

USAGE & REVENUE DATA

According to 2007 and 2008 circulation and program attendance statistics supplied to the consultant by the Library, it appears that the usage of the two small branch libraries in the ACPL system account for about 0.014 percent of total circulation and 0.040 percent of program attendance. Therefore, we have “assigned” 0.02 percent of the data we have analyzed to the branch libraries.

Thus, if the reported Circulation in 2006 for the ACPL, as stated by the Wyoming State Library, was 207,306, for the Laramie Library it was approximately 203,160 ($207,306 \times 0.98 = 203,159$ (rounded to 203,160)).

All of the data for this report has been taken from the annual statistics for Wyoming Public Libraries as compiled by the State Library.

POPULATION, CIRCULATION, & PER CAPITA DATA

The service area population was 31,887 in 2005 and 32,227 in 2008. However, in both 2006 and 2007 the figure dropped below 31,000. There was a decline of almost 1,000 in 2006 and another drop of about 500 (to 30,360) in 2007. The decline was interesting, to say the least.

For the same four years the total circulation ranged from 177,836 in 2005 to last year’s 188,356. In 2006 it spiked to 207,306. Thus, there is a near six percent rise over the four-year period – but a 9.1 percent decline from the 2006 peak. 2006 was also the high point for visits during the past four years, as well as reference transactions and children’s circulation. However, the budget was larger in 2006 than 2005 and it has continued to rise in 2007 and 2008.

When factoring on a per capita basis we find the following numbers for the past four years:

- 2005 Circulation – 5.78 items per capita
- 2006 Circulation – 6.71 items per capita
- 2007 Circulation – 5.68 items per capita
- 2008 Circulation – 5.84 items per capita

OTHER USAGE MEASURES

The Wyoming State Library is reasonably consistent in how it records and reports data from year to year. As time marches, by it does appear to tweak its reporting a bit to provide the libraries and others studying the data a bit more information. Nonetheless, for this report, we will basically confine ourselves to the consistent data that has been reported.

Registered Borrowers

This data was reported for '08 and '07. The total number of registrants last year was 15,274, an increase over the previous year of 1,814, or 13.5 percent. That is moving in the right direction. However, the total in '08 represents but 41 percent of the total population. There are many libraries that have percentages in the 60s, 70s, and above. It should be noted, however, that the ACPL does purge its files on a regular basis of those who have not used their borrower's card in the past three years. There are libraries that are not as regular with purging inactive borrowers.

Visits

Visits have remained fairly constant, hovering just above or below 90,000. In 2008 the number of visits was 90,988, or 2.82 per capita. Per visit the circulation was 2.07.

Reference Transactions

This usage element shows a steady decline between '06 and '08, a drop of 41.3 percent. This may be a result of increased usage of the public computers, although the '08 figures for that element was only slightly higher than in '05, or the change in the way that the Library records reference transactions. Regardless of the reason the overall numbers are quite low.¹

¹ In an effort to obtain a more accurate count of reference transactions, the Library has recently been striving to record each and every transaction. A week-long sample, if a norm, would result in an annual total in excess of 12,000 reference transactions.

Interlibrary Loan

This service has steadily increased over each of the last four years. It rose from 787 items loaned to other libraries in 2005 to 2,772 in 2008. The borrowing figures also show a steady march upward – over four years a gain of 65.4 percent, or 2,143 items borrowed by the ACPL from other libraries for ACPL customers. Interlibrary Loan service is very labor-intensive. The consultants question how much longer the Library can, or should, continue to provide this as a free service.

Programs & Program Attendance

2008 had total attendance nearly double what it was four years past. The '08 number was 14,321, up almost 3,000 over the previous year.

Children's program attendance accounted for 89 percent of the total. Attendance for children's programming has also doubled over the 2005. Young Adult program attendance totaled 554 in 2008 and 395 the previous year. There was no reported data for '06 or '05.

