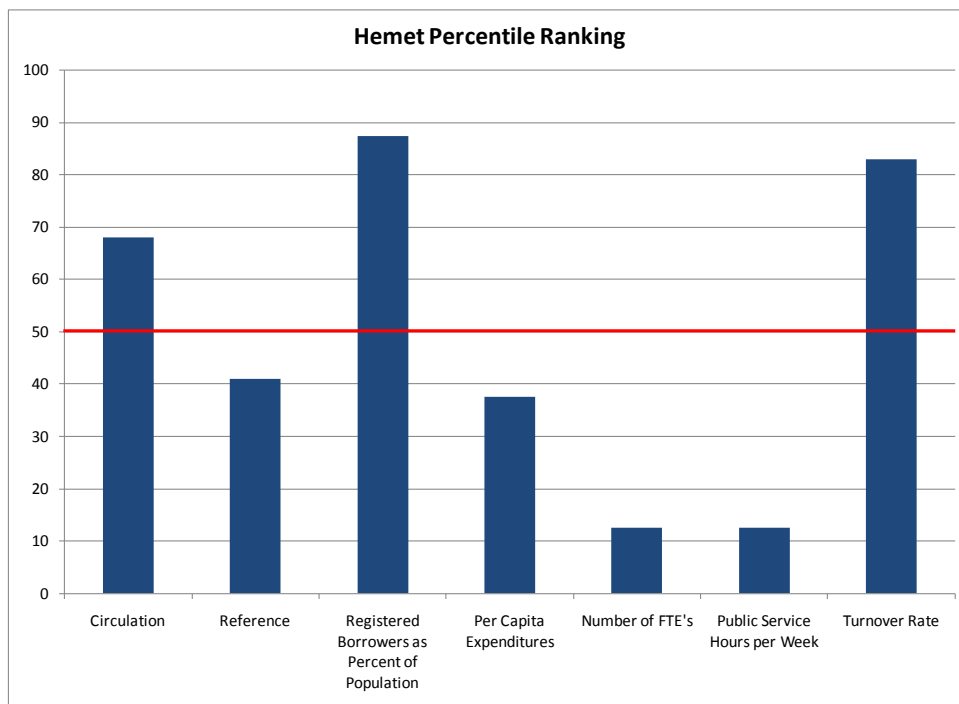
<sup>12</sup> Statistics are based on FY 2007 data, the latest national data available for comparison purposes. More current data is used elsewhere in this report, when available.

	<b>Hemet Public Library</b>	<b>PLDS Percentile Ranking</b>
<b>Circulation</b>	482,110	Between 50th and 75th percentile
<b>Reference Transactions</b>	53,500	Between 25th and 50th percentile
<b>Registered Borrowers as Percent of Population</b>	110%	Top quartile (above 75th percentile)
<b>Per Capita Expenditures</b>	\$33.19	Between 25th and 50th percentile
<b>Number of FTE's</b>	17.9	Lower quartile (below 25th percentile)
<b>Public Service Hours per Week</b>	44	Lower quartile (below 25th percentile)
<b>Turnover Rate*</b>	4.85	Top quartile (above 75th percentile)

\*Turnover Rate is a measurement of how relevant a library's collection is to its users. It's computed by dividing circulation by holdings and is roughly equivalent to a retailer's turn on inventory.

The figures in the table above are based on FY 2007 statistics. Comparable data is not yet available, but when it is many of the rankings will undoubtedly slip because of the reduction in operating budget and hours of service.

The chart below shows the same data in graphic format. The red line indicates the median or 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. It shows that the library is using its limited resources very well. Use is high, even with limited hours and the collection is relevant to library customers, even with a limited budget for library materials.



