

Lake County Library System Long Range Plan of Service 2005-2010

Lake County Library System

Astor County Library
Citrus Ridge County Library
Cooper Memorial Library, Clermont
East Lake County Library
Fruitland Park Library
Helen Lehmann Memorial Library
Lady Lake Public Library
Leesburg Public Library
Marion Baysinger Memorial County Library
Paisley County Library
City of Tavares Public Library
W.T. Bland Public Library, Mount Dora
Umatilla Public Library

Developed By

**The Lake County Library System
Long Range Planning Committee**

With the Assistance of
Leslie and Alan Burger
Library Development Solutions
Princeton Junction, NJ
September 2005

LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Lake County Library Advisory Board

Helen White – Fruitland Park Public Library

Bill Calhoun – Lady Lake Public Library

Mary Malaszek – Leesburg Public Library

Brenda Muniz – Helen Lehmann Memorial Library, Montverde

Dorothy Keedy – City of Tavares Public Library

Karen Howard – Umatilla Public Library

Vacant – W.T. Bland Public Library, Mount Dora

Barbara Newman – District 1 At-Large

Jody Bryant Newman – District 2 At-Large

Valerie Johnson – District 3 At-Large

Betty Ann Christian – District 4 At-Large

Roy Hunter – District 5 At-Large

Advisory Board Alternates

Wanda McClendon – Fruitland Park Library

John Johnson – Leesburg Public Library

Vacant – Helen Lehmann Memorial Library, Montverde

Beth Sindler – City of Tavares Public Library

Vacant – Umatilla Public Library

Catherine Gillespie – W.T. Bland Public Library, Mount Dora

Jim Page – Lady Lake Public Library

Member Library Directors

Mary Ellen Babb, Director, Umatilla Public Library

Heather Coddington, Director, Helen Lehmann Memorial Library, Montverde

Stephanie Haimes, Director, W.T. Bland Public Library, Mount Dora

Mary Kay McGuire, Director, Fruitland Park Library

Marilynn Nesbitt, Director, Lady Lake Public Library

Barbara Morse, Director, Leesburg Public Library

Beth Sindler, Director, City of Tavares Public Library

Lake County Library System Staff

Wendy Breeden, Director

Tom Merchant, Assistant Director, Public Services

Library Branch Managers

Eric Tommerdahl, Astor County Library

Katherine Spurgeon, Citrus Ridge County Library

Tracy Swank, Cooper Memorial Library

George Dore, East Lake County Library

Mike Dinkins, Marion Baysinger Memorial County Library

Ron Moore, Paisley County Library

**LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
MEMBER LIBRAIRES**

W.T. Bland Public Library
1995 North Donnelly Street
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Stephanie Haimes, Director

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Mary Kay McGuire, Director

Helen Lehman Memorial Library
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Montverde, FL 34756
Heather Coddington, Director

Lady Lake Public Library
225 W. Guava Street
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Marilynn Nesbitt, Director

City of Tavares Public Library
314 North New Hampshire Avenue
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Beth Sindler, Director

Leesburg Public Library
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Leesburg, FL 34748
Barbara Morse, Director

Umatilla Public Library
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Umatilla, FL 32784
MaryEllen Babb, Director

**LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES**

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Astor County Library
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Citrus Ridge County Library
Summer Bay Shopping Center
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Clermont, FL 34714
Katherine Spurgeon, Branch Manager

Cooper Memorial Library
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Clermont, FL 34711
Tracy Swank, Regional Branch Manager

East Lake County Library
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Sorrento, FL 32776
George Doré, Branch Manager

**Marion Baysinger Memorial
County Library**
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Groveland, FL 34736
Mike Dinkins, Branch Manager

Paisley County Library
24954 C.R. 42
Paisley, FL
Ron Moore, Branch Manager

LONG RANGE PLAN APPROVAL

This plan has been reviewed and approved by the Lake County Board of County Commissioners, the designated governing body of the Lake County Library System.

ATTEST:

COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA

, Clerk of the Board of
County Commissioners of Lake County,
Florida

, Chairman

This _____ day of _____
2005.

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

County Attorney

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Introduction

In its short history, the Lake County Library System has transformed library service to county residents. Through a continuous process of long-range planning which began with the first plan in 1994, the system's members work collaboratively to identify priorities to guide the delivery of library service to the county's growing population. Two planning cycles resulted in an ambitious set of goals and objectives that were used to guide the system's development and enhance library service to Lake County residents. As a result, library service in Lake County is readily accessible through a network of municipal and county libraries that extend library service to all geographic areas.

Having accomplished most of their goals and objectives from the 2000-2005 plan, the Lake County Library System Board and members embarked on another planning process to guide their work over the next five years.

In the last five years the Board of County Commissioners, recognizing the importance of libraries to the overall quality of life in the county, invested significant financial resources in the library system. Six county branches have opened, two additional communities joined the library system, and, for the first time, impact fees have been directed to support library expansion. These actions demonstrate to the entire community that Lake County is committed to building an effective library infrastructure.