One clear reason for the sharp increase in attendance has been an equally sharp increase in the number of programs – from a low of 501 in 2005 to last year's total of 880. Children's programs numbered 715, or 81 percent of the total.

Public Computers & Uses of the Computers

Over the last four years the number of public use computers for the Library system has risen from 17 to 29. However, the usage data has been like a bell curve. In 2005, it was 11,237, or an average of 661 per computer and 2.77 per hour.

The following year the usage per PC was 610 and the hourly use was 3.29. The next year (2007), the usage per PC was 668 and the hourly use was 3.93.

Then, in 2008, the Library experienced a sharp decline. Overall usage fell by 4,372, or over 27 percent. Usage per hour dropped to 2.86, and usage per piece of equipment was down to 402. [For 2009, usage spiked upward to an hourly average of 13.24 and 902 per computer.](#)

There may have been policy changes regarding the usage of the computers, e.g. lengthen the time a person could “be on” a computer. There could have been a considerable amount of “down” time. The reporting strategy may be somewhat “loose.” [A reasonable explanation of the 2009 increase is the downturn in the economy and the number of persons who are using their public library for sharpening their resume and seeking employment opportunities.](#)

HOURS OPEN

In 2005, the total open hours for the ACPL was 4,056. For the past three years the number has been 4,080. These numbers reflect the two branch libraries as well as the Laramie facility.

STAFFING

Last, but certainly not least, is the Library staff.

The FTE (full-time equivalent) has stayed reasonably the same – 17.3 in 2005, 17.42 a year later, then up to 18.93 in '07, and back down again to a low of 17.17 last year. We are aware that a small portion of the FTE allocation is for the two branch libraries.

An interesting fact is that even though the FTE count is ever so slightly smaller in 2008 than four years past, the dollars expended has risen 24.3 percent.² Work benefit costs may account for some of the increase, but probably not the entire amount. COLAs and/or merit increases could also be a contributing factor. However, the consultants also are of the opinion that number of staff – 30 positions in 2008, 31 the year before, and 43 in 2006 – is also a contributing factor. That is, we believe that having more full-time staff and fewer overall staff is more efficient and effective.

However, we do not wish to leave an impression that we believe the ACPL is overstaffed. We will, when we prepare our facility and operating cost recommendations, be able to zero in on what we believe the staffing levels of the Laramie facility should be.

² The ACPL adopted a salary schedule for Southeastern Wyoming based on a study done by Laramie County. This was the primary reason for the overall increase in personnel costs.

RESOURCES – DOLLAS AND CENTS

Income

Total income for the Library has increased \$284,174, or 50.4 percent over the past four years. On a per capita basis, the change has been from \$17.67 in 2005 to \$26.30 in 2008, which is good news. What is the “bad news?” At \$26.30 per capita the income is well below the average in Wyoming or in most parts of the country. However, that is another study.

Table 4.1
Income

<i>source</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>\$ change</i>	<i>% change</i>
Local Funds				
Mill Funds	\$604,177	\$547,045	\$57,132	10.4
Non-Mill Funds	25,000	0	25,000	n/a
City Income	11,644	8,962	2,682	29.9
Total Local	\$640,821	\$556,007	\$84,814	15.3
State	\$72,427	\$72,427	\$0	0.0
Federal	\$9,166	3,131	\$6,035	192.7
Other Income				
Grants	\$77,863	\$43,031	\$34,832	80.9
Fees	3,705	6,831	- 3,126	- 45.8
Fines	443	377	66	17.5
Gifts	22,580	11,900	10,680	89.7
Interest	1,578	2,908	- 1,330	- 45.7
Total Other	\$125,310	\$68,191	\$57,119	83.8
Total Income	\$847,724	\$699,756	\$147,968	21.1
Per Capita	\$26.30	\$23.05	\$3.25	14.1

The data reported for the last two years by the State break down the income into several smaller segments. Here is what was reported:

Expenditures

Over the same four years the ACPL’s outlay excluding capital expenditures (of which there has been very little, if any) has gone from \$819,220 in 2007 to last year’s total of \$804,834. The increase has been \$232,752, or 40.7 percent. The Library has collectively exceeded its budget, or at least has spent more than its income, by approximately \$146,000. However, last year it under spent by about \$43,000.