## PRODUCTIVITY COMPARISONS

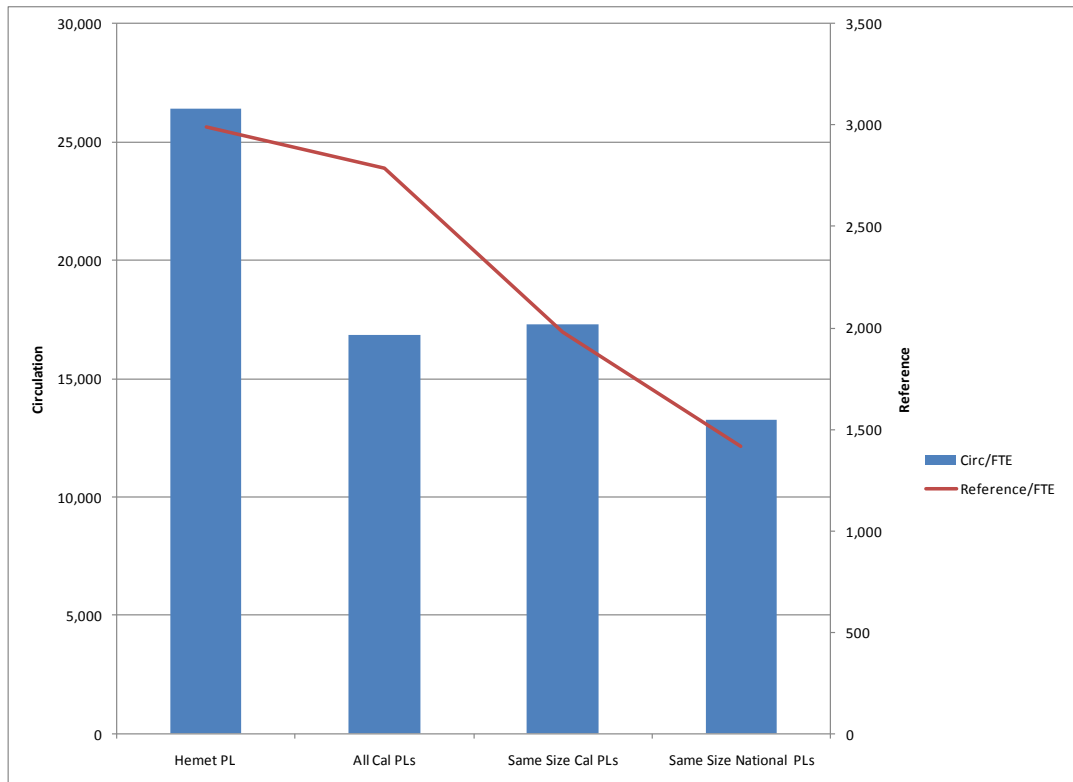
Workload is measured by dividing outputs (the measurable results of an activity, product or service delivered) by effort (the employee time it takes to produce or deliver the product or service). An accurate assessment of workload requires an accurate measurement of both the output and the effort. In order to make comparisons between HPL and other libraries, the largest and most consistently defined and measured transaction output to use is circulation. This measure is not perfect because circulation can be affected by local rules regarding renewals, limits, fines and fees, but is the best we have at this time.

Reference transactions (which include a variety of types of question answering and customer assistance) can also be analyzed, but these number are less accurate, due to major differences in definition and counting methodologies and accuracy. In both cases, transaction handling per full time equivalent (FTE) is shown as a measure of staff productivity.

General comparisons can be made with all other public libraries in California, California libraries in the same population grouping at Hemet (70,000- 100,000), and with public libraries nationally in the same population grouping as Hemet (50,000-99,999). Aggregate statistics have been used for California, averages have been used for the California comparables, and median averages have been used for the national comparables. All data is based on FY 2007 statistics, the latest available.

Comparisons with California and National Libraries				
	Hemet PL	All California Public Libraries	California Libraries (70,000-100,000)	National (public libraries serving 50,000-99,999)
<b>Circ/FTE</b>	26,934	16,850	17,275	13,245
<b>Reference/FTE</b>	2,989	2,788	1,982	1,416

The difference in productivity is striking when presented graphically as it is in the chart on the following page. The blue bars represent circulation per FTE and the red line represents reference transactions per FTE. Circulation is measured on the left Y axis and reference on the right Y axis. Note that different scales are used so that the relationship between the two measurements can be presented.



