



Georgians' public library use up 10%

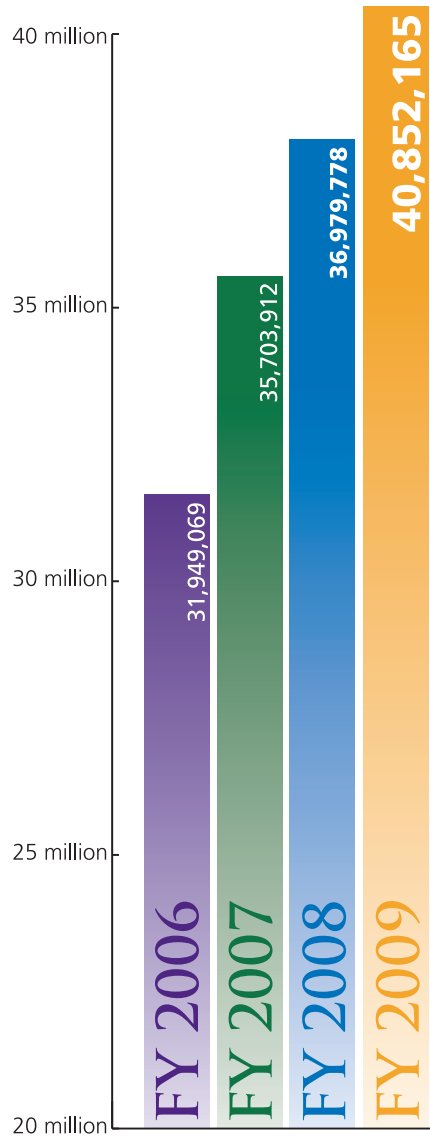
"The latest statistics are in," said State Librarian **Dr. Lamar Veatch**, "and they are impressive to say the least. No one can say that public libraries are not being used by Georgia's residents!"

According to the figures compiled from recently completed annual reports for the state's 61 public library systems, library visits increased 10.47 percent from 2008 to 2009, rising from 36,979,778 to 40,852,165. This represents a cumulative increase of 27.9 percent since 2006, the last year prior to the current economic crisis.

Circulation of books and recordings increased by 9.5 percent last year, from 43,663,621 to 47,811,748 — a 17.4 percent increase from 2006.

The annual number of public-access computer sessions at Georgia libraries this year topped 15 million for the first time. Computer use increased 6.85 percent in 2009, from 14,054,682 sessions to 15,018,105. This was a total increase of 12.2 percent over the 2006 figure.

"The computer-use number is a bit misleading," Veatch said, "because most of the computers were being used at or near full capacity during library hours in both years.



The increase in percentage is more a reflection of additional computers and the slightly greater capacity they provided."

These numbers come from the annual reports of Georgia's 61 public library systems, as reported to Georgia Public Library Service and

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Hard economic times bring further cuts in library funding

Although Georgia's public libraries are reporting double-digit increases in use, many of them will feel the state's economic pinch harder than ever in the coming fiscal year.

Two days on the heels of his eighth and final State of the State Address to the Georgia General Assembly on Jan. 13, **Gov. Sonny Perdue** formally submitted his recommendations for the Amended Fiscal Year 2010 and Fiscal Year 2011 budgets. The former includes an 8.2 percent reduction of formula funds from the original FY 2010 budget.

The cut in state support for Georgia's public libraries during FY 2010 stands at \$3.3 million in direct funding and staff furloughs. The lean 2010 budget was partially offset, however, by the governor's and the legislature's funding of 18 library-related design and construction projects.

Perdue's 2011 budget continues the 2010 cuts, with an incremental 1.7 percent reduction that brings the total decrease to 9.9 percent. However, none of the 12 capital outlay proposals made by Georgia Public Library Service for 2011 received Perdue's recommendation for funding.