Where has the money gone?

Table 4.2
Expenditures

<i>source</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>\$ change</i>	<i>% change</i>
Personnel	\$569,341	\$458,094	\$111,247	24.3
Library Materials				
Print	\$56,354	\$23,929	\$32,425	135.5
Electronic	15,350	0	15,350	n/a
Other	4,762	0	4,762	n/a
Total Materials	\$76,466	\$23,929	\$52,537	219.6
Per Capita	\$2.37	\$0.75	\$1.62	216.0
Other	\$159,027	\$90,059	\$68,968	76.6
Total Expenditures	\$804,837	\$819,220	\$232,752	40.7
Per Capita	\$24.97	\$17.94	\$7.03	39.2

The most telling figures, as aside from the overall low per capita numbers, is the paltry amount of money available for library materials. What can a library buy for \$2.37 per capita? Not much! The absence of a healthy budget for library materials is unquestionably one reason for the faltering circulation statistics. Our budget projections for the Library (see Chapter 15) reflect a per capita increase in the budget for library materials of 72 percent.

Expenditures as a Percentage by Category

It is, we believe, instructive to look at how the funds for specific cost elements are expended when measured again the total expenditures.

Table 4.3
Expenditures, by Category

<i>element</i>	<i>\$ expended 2008</i>	<i>% of total 2008</i>	<i>\$ expended 2005</i>	<i>% of total 2005</i>
Personnel	\$569,341	70.7	\$458,094	80.1
Library Materials	\$76,466	9.5	\$52,537	9.2
Other	\$159,027	19.6	\$68,968	12.1
Total				
Expenditures	\$804,834		\$572,082	

The expenditures for Library Materials have remained fairly constant. Personnel costs are down – as a percentage of the total, offset by the jump in Other costs. What accounts for the healthy increase in Other costs?

Perhaps it is utilities, communications, fees for computer services and databases, and/or general inflation.

LIBRARY MATERIALS

The total collection size – print, subscriptions, audio, video – has declined slightly between 2005 and 2008 – the drop has been 2,104 items, or 1.6 percent. Given the minimal budget for library materials that is understandable.

However, the 2008 collection size of 127,257 equals 3.95 items per capita. That is a solid number – and the consultants believe too solid for the ACPL and the facility it now has.

The book collection is quite large and the media collection somewhat on the small side (although quite an increase from four years ago – from 3,350 in '05 to close to 10,000 in 2008).

The consultants believe, at this stage of our work with the ACPL, that a collection size of between 2.5 and 3.0 items per capita would be ample provided there is funding to maintain it at that size. In addition, the media collection – books-on-CD, music CDs, and DVDs – should account for between 15 and 20 percent of the total.

SUMMARY

Usage of the Laramie Library is not what it should be for a community that is home to a major university. Typically we find that use of the public library in a university community runs considerably higher than it has been in Laramie.

However, of equal importance to consider is the low level of financial support the ACPL – and thus the Laramie Library – receives. It too is much lower.

In our statistical comparisons of Albany County with other Wyoming county libraries (see Chapter 6), and those that have significant university populations and are in a general size range with regard to service area population as Albany County (see Chapter 7), we noted that the per capita income of the average of both the libraries in the state as well as those nationally was generally higher than Albany County. Usage per capita for the different libraries averaged quite a bit more than Albany County's.

Given the financial constraints, as well as the physical problems of an overcrowded building with too few parking spaces, the usage of the Laramie Library is probably just about as good as it can be at this time. But, there are changes that can be made that the consultants believe could result in some additional usage. Then again, without the financial resources to implement change . . .