Library planning has become a tradition in Lake County. It is a process that involves many Lake County Library System stakeholders. The system's Advisory Board, LCLS staff and member library staff, planning committee and community residents all contributed to the ideas included in the plan. Without their invaluable assistance, their commitment to libraries, and their willingness to share ideas, this plan would not have been possible.

Those who worked on the plan believe that this sets forth an ambitious agenda for the future, a future that raises the level of library service in the county, makes library service readily accessible to all, and increases the technological and library resources available to all Lake County residents. The Lake County Library System has a track record of success and determination that will allow it to move boldly ahead into its next five-year plan.

The Planning Process

The planning process used to develop this plan involved a variety of people who care about the ongoing growth and development of library service in Lake County. The planning process adapted the successful process used during the development of the last two planning cycles including hiring Library Development Solutions, a Princeton-based consulting firm, to facilitate the process. Key steps in this plan's development included:

- Site visits by the consultants to each member and branch library
- Interviews with library staff at each library to learn more about their challenges and hopes and dreams for the system
- Focus group sessions with community representatives from the geographic areas served by member and branch libraries to learn more about their library and information needs and determine their level of satisfaction with current system services
- Meetings with the Lake County Library System staff to understand the challenges associated with the cooperative library system and their ability to deliver library services to meet the demand of a rapidly growing county population
- Two planning sessions with the Lake County Library Advisory Board and system library staff to update them on recent planning developments and to identify critical issues to be addressed in the plan, celebrate the system's accomplishments, consider trends and changes affecting the delivery of library service, revisit the system's vision, mission and values, and identify goals and objectives for the next five years

This plan is the product of a collaborative effort of the entire planning team and reflects the needs and desires of Lake County residents. While the plan is ambitious, it is tempered by the realities of what is possible in the current political and economic climate. The plan assumes the continued cooperation and high level of commitment among all the member libraries and the spirit of collaboration that exists between the LCLS staff and its members. The last five years have shown that by working together Lake County libraries can create great library service. The plan for the next five years will help the libraries provide even better service to more county residents.

Accomplishments

Since the adoption of its last plan in 2000, the Lake County Library System has moved forward with implementing its plans to improve library service throughout the county. The 2000–2005 Plan was critical to the development

of new library programs, services and facilities that have transformed the Lake County Library System. The new Horizon automated library system platform, the opening of 5 county branch libraries, the expansion of public computing, and introduction of more online services are just a few of the major accomplishment in the last 5 years.

Before starting their planning discussions, the Planning Team took some time to celebrate some of their significant accomplishments since 2000. Here is a partial listing of what was achieved:

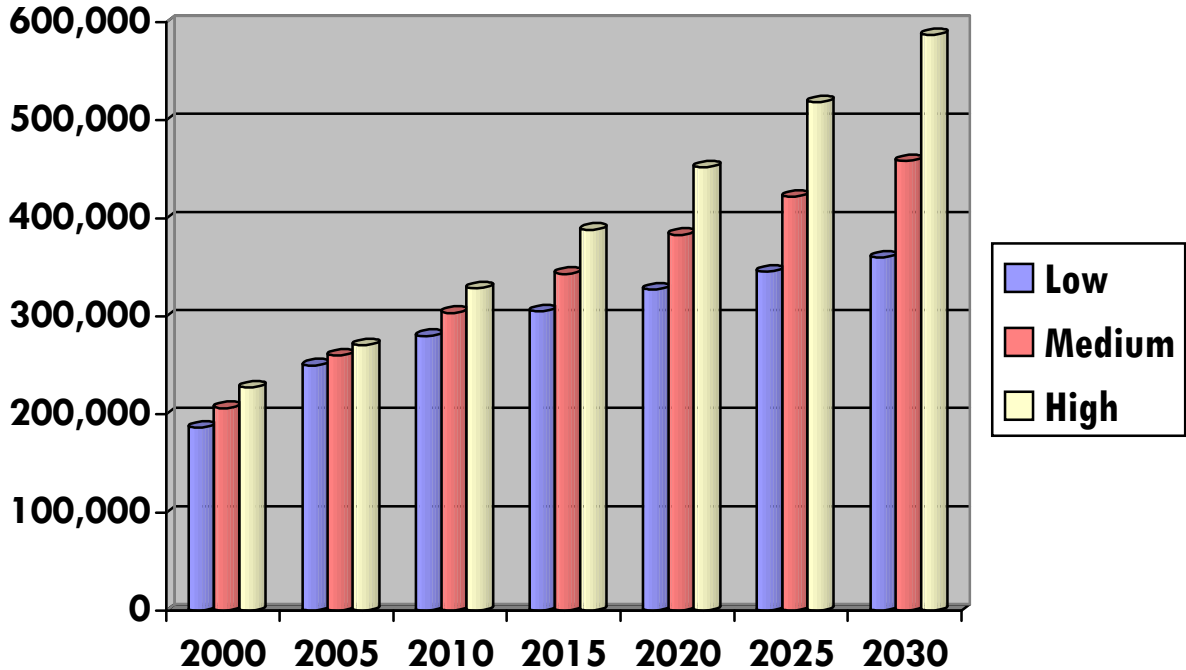
- The expansion of branch library service ensuring accessibility to library service for those areas of the county that were previously unserved
- The addition of two new member libraries in Leesburg and Montverde
- An increase in county funding to support library service and a portion of impact fees specifically dedicated for library infrastructure
- A growing perception that libraries play an important role in bringing people in the county together
- Improved access to information resources both in the libraries and at home through the introduction of subscription online databases
- Expanded library programming for adults and children including the Born to Read program, books by mail, ESL and literacy programs and the “Festival of Reading”
- Increased use of technology to support library work routines – OCLC, migration to Horizon, RFID
- Additional library staff, improved competence and a more customer focused attitude among library staff