As this data shows, the productivity of Hemet Public Library staff is double that of their national peers and significantly higher than their California peers. And, it's important to note, this level of productivity was achieved before the several rounds of budget cuts of the past year. Based on the just released FY 2009 HPL statistics, circulation per FTE was 28,042 and reference per FTE was 2,694.



This level of productivity reflects both a commitment by staff and management to continue to provide excellent customer service despite cuts in hours and staff as well as a heavy reliance upon the use of volunteers and an "all hands on deck" approach to providing services and ensuring that materials are available for library customers to check out. With the latest cuts in hours and staff, all staff members work a substantial percentage of their work week on public service desks. The library

has also used technology as extensively as possible as a way to handle the ever-growing workload and support patron self-sufficiency.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to track and compare Hemet Public Library key performance measurements with those of comparable public libraries.
- Identify, track, and compare key productivity measurements, such as circulation and reference per FTE.

## POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES

### USAGE TRENDS

Until the recent reduction in open hours (instituted in March of 2009), the library reported significant upward trends in all major categories of usage. The people of Hemet responded very positively to the opening of the new, much larger library. The table below illustrates the positive trending of several usage categories. During this same time period the service population increased 19%.

	FY 2003	FY 2008	% Increase
<b>Circulation</b>	234,721	487,152	108%
<b>Circulation per Capita</b>	3.77	6.57	74%
<b>Reference Transactions</b>	30,373	55,000	81%
<b>Reference Transactions per Capita</b>	.49	.70	43%
<b>Number of Registered Borrowers</b>	51,633	87,834	70%
<b>Total Number of Programs</b>	139	447	222%
<b>Total Program Attendance</b>	10,227	17,213	68%

### COMMUNITY FOCUSED

The library is very much aware of the age, ethnic and language makeup and preferences, educational level, and other demographic features of the community it serves. It is aware that the community is changing (as are most communities served by public libraries) and strives to adjust its collections and services to meet the changes it observes and anticipates.

The library searches out and enters into partnerships with other community agencies, thus extending its reach and making its services available to more people. It has partnered with local schools to promote its services, through presentations, programs, and links from school web pages to library web pages. The literacy program partners with appropriate community agencies to ensure that adult learners are identified and linked with the program and that potential

volunteer tutors hear about the program. The local history Heritage Room is staffed by volunteers from the local historical society and local genealogists.

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## HIGH VALUE PLACED ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

The library walks its talk when it comes to a commitment to public service. The library has a service code which spells out its customer service philosophy by acknowledging that its customers are the reason the library exists. Among other commitments, the library makes these:

- We will put the needs of our customers before our own.
- We approach each service transaction in a positive manner with courtesy, honesty, accuracy, friendliness, and sensitivity **from** an individual **to** an individual.
- We are always looking to improve public service, and staff members are encouraged to make suggestions and explore different approaches that benefit the public.
- When we are in doubt about handling a situation, or if we are dealing in "gray areas" of our library policies, we will always lean in the favor of our customers.
- All staff are empowered to attempt to resolve issues; decision which utilize common sense and department guidelines and which are made on the customer side of an issue are not overruled.
- Our focus will always be on **direct** public service. Staff will strive to eliminate, reduce, or rethink those duties and responsibilities which keep us in the backroom and/or away from public access.



The consultant observed a high regard for customer service among library employees at all levels. The fact that the library has received and continues to receive favorable coverage in the local press is further evidence of the library's commitment to this value even during times of very compressed usage and fewer paid staff.<sup>13</sup>

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## DATA DRIVEN

The library is doing a commendable job of using, collecting, and analyzing data to make decisions, to develop a clear picture of the services it provides, and to provide rationales for changes in services or methodologies. The library has worked to cultivate a service model that supports increased library customer self-sufficiency both because studies show that most library

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<sup>13</sup> An editorial in *The Valley Chronicle*, July 31, 2009, noted that the library had continued to provide and improve responsive services to the community regardless of painful budget cuts and a reduction in hours of service.

users desire to be self-sufficient and as the means to provide as many and as extensive services and collections as possible within available resources.