"I know that the governor recognizes the great value of public libraries," said State Librarian **Dr.**

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Public meetings focus on Georgia's Talking Book Centers

Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) has announced a series of public meetings that will give patrons the opportunity to share suggestions for service improvements. The goal is to provide more efficient, effective service to citizens with visual or physical disabilities that prevent the use of regular print materials.

The GLASS network of 11 libraries serves every corner of the state, offering a variety of programs and support services, including the distribution of Braille and audio materials from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped that are circulated to eligible borrowers in the United States by postage-free mail. GLASS libraries and an additional outreach center are strategically located throughout the state, and the network maintains affiliations with each of the state's nearly 390 public libraries.

The public meetings will give consumers and providers in each service area an opportunity to learn about and provide suggestions toward a new draft plan. GLASS and Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) encourage everyone who uses or is interested in the service to attend and share opinions and information that will help the planning team develop a final map for delivering the best service possible with the available resources.

Ideally, said GLASS Director **Stella Cone**, attendees will include current and potential consumers of Talking Book Center (TBC) services; TBC employees, library directors and staff; and a variety of service providers, such as educators, health care providers and vocational rehabilitation counselors.

Meetings were held in Bainbridge, LaFayette, Macon, Rome and Valdosta in January.

"Based on our first two meetings, patrons are very pleased to have input into the planning process, and they are expressing a great deal of satisfaction with the service," Cone said. "They don't want to see too many changes, because they are very happy with the sub-regional system and the services they provide. Our users like the personal connections they have with their local readers' advisers, and they don't want to lose that personal contact. Even if it is only occasionally, they also enjoy the ability to visit their local TBC and browse the shelves.

"The biggest problems people have identified so far have more to do with mail delays than with anything the TBCs are or aren't doing," Cone said, "so we need to work with the postmaster to see how we can work together to improve that portion of the service.

"We still have many people to hear from around the state, and if they echo what we have heard so far, it's likely we'll be seeing more a refinement of than a rebuilding of the current service delivery model."

Upcoming meetings will be held Feb. 6 at the Athens-Clarke County Library; Feb. 10 at the Brunswick-Glynn County Library and at the Southwest Chatham Branch Library in Savannah; Feb. 11 at the Augusta-Richmond County Public Library and at the Laurens County Library in Dublin; Feb. 23 at the Columbus Public Library; and Feb. 26 at the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library.

An initiative of GPLS and an affiliate network of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, GLASS is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services to GPLS under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

For additional information about upcoming meetings or about GLASS services, including Talking Book Centers and counties served, visit www.georgialibraries.org/glass or contact GLASS toll-free at 800-248-6701. ■

Staff

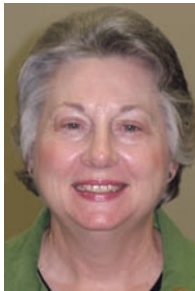


Mareice Cook, a vocational rehabilitation counselor with the Georgia Department of Labor in Albany, speaks at the GLASS-sponsored public meeting in Bainbridge.

Cooperative agreements show benefits for libraries and their communities

For the past several years, the Jefferson County Board of Education has contributed funding for the Jefferson County Library System. In return, the library system has provided books and other materials for teachers to use in the county's elementary and middle schools. For fiscal year 2010, however, the Board of Education received significant state cuts, and adjustments to its budget included cutting library system funding by 50 percent.

"Knowing that the Jefferson County Library System depends on BOE funding to meet the state requirements for maintenance of effort, the BOE began looking for innovative ways



Edwards

to provide in-kind assistance to support the library system," explained Library Director **Patricia Edwards**. "One way they've helped is to make schools' information technology personnel available to help with any of the library's IT needs that fall above and beyond the expertise of our staff."

This fall, school system IT staff added network wiring to the Louisville Library to facilitate the moving, leasing, and networking of a new copier with color, scanner and fax capabilities, Edwards said. In the coming months, they will assist by installing wireless networks in all three of the system's branches. School system IT staff members are also available as needed to answer technical questions, offer advice and provide instruction for library staff who are involved with computer security and maintenance.