A Changing County

Demographics

Lake County continues to be one of the fastest growing counties in Florida and the nation. While that brings many new residents to the county each year, it also presents some challenges to the existing infrastructure that is not keeping pace with the level of growth. In April 2004 the Bureau of Economic and Business Research projected Lake County’s current population at 251,878. By 2010 the population is expected to reach 303,600, a 21% increase. Population projections for the county through 2030 are illustrated in Figure 1. These projections do not include seasonal residents.

Fig. 1
Est. Lake County Resident Population Growth 2000-2030



Lake County has 14 incorporated municipalities but only 8 have established public libraries. Of the municipalities and communities that comprise the LCLS, Four Corners, the greater Clermont area, Mount Plymouth/Sorrento, Leesburg, Tavares and Mount Dora are anticipated to have significant growth over the next five years.

Changing Libraries

The Lake County Library System

Established in 1982, the Lake County Library System offers library service to residents throughout the county through a coordinated system of local member libraries and county operated branch libraries. Libraries share resources, offer a wide array of services, and utilize new information technologies to ensure that residents have access to conveniently located libraries. The Lake County Library System has 7 members:

- Fruitland Park Library
- Helen Lehmann Memorial Library, Montverde
- Lady Lake Public Library

- Leesburg Public Library
- W.T. Bland Public Library, Mount Dora
- City of Tavares Public Library
- Umatilla Public Library

Since 2000, the LCLS has opened five county funded and operated branch libraries in Astor, Sorrento, Paisley, Groveland and the Four Corners area. In addition, in 2002, the Cooper Memorial Library in Clermont transitioned from a member library to a county branch library.

LCLS is supported through a combination of local, county and state support. Member libraries are funded primarily with municipal tax funds and private donations supplemented by county funding. County funding provides support for library services, provided to residents outside the member library municipalities' geographic borders through its branch libraries. The local libraries also receive a formula-based grant each year.

County support also supports the LCLS administrative headquarters in Tavares. The System manages programs of benefit to all member communities including the Horizon automated library system, a courier service to transport materials from library to library, high-speed Internet access, books by mail, online databases, interlibrary loan, centralized cataloging, library promotion and technology training. Under the skillful direction of LCLS Director Wendy Breeden, the Lake County Library System members meet on a regular basis to cooperatively plan programs, identify new service needs and responses, and engage in problem solving to help improve libraries throughout the county.

The Lake County Board of County Commissioners through the Department of Community Services governs the LCLS. An 11-member Lake County Library Advisory Board composed of one representative designated by the governing body of each member library and five county representatives advises the System on countywide plans, policies, and budgets.

Member libraries administer their own libraries within the framework of the system's plan and interlocal agreements with the Lake County. The interlocal agreements detail the member library relationships with the LCLS, as well as the requirements and responsibilities of each party. The interlocal agreements specify that the cooperative will be administered by a single administrator who has responsibility for coordinating the development and management of the library system's plans, budgets, and services; the agreement also requires the member library to expend funds to support the

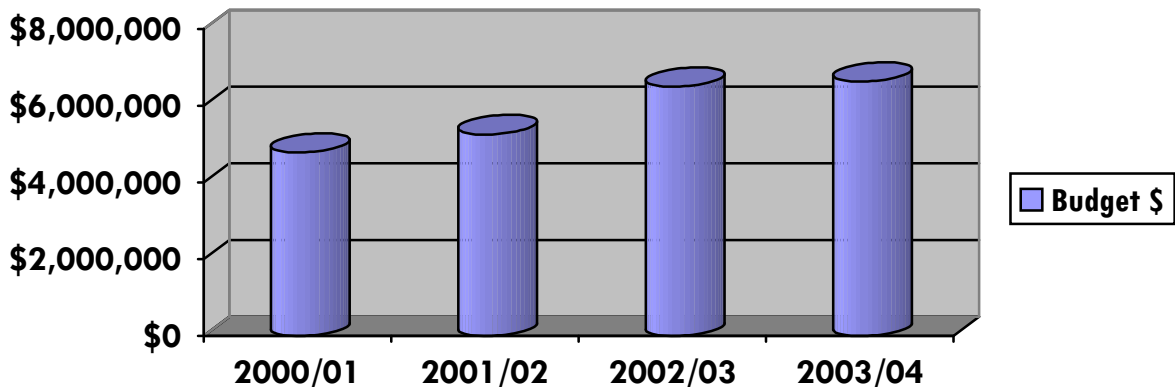
goals and objectives outlined in the long range plan and to expend funds centrally, as defined in the Florida Administrative Code Chapter 1B-2.