The library routinely compares key service measurements against those of the previous year and notes both numerical and percentage changes. Trend information is also tracked and key indicators are provided in both narrative and chart form in a brief, informative annual report.

The attention HPL pays to quantitative detail and the ease it showed in providing requested data is commendable. Many libraries, including libraries much larger and with many more resources than HPL are deficient in this area.

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## USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The library is significantly ahead of many others in its embrace of technology. While not willing to be on what is often the costly "bleeding edge" of technology adoption, the library has shown a willingness to investigate and adopt those technologically enabled solutions that, after analysis, make sense and appear to provide a positive return on investment.

The library has adopted a number of library customer self-sufficiency techniques, such as customer self-check out, self-check in, self-registration for library cards, and self-pickup of holds and has successfully designed and implemented equipment and furniture so that library customers can help themselves or easily ask for staff assistance. HPL has followed the lead of library innovators by rethinking how customer assistance is provided, how public service desks should be configured and placed, and how staff duties and staffing configurations should be redefined.

The library has implemented the use of radio frequency identification (RFID) labels, which speeds check out and many check in activities. This innovation has also allowed the library to take a comprehensive inventory of its holdings, something which had been impractical to do without this technology. The Friends recently provided funds for an inventory wand that can be used to take inventory at the shelves without the necessity of removing each item and scan its barcode. This will allow the library to complete the 25% of the inventory not yet finished and conduct similar inventories more frequently and more quickly.

The library provides a number of electronic databases which provide fast, easy, and timely access to newspaper and magazine articles, homework assistance, genealogical research material, test preparation guides and practice tests, and information geared to assist California families. In addition, the library has made 24/7 online reference services available to its users, so a question can be asked and answered at any time, even when the library is closed.

Behind the scenes, the library is taking advantage of a number of technology-based products offered by its vendors. Whenever possible, it acquires library materials already cataloged and processed, so that only minimal handling is done when they are received. When it does have to



catalog or process materials, it uses available technology so that as much of the process is automated as possible. This reduces the amount of time staff has to work with materials and makes materials available for library customers sooner.

These types of changes don't come easily and the library is hampered by the very large size of its building and the presence of large public service desks, designed before newer public service models came into play. The library is working to marry a high regard for customer service with its goal of maximizing customer self-sufficiency.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to keep performance and trend statistics over five or ten year periods. Calculate percentage changes as an additional way to analyze data.
- Continue to proactively seek out technological solutions to issues raised by increasing workload and decreasing paid staff. Communicate why solutions are being sought, what solutions are to be adopted, and include staff in discussion of implementation. With so much happening within the reduced schedule, staff members are sometimes left wondering about the changes that are being considered or that have been implemented.
- The library is doing many things right. However, the reason for changes in processes or service models is not always clear to employees. Extra care must be taken to communicate what changes are taking place and why.

## AREAS TO ADDRESS

### CONTEXT

The library undertook this performance audit to find out where it could make changes or adjustments to ensure its continued operation as both an effective and efficient organization. It wants to use its resources (staff, library materials, technology, and facility) in ways that meet the needs and wants of the community it serves, as efficiently as possible. As described in the previous section, it has made many decisions that ensure that it is doing the right things (the effectiveness dimension) in the right ways (the efficiency dimension). But the continued growth and diversification in population and library usage coupled with decreasing revenue means that additional ideas must be considered.

The Hemet Public Library has undergone a 34% budget reduction since FY 08. This has resulted in a decrease in hours open (from 52 hours a week over six days to 38 hours a week, over four days) of 27% and a reduction in paid staff from seventeen FTEs to ten and a half FTEs, a reduction of 38%. While a reduction in open hours results in a reduction in reference transactions (people can't ask the questions if the library isn't open), there is often not a parallel drop in circulation. People adjust their borrowing habits, which means even more work is squeezed into fewer open and work hours. Indeed, this pattern seems to be the case with Hemet.