This solution has proved beneficial to the school system, which saved approximately \$5,000 in funds, Edwards said, and it has provided a needed service to the library system, which has no trained technology staff. For its part, the library's courier continues to visit each school every other week to deliver and pick up materials that the county's teachers have requested.

A second cooperative agreement, this one with Georgia Southern University, has provided a new Web site for the library system. Two IT professors at GSU, **Dr. John O'Malley** and **Dr. Chris Kadlec**, needed to obtain practical experience for their students, and the library system needed a new and more-easily-updated Web page, Edwards said, so during the spring semester, a group of students designed a great new Web presence for the library.

According to Deputy State Librarian **Julie Walker**, cooperative agreements are an excellent way for economically hard-hit communities to combine resources to continue providing as many public services as possible with available funds.

Similar partnerships are being explored by library systems around the state, Walker said. "Georgia Public Library Service is currently working with ACCG (Association County Commissioners of Georgia) in anticipation of strengthening the relationships between county governments and public libraries.

"We believe it's a win-win situation for all parties to work together to find innovative ways of coping with the economic downturn while meeting the ever-increasing public demand for library service." ■

CSAC '10 cancelled due to budget woes

Due to budget constraints, there will be no Children's Services Annual Conference (CSAC) for the current fiscal year. The event has traditionally been held each February.

"The next CSAC is tentatively scheduled for early December 2010 in Macon," said **Elaine Black**, director of Youth Services for GPLS. "The plan is to restore this conference to the FY 2011 budget, which covers the period from July 1, 2010, through June 20, 2011. We also hope to once again offer a Teen Services Annual Conference in early December, provided that funds are available."

This year's teen conference did not get beyond the planning stage, due to shortfalls in the FY2010 budget.

Black said that Georgia's annual 2010 Summer Reading Program will take place as planned, although many of the state's library systems may suffer reductions in materials, programming or both for a second consecutive year.

"Budget cuts prevented us from offering the planned LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) minigrants for materials and programming for the 2009 program, and the same will hold true for 2010."

Originally, Black said, \$180,000 had been earmarked for minigrants to the state's libraries in each year. ■

NGRL system participates in DOL career expo

More than 3,000 people attended the Department of Labor's (DOL) North Georgia Career Expo and Job Fair in Dalton in mid-November. Deputy Regional Director **Nick Fogarty** and Dalton-Whitfield Public Library Manager **John McPhearson** represented the Northwest Georgia Regional Library (NGRL) System at the event, which the DOL called one of the largest held in North Georgia.

"There was no typical job seeker," Fogarty explained. "The need for a job has cut across all ages and professions. Although we were there to discuss using library computers and resources for job searching and applications, there were those that expressed interest in library careers — both in a professional capacity and as a part of support staff."

DOL Commissioner **Michael Thurmond** said he was gladdened to see that so many people had not given up hope in finding a new job or new career. DOL held the job fair

John McPhearson



Nick Fogarty (left) and Arlena Freeman (center) of the Northwest Georgia Family Crisis Center discuss job searching with an attendee.

in Dalton, he said, because the area is one of the hardest hit by the recession in Georgia.

NGRL is also working with the Dalton-Whitfield Chamber of Commerce in encouraging job seekers to register for the Georgia Work Ready Program, and Fogarty is a member of the chamber's work force development committee.

"We want to be a part of the committee taking action to help our residents find jobs," he said. "We know that, for many, the public library is their only access to computers for job searching. Hearing about the importance of the library first-hand from job seekers at the career expo was very sobering, and it was gratifying to have so many people thanking us for being there." ■

Visits

Continued from page 1
the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the federal agency that compiles and publishes annual statistics for public libraries nationwide.

Georgia's increase in public library use dovetails with similar reports from across the country, Veatch said. According to a recent Harris Poll from Harris Interactive, more than 68 percent of Americans now have a library card, up 5 percent since 2006. This is the greatest number of Americans with library cards since the American Library Association began measuring

library card usage in 1990.