Library budgets are developed and adopted within the policy framework of the agency responsible for library operations. The Board of County Commissioners approves a combined budget and annual plan of service to submit to the State Library each year.

LCLS Funding

County funding for the Lake County Library System increased a significant 32% from \$3,047,070 in 2000/01 fiscal year to \$4,442,619 in fiscal year 2003/04. The increased funding has enabled the LCLS to enhance many of the services provided to Lake County residents including new member libraries and new branches. Figure 2 illustrates the effect the growth in county funding has had on the System's overall operating budget.

Fig. 2
Lake County Library System Total Operating Budget 2000-2004



Per capita spending for library service in Lake County in 1998 was \$10.30 per capita as compared to the state average of \$18.32. Due to the increase in use, support and funding during the past few years, the Lake County Library System now has a per capita expenditure of \$22.37 compared with the state average of \$22.87.

Library service in Lake County lacks a dedicated source of funding to ensure its stability unlike some of the other county library systems. Funding for the county's public libraries is funded by ad valorem taxes. Recent discussions indicate that there may be some receptivity to the establishment of a municipal services taxing unit, which would provide a level of funding to help Lake County make the investment it needs in its public libraries.

Local Libraries

There are currently 13 public libraries serving Lake County residents – 7 member libraries and 6 county operated branch libraries. These 13 libraries work cooperatively to ensure all county residents are served. In the last five years LCLS member libraries have made significant progress towards improving local library service. Two libraries that had not been members of the cooperative joined – Leesburg and Montverde. The trustees of the Cooper Memorial Library in Clermont decided to become a county branch, new county branches opened in Groveland, Paisley, Astor, and East Lake. In 2000, just prior to beginning the previous plan, Lady Lake, Fruitland Park and Umatilla libraries completed expansions and the first branch library, Citrus Ridge, opened. Leesburg is currently building a new 42,000 square foot library. The county is in the planning stages for a new Citrus Ridge Library and a new library in Clermont. The ability to provide service in modern library buildings is attracting new users who use the libraries not only as a resource for materials but as a place to meet with others in the community in formal and informal settings. Table 1 provides data about each of the libraries.

**Table 1
Lake County Library System Member Profile**

Library	2004 Holdings	Public Access Internet	FTE	Annual circulation	Program attendance	Reference questions	County Funds	Local funds	% County to total local funding
Lehmann Library, Montverde	N/A	3	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Leesburg	120,794	42	25	284,968	9,222	58,435	263,580	812,696	24%
Tavares	41,318	13	10.25	104,576	5,467	42,282	153,996	251,937	38%
Umatilla	31,473	21	8.25	130,623	11,051	20,826	182,626	147,605	55%
W.T. Bland	57,794	12	10.5	186,219	14,702	63,367	209,829	261,580	45%
Lady Lake	34,760	16	5.5	103,209	4,774	15,015	116,824	182,580	39%
Fruitland Park	27,990	11	4	61,886	3,640	8,268	80,721	77,500	51%
County Branches	166,083	49	58.7	521,757	18,030	44,904	2,676,233	0	100%

* Information taken from the annual statistical reports to the State Library of Florida FY 2003/04

Emerging Trends

Before developing this plan it was essential for the Planning Committee to think about the communities served by the Lake County Library System and its members, how those communities are changing and what impact those changes might have on the delivery of library service. Team members identified key trends affecting the development of this plan:

- Dramatic growth in Lake County's population continues to strain the ability of libraries to keep up with demand despite significant progress in the last five years.
- Lake County is experiencing a significant influx of non-English speakers, particularly Spanish speakers, which are looking for organizations who can support their need to learn English.
- As more and more families move into the county, both from other Florida counties and other states, the expectation for accessible library service continues to grow in a climate where there is increased competition for funding.
- Increasingly large numbers of Lake County's work force leaves the county each day to work elsewhere with many of these people working longer and harder than ever before. The result is a time starved population that has more demands on its free time and more choices for leisure time activities as well as a limited amount of time to use the library. People are looking for services that are convenient and fit with their lifestyles.
- As the population ages there is an increase in the number of disabled people requiring assistance with service as well as a growing population of elderly people with caregivers who may be unable to get to the library to receive service.
- Lake County faces a growing transportation crisis with more traffic clogging the roads and a lack of public transportation that allows people to get to the libraries independently.
- Libraries face increased competition from other organizations, businesses and online services that provide information and reading

materials and now operate in a world where many people think they can get everything they need on the Internet.

- Today's population has different expectations for library service, which are focused on space -- they expect libraries to be more social places, to have cafes, and to be places where they can meet members of the community.
- There is a growing need for access to computers as well as training to use computers associated with issues concerning a "digital divide." People expect more technology formats, faster access to formats, books on CD, DVDs, e-books, and more databases on the web as well as staff who can provide training to help use new technologies. Computers are bringing new users to libraries.
- Society places an increased emphasis on the value of partnerships as a way to achieve goals.
- Millennial library users have a different way of learning and using libraries. Library staff will have to adapt current practices to attract and retain new users.