While reference transactions have declined significantly, circulation has only declined 10%. As the table below shows, staffing has declined even farther. The library's volunteers have stepped into the breach, complementing paid staff by carrying out a number of basic tasks.

	FY 2008	FY 2009	% Change
<b>Circulation</b>	487,152	437,175	-10%
<b>Reference Transactions</b>	55,000	42,000	-24%
<b>Hours Open per Week</b>	44	38	-14%
<b>Total Program Attendance</b>	17,213	9,222	-46%
<b>Total Paid Staff FTEs</b>	17	13	-24%
<b>Volunteer Hours Donated</b>	31,645	29,053	-8%

## WORK PRACTICES AND POLICIES

Staff and managers reported a number of improvements to work flow and work processes and the desire is to continuously review and improve both. Everyone working at the library must be involved in reviewing and reconsidering work practices, routines, and policies. The library wants to be as efficient as possible and must enlist the experience and creativity of staff who are doing the work to devise new methods and adapt best practices from other libraries. A key way to deal with increased workload is to continuously look for ways to streamline and simplify workflow and eliminate steps in work processes. This involves studying all the steps and tasks involved in various work activities and asking "why" about each. Every step should add identifiable value. If the step is done because it has always been done that way or the employee was trained to do it that way, it is a candidate for reconsideration. The impact on the end user

should be the measure of success. Good, basic methodology and work forms are available in *Staffing for Results*.<sup>14</sup>



### WORK FLOW AND WORK AREAS

Additional analysis of work processes and materials movement should be done to streamline the handling of materials in the circulation workroom and to minimize holding areas and clutter in all work areas.

All materials are now returned through the RFID reader equipped book drop. However, some staff members feel that these items must be checked in again in order to trap holds or to determine who has checked an item out if pieces are found to be missing. This redundant work could be reduced considerably if two or three bin sorter designed to

<sup>14</sup> Electronic versions of the forms: [http://www.elearnlibraries.com/workforms/staffing\\_for\\_results.html](http://www.elearnlibraries.com/workforms/staffing_for_results.html).

work with the library's RFID system were installed. A two bin sorter would allow the differentiation between returns to Hemet and holds. A three bin sorter could also accommodate exceptions as a third sort or be configured in a variety of other ways. Attaching automated sorter bins to the book drop would streamline operations and reduce repetitive handling of materials.

Currently, returned materials cascade into the workroom during the three days each week the library is closed. If an automated return sorter and bins are installed, thought should be given to their capacity and how materials might accumulate during these extended closure periods.

The receiving area is cramped, consisting of a small table, located in a heavy traffic area in the workroom. It may be that this is sufficient, but seems unnecessarily inconvenient. A larger table is located diagonally across the room which appears to be largely unused. The space where this table is located could be repurposed to provide a less congested work space with an ample surface for unpacking and sorting received materials and room for carts.



Staff cited awkward work space, work flow, and work processes in several of the staff survey forms. As the library continues to review materials flow and space utilization, staff members should be involved in diagramming their space and the movement of materials within it so that they are involved in deciding what can be eliminated or streamlined. Again, the methodologies and forms in *Staffing for Results* can be used as resources for this analysis.

Several work areas were observed to be cluttered. However, full time staff now have only two hours a week to work when the library isn't open to the public. Part time staff members work only during open hours. Very little time is available for straightening up or organizing work areas. Working to declutter these areas would be beneficial, however, as it would remove visual and literal barriers to smooth work flow and might also help staff visualize and implement the minimal number of steps needed to complete a routine.

#### MAXIMIZE USE OF SELF-CHECK

The library has four self-check machines at the circulation desk. The utilization rate is presently at 75-80%. A number of public libraries have been able to increase the usage to 90-95%, with some even reporting very close to 100% utilization by library



customers. The library has done a good job of educating its customers but there is still some staff reluctance to promote use of the machines.