"The services provided by public libraries are in greater demand than ever," Veatch said. "When Georgians are looking for work, they use their public library's free Internet access to assist their job search. When people economize, they check out books, magazines and DVDs instead of buying them. When they wish to improve their knowledge and life skills, they use the vast resources of the library. These latest statistics are proof that Georgia's residents truly depend on and appreciate the services their libraries provide." ■

Funding

Continued from page 1

Lamar Veatch, "but virtually every recipient of state funding is working with significant cuts due to the state's projected budget shortfalls, and libraries are not exempt."

The 2010 and 2011 budget reductions cover both GPLS operations and state grants to libraries, Veatch explained, and cuts were anticipated. "We understand the need for further belt tightening," he said, "but with library use increasing so dramatically, more budget reductions will certainly be challenging for public libraries, as well as for GPLS, to absorb."

Veatch noted that the possibility exists that the General Assembly will restore some library funding as members of the House and Senate work through and modify the governor's outline.

"If not," he said, "many library systems will need to seek additional local funding or be forced to reduce services to the communities and citizens who are depending on them more than ever." ■

Applications due for scholarships

Scholarship applications for the Georgia Public Library Service Librarians Build Communities Program for fall semester 2010 are due by March 31. Details and an application form are available from the GPLS Web site at www.georgialibraries.org/lib/publiclibinfo/bush_grant_app.php. The program is funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. ■

Macon's Washington Memorial wins \$500,000 grant

Macon and Bibb County residents will be able to gain computer skills and enjoy expanded Internet access thanks to a \$500,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

With the support of the Knight Foundation and the Bibb County Commission, the Washington Memorial Public Library will aim to transform itself from an aging traditional library into an information hub and gathering place for community activities. Numerous areas of the library, particularly the children's department, will be renovated, with the commission contributing \$450,000 toward building upgrades that will include improved, higher-efficiency lighting and new carpet and paint.

"The collaboration between the Knight Foundation, Bibb County Commission and Macon Friends of the Library presents an opportunity to meet the digital needs of library patrons," said **Thomas Jones**, director of the Middle Georgia Regional Library. "This is especially welcome now, because the library is serving more patrons while receiving reduced funding due to difficult economic times. We are delighted to be able to provide better services and additional access to patrons where and when it is needed most. To be able to accomplish this and provide a comfortable gathering spot for the community is just an ideal goal for a public library."

Jones explained that the foundation's grant is earmarked for helping the area's patrons who are not

computer literate develop the skills necessary to write resumes, build job skills and conduct online job hunts. To that end, foundation funds will be used for equipment upgrades, including 85 new computers — nearly double the library's current number — and for software and training classes.

Some of the new computers will be laptops, which patrons can check out for use within the building. Many of the current computers will then be relocated to other Middle Georgia Regional Library branches, improving access for patrons throughout the system. Wireless Internet access will be available to patrons who bring their personal computers into the library or areas surrounding the library, such as nearby Washington Park, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Jones said. Software will be installed to allow printing from personal computers. Ergonomic seating and study areas will be installed throughout the library to facilitate the use of laptops.

"The Washington Memorial Library already serves as an important technological link for local citizens without access to computers," said **Samuel F. Hart Sr.**, Bibb County Commission chairman. "This hub will improve and strengthen that access and, more importantly, become a community gathering place."

Washington Memorial is the central facility of the 14-branch Middle Georgia system, which serves Bibb, Crawford, Jones, Macon, Twiggs and Wilkinson counties. ■

Catoosa celebrates anniversary

The Catoosa County Library celebrated its 10th anniversary at the Benton Place Campus in December. Events included a performance by the Chattanooga Symphony String Quartet, evening and afternoon receptions and a book sale sponsored by the Friends of the Catoosa County Library.

December also marked the return of the system's annual Festival of Trees. Local civic organizations, agencies, businesses and schools were invited by the Friends to display trees in the library, spotlighting their purpose in the community. "The library was decked out in its holiday finest, with 20 organizations participating," said Library Director **Bridgid Broderick**.