The Next Five Years

These assumptions about the future shaped the development of this plan. Most significant about these assumptions is the idea of choice and opportunity, which reflects the notion that there is no right or wrong way to deliver library service but that what is most important is responding to community needs.

Choice. Public libraries have more choices about their roles in their communities. Libraries are no longer trying to fit into a one size fits all description of appropriate roles for public libraries but instead are developing their own roles based on what is going on within the context of their own communities. Libraries are rethinking current practices.

Rethinking Our Image. Libraries are thinking more broadly about the types of service provided, breaking away from the traditional perception that libraries are warehouses for books. Libraries are offering homework assistance, providing social and civic space, marketing their products by emulating good retail models, and thinking about specific services as profit centers.

Taking Risks. Public libraries are taking more risks in developing and providing services to their communities. If something doesn't work it is not the end of the world but more an opportunity for learning and continuous growth.

Technology Is Here To Stay. Technology has reshaped the way in which library service is provided, streamlining many routines and making information more accessible than ever before. Libraries need to embrace new technologies and shorten the planning cycle for the introduction of technologies that provide people easier and more convenient access to our services.

Greater Accessibility and Convenience. People want libraries to be easy to reach with abundant and convenient parking. The library's physical location should be located where people are. It should also be available 24/7 via the web so people can locate needed information.

Community Needs

To determine community needs and preferences for library service in Lake County, the LCLS provided a number of opportunities for the community and staff to comment on the future development of libraries. Focus groups were held with library users from member and branch libraries. Staff at each facility was interviewed to obtain their unique perspective about providing service in their communities.

Participants agreed that libraries continue to be essential to the quality of life in Lake County. They recommended:

Make library service more convenient to users

Focus group participants love the LCLS but want greater access to them. Hours and access to the libraries seven days a week continue to be important. Suggestions for increasing convenience include expansion of library hours during evenings and especially on weekends, including Sunday.

Provide access to centrally located, modern, spacious libraries

The most often mentioned comment at the focus groups related to the lack of meeting space in the libraries. More library programs would be possible if individual facilities had meeting room space to accommodate larger groups. People who came from Paisley and Astor want more spacious branches in conventional buildings that

accommodate more people and reinforce the library's central role in community life.

Improve Technology

Access to public computers has become a central role for Lake County libraries. Users expressed frustration about the speed of the telecommunications network and suggested upgrades. Users also want access to wireless network, color or high speed copiers, scanners and fax machines at their local libraries as well as additional PCs in each location.

Address the Needs of New Population Groups

The increased influx of Spanish speaking people caused many in the focus groups to talk about the need for bilingual staff and materials to assist in the assimilation process. Suggestions included more Spanish language material, more ESOL classes, and cultural programs designed to attract this population to the library.

Grow the Collection

The cooperative system allows for the transfer of material from library to library to meet demand but many participants talked about the need for expanded collections. New formats including graphic novels to attract teens and reluctant readers, best sellers and recent movie releases, and more material for children were among the most frequent suggestions.

Improve the Infrastructure

Staff members addressed concerns not immediately apparent to the public participants in the focus groups. Many were concerned about the look and functionality of the new Horizon system but realized that many of those issues would be worked out in the next twelve months. Some addressed concerns about cataloging and the length of time it takes to catalog materials. Staff and patron training, improved communication, a more functional catalog, and standardization among members were among other concerns most frequently mentioned.

Building on Strengths, Addressing Challenges

The Planning Team considered the county and library system strengths in order to identify the building blocks upon which the plan could be constructed. These strengths are indicators of the opportunities that exist for expanding and strengthening library service in all areas of the county.

Along with strengths come some challenges that need to be addressed in planning for the future. These strengths and challenges provided the Planning Committee with insights about the current library and information environment and helped them to identify the most important priorities to address during this planning cycle.

County and Library Strengths

- Creative library programs that are attracting new communities of users to the libraries. Library staff members are attuned to their communities and program accordingly
- A cooperative atmosphere among libraries in the system that allows for resource sharing, reciprocal borrowing, and shared automation that reduces duplication
- Effective communication among the libraries that makes it easy to share ideas and seek assistance
- County residents and government support libraries and cultural activities as evidenced by increases in the budget and the use of impact fees for libraries
- The shared online catalog encourages users to request items from any library and the courier service ensures that items are delivered quickly.
- A strong library board which represents member library interests and acts as an advocate for library services
- Friends groups who support individual library requests and act as advocates for the county's libraries
- Dedicated, competent library staff at the county and local level

County and System Challenges

- The inability to keep up with changes in technology because of limited funds
- Lack of public transportation and increasing traffic congestion making it difficult for some to reach their libraries
- A territorial attitude on the part of some communities and their patrons concerning their materials
- The inability to open LCLS doors to Sumter County residents due to lack of funding

- Lack of a strong sense of community in some parts of Lake County because of the large number of newcomers. Libraries can play a role in fostering community spirit and helping people to make connections with others.
- Library and user frustration because some system service is slow and/or perceived as slow
- Little opportunity for library staff to interact with each other and attend training because the libraries are becoming so busy
- The need for a stronger advocacy effort on behalf of the system

Opportunities and Threats

The Planning Team considered opportunities for extending library service throughout the county as well as potential threats that could inhibit the progress of library development in the next five years.