Checking in materials should be confined to the work room so there is minimal staff presence at the counter, to encourage self-service. The staff member stationed at the Greeter Desk should work proactively with customers, showing them how fast, easy and confidential it is to use the self-check machines rather than just taking over the check out process from them. A clearly defined and identified "Accounts Area" should be established so people know that only exceptions or payments are handled by staff members. There will be a few cases where customers cannot or will not use the machines, but these should be very minimal.

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## MAGAZINE PROCESSING

All routines must be rethought. Magazine and newspaper processing is typically time consuming. These materials are usually deemed ephemeral with a short life span, provided primarily for leisure reading. Processing should be simplified to be done as minimally as possible to save staff time and ensure that materials are provided to users as quickly as possible. With the library open essentially half the time, there should be little delay in making them available.

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## LOAN PERIODS AND POLICIES

The library still has a fairly conservative loan period and renewal policy. Because automated systems make renewing and finding and retrieving wanted items so easy, libraries have begun to relax loan and renewal policies which date back to manual circulation systems. Many libraries have one loan period (often three weeks) for all types of materials and allow many more than two renewals (HPL's current policy). Allowing additional renewals means that people can keep books longer, unless someone else has put a hold on a title, in which case it would not renew.



This is a convenience for many users.

The limitation on the number of items that can be checked out at one time should also be reviewed. The library is now open only half the time, which means that its collections are held hostage by the current budget situation. It does no one any good to have library books, DVDs and other items unavailable in a closed building. A number of libraries have made these changes to their policies without adverse consequences.

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## USE OF TECHNOLOGY

As noted earlier, the library has done an admirable job of identifying and utilizing available technology to support library customer self-sufficiency and to reduce the amount of staff time spent on routine, repetitive activities. Automated and vendor provided services are used to select, order, catalog and process many library materials. Technology is used to schedule public PCs and RFID technology is used to speed up the materials check in process, to protect materials (through the link to the security system), and to inventory library materials (a time consuming task that few public libraries are able to accomplish). New social networking tools are being used (such as Facebook) and popular communications tools such as instant messaging and texting are being considered.

The library should continue to proactively seek out technologies that can expand the ways it can interact with users, make the finding and use of library materials and services more convenient for users, and manage its workload.

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## PROGRAMMING

As a result of the library service hour reduction, its ability to provide a wide variety of programs to all age groups has already deteriorated. In FY 09 46% fewer programs were provided than in FY 08 and the percentage provided for children (pre-school and school age) dropped by six percentage points. This is an unfortunate trend, although the Library Director reports that attendance on a per program basis is actually higher than in previous years.

As with everything else the library does, the effort and impact of programming must be examined and care taken to ensure that community needs are effectively met through the programming provided. Many libraries develop written program plans as a way to articulate their programming priorities and goals. The programs presented should align with the library's priorities and be part of its accomplishing its goals. Focus should be applied to the programming effort and basic guidelines developed that address the cost of preparing and presenting a program with the benefit to the recipients. Every use of time is a matter of choice and the decisions about how to use time for programs, presentations, book clubs, school visits, community contacts, etc., should be deliberate and within the general guidelines and program philosophy developed by the library.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Study all steps and tasks of various activities to identify additional ways to streamline and simplify activities. Use the methodologies and forms in *Staffing for Results* as resources for this analysis. Use the impact on the end user as the criterion for success.
- Specify and purchase two or three automated bin sorters to go with the RFID enabled book drop return. Reconfigure circulation workroom to accommodate sorters and

redesign work processes to minimize duplicate handling and the easy identification of exceptions and holds.