"Christmas trees always make things seem more festive," added **Karol Radovich**, children's services coordinator. Her sentiments were shared by many of the library's visitors, particularly children.



Lois Burns

Members of the Catoosa County Library's Teen Advisory Board paint ornaments for the Christmas tree that was displayed in the library's new teen area in December. From left are Katie Schrader, Bethany Prus, Shelby Wilson, Jennifer McBride, Tina Villarreal and Caroline Walden.

"They loved touching the ornaments on the large tree in the rotunda," Broderick said.

"The community here is very supportive of our library and its services, and we wanted the 10-year celebration to be our way of saying 'thank you' to everyone." ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

The regional board of trustees of the Brunswick-based Three Rivers Regional Library System has hired **Linda Bolton Kean** as its new regional director. Kean joins Three Rivers from the Lower Dauphin School District in Hummelstown, Pa., where she has served as a librarian. She is former director of the Milanoff-Schock Library in Mount Joy, Pa. The Three Rivers system serves Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Glynn, Long, McIntosh and Wayne counties.

Anthony "Tony" M. Grooms, prize-winning author of *Trouble No More*, *Bombingham* and *Ice Poems*, has agreed to serve on the Georgia Center for the Book Advisory Council. Grooms, who lives near Decatur, is also a professor of English and creative writing at Kennesaw State University.

Daniel Ceabron Williams has been promoted to head of information technology services for the Flint River Regional Library

System in Griffin. He has been employed with the system since 2001.

The DeKalb County Public Library held a grand opening ceremony for its new, state-of-the-art Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library on Jan. 23. Members of the public joined DeKalb CEO **Burrell Ellis**, county commissioners, library trustees, administrators and staff for the ceremony, which included a ribbon cutting, tours of the new building and refreshments. The 25,000-square-foot building will hold 82,000 volumes. It includes 42 public-access computers, a computer lab, special areas for children and teens and a café.

The GED Testing Program of Georgia, part of the state's technical

college system, has awarded the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library (AFPL) System its Largest Growth in Number of GED Test-Takers Award. The library system received the award in the category of medium-sized General Educational Development (GED) testing centers for its growth measured from 2007 to 2009, both in total examinations passed and in total examinees. AFPL's GED program is supplemented by its strong adult literacy and English-as-a-second-language efforts. The library system also provides preparatory classes and assessments through a partnership with Atlanta Public Schools. ■

ParkPass program renewed for 2010

Thanks to the overwhelming support it has received since its introduction in 2008, the "Get Outdoors Georgia" campaign's ParkPass program has been renewed for a third year.

A joint initiative of GPLS and the Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the program will enable Georgia's public libraries to continue making it easy for patrons to enjoy the great outdoors in 2010.

With a valid library card from a participating library system (including PINES), patrons can borrow Georgia State Park ParkPasses and Historic Site passes from their local libraries. The passes are good for free parking or admission at more than 60 attractions across the state. ■



Kathryn Youles

Elves of the shelves

The merry library elves from the Screven County Library have been having a lot of fun! Library staff members Belinda Waters, Gina Bartley and Dhara Shah pose with Rudolph the Reading Reindeer as they prepare to participate in the Sylvania Christmas Extravaganza Parade on Dec. 3.

Vivian Price/Georgia Genealogical Society



Good genes

Laura Carter, a librarian at the Athens-Clarke County Library, has received the Georgia Genealogical Society's (GGS) Elizabeth Haulbrook Taylor Award. The honor is presented annually to the GGS member who has donated the most volunteer time to the organization's projects and who is not a current member of its board. Carter was presented with the award at the society's Dec. 5 annual meeting.

GPLS, Path2College 529 Plan to sponsor “Save for College” sweepstakes

This year, one lucky Summer Reading Program participant will win more than \$5,000 to apply toward their future education, as the Path2College 529 Plan, Georgia’s state-sponsored 529 college savings plan, partners with public libraries across the state to offer the inaugural “Make a Splash — Save for College Sweepstakes.”