Opportunities

The extraordinary growth in Lake County will result in additional tax revenues and a year-round community that is more invested in the county and its services.

People are looking to libraries as centers for community activity.

As more families move to the county there is a new focus on family friendly services.

There are increased opportunities to partner with other agencies to deliver service, particularly to the homebound.

A more stable funding source for libraries could be available with the establishment of an MSTU.

Threats

Despite gains in expanding the LCLS the increased demand for libraries may exceed the ability to obtain funding to support continued growth.

Library programming is challenged by more competition from others, and insufficient meeting space in the libraries

Parents with larger families are finding it difficult to cope. Libraries lack enough quiet study space.

Other agencies may not have time or the ability to accommodate the library.

County government may be reluctant to establish a dedicated tax for libraries.

New models for fundraising are possible through the establishment of a library foundation.

Libraries may find it difficult to raise private funding to supplement tax revenue.

There are opportunities through increased marketing and outreach to make it “cool” to come to the library.

GenX believes that libraries are irrelevant to their lives.

The Lake County Library System’s Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision for the Future

Library users in Lake County will encounter a system of libraries that exceeds their expectations in every way. People will look to Lake County’s libraries as destinations for learning, information, ideas and fun.

We will have achieved our vision when:

- The Library is the first place Lake County residents go when they have a need for information;
- County residents are fully informed about library services and consider libraries essential to their quality of life;
- All libraries in the county are members of the system;
- County residents have convenient access to libraries that are modern, spacious, and inviting;
- People throughout the county return to the libraries again and again because of the high-quality of customer service and assistance received;
- Newly arrived immigrants see the county’s libraries as places of opportunity;
- Library staff are compensated at a level comparable to others in government with their level of education and experience; and,
- Libraries in Lake County are supported with a dedicated tax that ensures stability in funding from year to year.

Mission

The Lake County Library System’s mission is to serve as the gateway to the world of information, ideas and entertainment for all county residents.

To fulfill this mission we will:

- Ensure that people have access to current technology, information and ideas;
- Provide ample library resources to meet community needs;
- Provide skilled, dedicated and customer oriented service staff;

- Support a cooperative library structure to extend service by working with other libraries;
- Ensure that library service is convenient to all county residents;
- Offer library service in attractive, welcoming and comfortable facilities; and,
- Provide training, guidance, and instruction to help library users navigate their information environment.

Values

- We provide free access to information, non-judgmental service, and unrestricted access to library resources for county residents.
- We support the Library Bill of Rights and the principles outlined in the American Library Association's Freedom to Read statement and do all we can to protect patron privacy and confidentiality.
- We believe that a cooperative library structure is the best method to deliver library service to Lake County residents.
- We are responsive to user needs by emphasizing customer focused high quality service.
- We communicate with each other in an honest and open fashion

Roles

The Planning Team identified the "roles" that should be emphasized in LCLS for this planning cycle. The identified roles reflect the needs of Lake County residents. The libraries and system headquarters will factor these roles into their decision making about budget and allocation of resources.

Help People to Realize their Dreams

This role focuses on the critical role libraries play in providing resources that encourage imagination, inspire dreams and broaden horizons. Increasingly, libraries are places where people can use the resources provided to help them achieve their dreams. Consider these examples:

- A non-English speaker who comes to the library to meet with an ESL tutor so he can achieve economic independence
- A child who uses a PC to complete a homework assignment because she lacks a PC at home

Provide Opportunities for Learning and Personal Growth

This role places libraries as central locations for continued personal growth and development. Libraries offer materials, access to information, and a wide array of programming that enables people to learn about new things. Libraries are the school for people who are out of school.

Consider these examples:

- An older adult who participates in a book discussion group and learns that she shares many of the same values as her neighbors
- A new immigrant who learns about US citizenship
- A child who uses library resources to improve his grades

Technology and Information Support

In an increasingly complex technological world where information is pervasive, libraries can help people cope with information overload by providing training, assistance in locating information, and access to technology that makes it easier to navigate. Libraries are the last remaining free source to information and technology in today's society.

For example:

- A man who participates in a technology training class where he learns how to establish a free email account so he can communicate with his grandchildren
- The woman who works with library staff to find the health information she was seeking on the web
- The young man who uses the library's subscription databases to complete his homework with the assurance that the information he finds is accurate

Provide Resources for Entertainment

Libraries are great places to find the latest bestseller, a recent movie, a recorded book or a magazine to read during your leisure time. Providing free access to these resources and an opportunity for people to enjoy their leisure time is a time honored tradition for libraries and one that assumes increased importance in a world where books now approach an average cost of \$25. For example:

- A resident who commutes to Disney World uses the library's recorded books to "read" while driving
- A family comes to the library on Friday to select a family focused DVD to watch that evening.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The Lake County Library System has made incredible strides in the last five years toward improving the overall quality of library service offered to library users. The promise of technology, stability in funding for the System, and new or expanded facilities to support a full scale library program will enable the LCLS to move further toward accomplishing its vision for the future. The Lake County Library System and its member libraries must focus their attention in the next five years on program and service development that will reach the greatest number of users and will result in a high level of satisfaction with libraries.