- Redesign the materials receiving area so that it is out of the main work room traffic flow and so that people unpacking and receiving materials have enough room to handle incoming materials. Consider using the large conference table as the receiving work surface.
- Use the methodology and forms in *Staffing for Results* as the basis for staff analysis of work space and materials work flow. Work through all identified work flow and cluttered space issues. Request supplemental funding from the library budget or Friends so that a special team can be paid to declutter staff work areas.
- Set an ambitious but attainable target of 90% of circulation going through self-check machines. Identify ways to reconfigure the circulation desk so that library customers are cued to check materials out themselves. Train staff and volunteers to assist and train customers so that they know how to use self-check. Publicize self-check as a positive alternative to staff assisted checkout, citing the benefits and convenience of this preferred alternative.
- Define standard check in procedures as behind the scenes, behind the desk activities so that staff are not seen as the preferred check out option. This will provide both a more efficient way to handle check ins and holds materials and serve as an encouragement for customers to handle check outs without staff intervention.
- Determine the amount of magazine and newspaper processing necessary, with an eye towards minimizing the amount of staff time spent on this activity. Actively question each step in the current processing routine.
- Review current loan policies. Is it still necessary to limit the number and types of materials checked out? Is it necessary to limit the number of renewals at the current level? What would the customer service and convenience impact be of making these policies more liberal?
- Continue to proactively seek out technologies that can expand the ways that the library interacts with users and that allows library staff to interact with users in the most meaningful, value added ways. Adopt technologies that promote services that users want and that help staff manage workload. For example, many users want the ability to pay fines and fees online with a debit or credit card. Libraries that have adopted this service have found that their revenue from these sources has gone up.
- Review the current approach to programming for each age grouping. Look at ways to maximize the impact of programming and the relationship of programming to the library's service priorities. Monitor and track the average number of attendees at programs to determine the "bang for the buck" return on investment of staff time on various types of programs. Set an attendance level that makes sense (for example, ten or more attendees) and review average attendance of programs as part of the program evaluation process.



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## BASIC COVERAGE

The library staffing is now painfully thin. In fact, there are now more volunteer FTEs (about 14) than paid staff members (10.5 in FY10). The library could not function without these dedicated library supporters. Basic coverage of public service desks is barely possible and all employees, including the employee who had previously handled back office functions such as ordering and paying for library materials, handling accounts payable, and preparing payroll, now spend time staffing public service desks. This means that desks are sometimes staffed with people who are not as experienced or knowledgeable as staff who have been working in public service positions for some time and that back office and support activities are postponed or done so hastily that mistakes are more likely to be made.

A "basic coverage calculator" has been prepared and provided to the Library Director to use as he refines staffing levels and schedules. The calculator identifies available staff and the actual hours they are available, after breaks and average leave utilizations are subtracted.<sup>15</sup> The actual hours available are then compared to coverage assumptions to determine whether or not basic coverage is available.

The library is currently open 38 hours a week and attempts to cover four public service desks during that time (Reference, Circulation, Greeter, and Children's). In addition, staff members need to work in the work rooms to check in returned materials, process requested materials, prepare new materials for circulation, weed old and damaged materials out of the collection, select and order materials, pay the bills and prepare payroll, and recruit and train the library's many and absolutely necessary volunteers. It is highly likely that something will have to give and that it won't be possible to staff all four public service points during all open hours.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use the coverage calculator provided to determine what levels of coverage can be provided by currently budgeted staff positions. Experiment with various assumptions.

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## COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The library is undergoing a number of changes, both because of its desire (and the necessity) to move to a customer self-sufficiency service model and its focus on continuously improving work processes to be as efficient as possible (which is also driven by the current budget realities). It has seen its workforce dwindle. Such changes are not always easy to make and some staff

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<sup>15</sup> On average, full time employees are really only available 75-80% of the time, which means that a 40 hour a week employee is only available 30-32 hours a week. If the staff is made up of long term employees who earn maximum vacation leave or if staff becomes stretched too thin and sick leave utilization increases, there will be even fewer hours available.

indicated that they felt communication was not as effective as it could be. They said that they didn't always understand what changes had been made or why.

People carry out the changes the library makes and they can have a variety of responses to them. For any given change or set of changes, typically there will be some who enthusiastically embrace the change, some who are actively resistant to it, and a large middle group who want to have their questions answered, see how it goes, get more used to it, or learn more about it before feeling comfortable with it.

Experts on managing change provide the following guidelines:

- Communicate, communicate, communicate. Often perceived resistance comes from people not knowing why something is being changed, how the actual change will be carried out, or what training or other support they will receive. As the former director of the Vigo County (Indiana) Library once said, “People are down on what they’re not up on.”
- Involve staff every step of the way. They are closest to the work and the library customers. They will also be more comfortable with a change they helped design.
- Identify desired outcomes rather than prescribed methodologies.
- Acknowledge that people will have emotional reactions when faced with change. There can be feelings of loss, grief, anger, denial, etc.
- Acknowledge, also, that when changes are made to programs or services this doesn’t mean that they didn’t have value. Find ways to express appreciation for past successes as you realign services and collections to meet current and future service priorities.
- Pilot the change if possible. This provides a chance to try things, make adjustments, identify needed training, and plan communications before rolling out a change system wide.
- Identify major issues but don’t become paralyzed by ongoing analysis or answering hypothetical “what if” questions. Perfection is probably unattainable; the last few increments towards perfection are the most costly and time-consuming. One manager cited by Michael Hammer in his article “Making Operational Innovation Work” has adopted the principle of “70% and go”: develop a solution that provides most but not all desired capabilities, get into the field quickly, and then enhance it over time. “This approach,” writes Hammer, “allows concepts to be tested, builds momentum and credibility, and delivers early benefits that silence critics and sway doubters.”<sup>16</sup>
- Model confidence, enthusiasm, and a can do attitude at the manager level. Staff will be looking to see if managers really embrace change or are resistant or beaten down by it.
- Accept the fact that change is usually a messy, chaotic, unmanageable process.

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<sup>16</sup> Michael Hammer, “Making Operational Innovation Work”, reprinted in the Harvard Business Online newsletter, *Harvard Management Update*. <http://discussionleader.hbsp.com/hmu/2008/09/making-operational-innovation.php>.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use change management guidelines to manage changes that the library will have to make to deal with constricted public service hours, increased workload, and reduced staff. Identify best ways to communicate issues and changes and test for staff understanding of changes and rationale for them.
- Consider various communications methods, including:
  - Use of whiteboard to communicate late-breaking changes in policies, procedures, processes
  - Brief morning huddle before opening to identify major issues, expected visitors, staffing issues, issues carried over from previous day, etc.
  - Use of Employee Assistance Program or community resources to help with internal communications issues, facilitation of problem solving sessions, etc.
  - Use of email and/or staff intranet to communicate policies, changes in procedures, software upgrades, problem identification and resolution, etc. All staff, including part time staff should have access to email communications and any websites or intranet sites used for library information and communication.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Hemet Public Library is doing a remarkable job with the resources it has. Despite significant reductions in operating funds and personnel, it has made the best of a bad situation and has continued to provide an array of services and a diverse and relevant collection of library materials to the residents of Hemet.

During the course of this project, the consultant examined key performance and output measures, observed workflow and work processes, and interviewed key staff members and the Library Director. Her conclusion is that the Hemet Public Library is doing an excellent job of providing effective collections and services in an efficient manner. The library is very aware of its mission and priorities, manages and measures to these, and practices continuous quality improvement, which involves continuously asking how it can improve and streamline operations without sacrificing service quality.

The library has also carefully and thoughtfully implemented technology-based solutions in order to streamline repetitive, backroom functions thus freeing up scarce staff to carry out tasks automation can't accomplish and to provide quality customer service with the staff it does have.

Community members are receiving over \$5 return on each dollar of tax money invested in the library. This return was computed using a conservative valuation technique. In addition, the library provides many services for which it is impossible or impractical to computer a dollar value but which are, nonetheless, of true value to the community. Literacy training and library materials and programs that provide educational or business information are a few examples.



Compared to public libraries serving a similar size population, the Hemet Public Library provides far more services per staff member and ranks well above others in the circulation of library materials and the relevance of library collections despite being open fewer hours, having fewer paid staff, and having a lower operating budget.

The bottom line: the Hemet Public Library stands out among the many, many libraries the consultant has worked with over the last ten years as a model of service effectiveness and operational efficiency.