The goals, objectives and action plans outlined in this plan are derived from staff and user suggestions and reflect the priorities that appear to be most important to people who use Lake County libraries. This plan will assist the LCLS Advisory Board and staff as they develop future library budgets and service programs, determine the allocation of county, state, and federal resources and improve library responsiveness to user needs.

Common Themes

During the focus groups sessions, staff interviews, and Planning Team discussions certain themes kept recurring as important guides for the system's growth and development over the next few years. These themes and priority areas reflect the needs of individuals residing in the LCLS service area as well as general societal trends likely to have a continued impact on library development. These themes are:

- **Build an effective library system that enables continued collaboration and resource sharing to meet the demand of a growing population**
- **Expand access to library service to encourage greater use by a larger number of county residents**
- **Celebrate and promote the value of reading**
- **Create opportunities for lifelong learning and personal growth**
- **Build great library collections and develop expanded library programming that make libraries destinations of choice**
- **Continually market library services so the county residents understand all that is available from their public libraries**

- **Partner, cooperate and collaborate with other public and private organizations to extend library services and enhance the library experience**

Goal 1: An Effective Library System

Lake County residents will encounter a library infrastructure that enables the delivery of high-quality library service.

Objectives:

1.1 *Implement the facility recommendations outlined in the Lake County Library Facilities Plan 2005-2020*

Strategies:

- Develop an awareness campaign to inform the community about the need for additional, new or expanded libraries
- Secure funding required to implement the plan

1.2 *Develop a comprehensive staff training and development program to ensure that all library users receive a consistent level of service*

Strategies:

- Survey library staff to determine their training needs
- Identify trainers and develop an annual training schedule

1.3 *Develop a system-wide staffing plan that recommends the types of staffing and expertise needed in each library*

1.4 *Revise and refine LCLS policies and procedures to ensure that they are up-to-date, legally defensible, reflect current practice and are customer focused.*

Strategies:

- Update the collection development plan
- Update library use policies
- Develop customer service standards
- Establish performance measures to evaluate the return on investment for library services

1.5 *Develop stable sources of funding for the LCLS*

Strategies:

- Establish a special taxing district to provide a dedicated tax to support library service

- Establish a library foundation to raise funds to enhance library programs, services and facilities
- Develop fundraising skills among member library directors and library boards

1.6 Develop and nurture alternative and/or supplementary sources of funding Strategies:

- Encourage the Friends of the Library groups to hold regularly scheduled books sales
- Encourage the friends to sponsor “benefits” or an “annual appeal” to support the libraries

1.7 Utilize technology to improve efficiency and security Strategies:

- Determine the current loss rate for library materials versus the cost of a security system
- Install Radio Frequency Identification systems (RFID) in new library facilities
- Provide self-check service points
- Install computer access management software

1.8 Increase access to public computing and supporting technology Strategies:

- Increase the number of public access computers
- Use laptops to expand the number of computers available in libraries
- Install wireless or broadband access in each library
- Improve the speed of the telecommunications system
- Explore providing access to scanners, color copiers, fax machines
- Provide permanent computer training labs in new library facilities

1.9 Work with Horizon to implement additional catalog enhancements Strategies:

- Email reserve notices
- Provide more training for patrons and staff
- Continue to improve HIP functionality
- Explore Ecommerce options for paying fines and fees
- Explore the use of smart library cards

Goal 2: Expanded Access to Library Service

Lake County library users will find expanded access to library services

Objectives:

2.1 Increase the number of hours LCLS libraries are open

Strategies:

- Secure funding to expand evening and weekend hours including Sunday hours

2.2 Continue to expand the online services that create 24/7 libraries in Lake County

Strategies:

- Continue to expand the “ask a librarian” service
- Expand the number of subscription databases available on the LCLS website
- Offer downloadable books
- Research and implement database search aggregator software to allow for simultaneous searching of subscription databases

2.3 Expand ways for people to access LCLS services

Strategies:

- Establish deposit collections in day care, clinics and senior centers
- Offer an expanded menu of materials in the books by mail service (DVDs, videos)
- Explore options for providing home delivery
- Broadcast story hours on public access cable channels
- Offer satellite drop-off centers near shopping areas for quick return of library materials

2.4 Increase library use by non-traditional users

Strategies:

- Hire bilingual staff
- Work with the home schooled community to provide library services that support teaching and learning

2.5 Expand the system’s promotional activities

Strategies:

- Work with local realtors, town officials, Chambers of Commerce, and county government to provide information about the library to new residents
- Develop library promotional materials in multiple languages to reach target populations
- Create *en español* page on the library web site
- Work with local hospitals, clinics and pediatricians to reach out to young children and their parents

Goal 3: Encourage a Love of Reading

The Lake County Library System will offer programs and services to enhance the community's love of reading

Objectives:

3.1 *Develop methods for sharing information about popular interest titles*

Strategies:

- Create online lists of most frequently read, as well as new and recommended lists
- Improve displays for new materials by using new retail-like fixtures
- Develop a method (online or bulletin board) for readers and staff members to share book reviews
- Institute system-wide readers' advisory service complemented by tools such as a Bookletters.com, novelist, etc.

3.2 *Encourage reading among children, teens and adults*

Strategies:

- Continue the summer reading program for children
- Establish summer reading clubs for teens and adults
- Establish an intergenerational reading program
- Encourage book discussion groups for all ages

3.3 *Focus community attention on the importance and joy of reading*

Strategies:

- Continue and expand the successful Festival of Reading program
- Initiate a "one book, one community" program
- Develop book club discussion kits
- Expand the use of online book discussion groups

3.4 Continue system wide efforts to improve early and adult literacy

Strategies:

- Continue the Born to Read program

Goal 4: Library Awareness

Lake County residents will be more aware of all that the libraries have to offer

Objectives:

4.1 Increase annual library use

Strategies:

- Conduct an annual satisfaction survey
- Conduct library registration drives
- Provide on-line patron registration and renewal

4.2 Create more awareness about the library's web site

Strategies:

- Purchase easy-to-remember domain name for the library web site, e.g. Lakecountylibraries.org
- Create the capability for the LCLS website to be searchable from a cell phone or PDA
- Develop a promotional campaign focused on the 24/7 virtual library
- Put the LCLS Web address on library cards

4.3 Expand library programming to attract additional users

Strategies:

- Offer more library system sponsored events throughout the year
- Book people from the library speakers' bureau for local community and county wide organizations
- Make visits to places where non-English speakers are working, living and socializing to promote library services

4.4 Create opportunities to inform the community about the value of libraries

Strategies:

- Work with agencies concerned about economic development to promote the LCLS contribution to the local economy
- Complete a return on investment study and publicize the results

4.5 Develop a marketing and promotion plan

Strategies:

- Develop partnerships with local supermarkets, retailers, the Chamber of Commerce and community organizations to advertise library services
- Allocate funds annually to support library advertising
- Work with local CATV providers to secure a time slot for a weekly library program
- Reach the Hispanic community by marketing through local churches and Hispanic places of business
- Establish an Internet newsletter

Goal 5: Encourage Lifelong Learning

Lake County residents will find a wide array of opportunities for lifelong learning at their libraries

Objectives:

5.1 Provide program space at each library facility

Strategies:

- Identify and secure space to support library programming including off-site locations

5.2 Expand program offerings for adults

Strategies:

- Offer programs on a variety of topics including: technology training, financial planning, international music, database searching, author readings, ethnic celebrations, international music, current event discussions

5.3 Expand program offerings for children

Strategies:

- Establish more children's story times
- Offer after school tutoring programs
- Offer bilingual story times

5.4 Expand program offerings for teens

Strategies:

- Offer college preparation classes and study groups
- Establish Teen advisory groups to assist on program development
- Establish a Teen volunteer program

5.5 Provide opportunities for English and non-English speakers to improve their literacy and language skills

Strategies:

- Offer English as Second Language tutoring programs
- Offer adult literacy classes and materials to support learning
- Install self-paced language learning software
- Continue to provide literacy materials and workbooks for adults and ESOL tutors and students

5.6 Provide resources needed to support on-going learning

Strategies:

- Purchase more learning software – learn a test, keyboard skills

Goal 6: Great Library Collections

Lake County residents will find library collections that respond to their needs and interests

Objectives:

6.1 Update the LCLS collection development plan

6.2 Increase the inventory of large print books, graphic novels, audio books for children and teens, world language and current materials

Strategies:

- Increase the library materials budget
- Work with the school librarians to secure additional titles for the summer reading list books
- Support the Accelerated Reader program
- Expand the world language collection
- Subscribe to more foreign language newspapers

6.3 Continually include new formats in the library collection

Strategies:

- Purchase electronic games, downloadable books, digital books, expanded databases, and similar resources
- Expand the world language collection

- Evaluate current database subscriptions in light of customer use

6.4 Allocate additional funding to increase the supply of print and non-print material

Strategies:

- Encourage memorial gifts to the library
- Increase the library materials budget
- Foster and encourage participation by the Friends of the Library

Goal 7: Partnerships, Cooperation and Collaboration

Lake County libraries will cooperate and partner with other county organizations to improve and deliver library service

Objectives:

7.1 Work with the county schools to develop collaborative programs that will enhance the K-12 educational curriculum

Strategies:

- Institute a homework alert system where teachers inform the libraries of upcoming projects
- Attend back to school nights to promote awareness of library services and register patrons
- Develop collaborative approach to after school homework assistance

7.2 Continue voter registration and early voting in LCLS libraries

7.3 Work with AARP, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, Lake County Elder Affairs Coordinating Council, Lake County Senior Services, and other agencies to provide library services to older adults

7.4 Work with institutions of higher education to enhance library service for the public

7.5 Utilize community partnerships to expand and promote county-wide literacy programs

7.6 Foster strong Friends of the Library organizations