The Path2College 529 Plan, managed by TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing Inc., will sponsor the sweepstakes, which will launch May 1 and run through July 31. At its conclusion, the grand prize winner will receive \$5,529 toward a Path2College 529 Plan account, and the home library of the winner will receive \$1,000 to be used for its children’s and teen’s department.

In addition, the Georgia library with the greatest number of entries and the Georgia library system with the greatest percentage of their registered users entered into the sweepstakes will each win \$1,529 for their children’s and teen’s materials and programming.

In April, each of Georgia’s 61 public library systems will receive a sweepstakes information kit from the Path2College 529 Plan. The kit will contain official sweepstakes rules, along with promotional materials that will include bookmarks, table tents and posters.

Beginning May 1, legal residents of the state of

Georgia who are at least 21 years of age and are a parent, grandparent or legal guardian of any child born after 1993 may enter the sweepstakes online at www.path2college529.com. Employees, directors, officers, trustees and agents, and their respective immediate household and family members (spouses and children, parents and siblings and their spouses) of the Path2College 529 Plan and employees, directors, officers, trustees and agents, and their respective immediate household and family members (spouses and children, parents and siblings and their spouses) of any Georgia public library or the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia are not eligible.

The Path2College 529 Plan will conduct a random drawing among all sweepstakes entries for the \$5,529 Path2College 529 Plan account winner in early August. The winner will be recognized at a press event in early September.

“Preparation for college comes in many forms, both academic and financial,” said **Chuck Penuel**, director of the Path2College 529 Plan. “We hope this sweepstakes will draw more children to the library this summer where they can continue to practice their reading skills and will help parents better understand that the steps they take today can make tomorrow’s dream of achieving a higher education for their loved one a reality.” ■

Photo contest encourages Georgians to show their love for libraries

In conjunction with Georgia Library Day, the Georgia Library Association (GLA), Georgia Public Library Service, Georgia Association for Instructional Technology (GAIT) and the Georgia Library Media Association are encouraging library supporters to show their love for Georgia’s libraries in a photo contest ending, appropriately enough, on Valentine’s Day.

“We hope to pull together a conglomeration of the best, most touching and effective pictures from all kinds of libraries,” said **Carol Stanley**, president of GLA and branch librarian for Athens Technical College in Elberton. “The subject matter is really up to the photographers, but we hope to rally around the themes of ‘A Typical Day in the

Life of Georgia’s Libraries’ and a variation of the National Library Week theme, ‘Communities Thrive @ Georgia Libraries.’”

Any digital photos taken between Jan. 1 and Feb. 14 of this year will be eligible, explained **Melissa Underwood**, president of GAIT. “This enables us to encourage library supporters to show their love for libraries by Valentine’s Day.”

The contest’s grand prize winner will receive a library/reading gift basket valued at \$100 from GLA and a certificate suitable for framing. First-place winners from each category will receive a certificate and a gift bag containing an assortment of library-related gifts. The contest is

open to all Georgia residents, including library staff. A full list of categories and rules along with required model releases are available for download from <http://gla.georgialibraries.org>.

A series of posters containing all appropriate submissions will be displayed during Georgia Library Day at the state Capitol on Feb. 25.

“I can envision these photos making a wonderful display at the Capitol,” said **Julie Walker**, deputy state librarian. “It’s certain to draw the attention of our legislators and help them appreciate how much Georgians value libraries and the services they provide.” ■

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Information presented in this newsletter will be provided in alternative formats on request. For more information about Georgia's libraries and literary events, or to post an event, visit our online calendar at www.georgialibraries.org

GALILEO kicks off birthday celebration

As GALILEO reaches its 15th birthday this year, the state's Web-based virtual library is sponsoring a number of celebratory events, including a contest for GALILEO supporters to show their fandom in the most literal sense — by designing a fan.

Short for Georgia Library Learning Online, GALILEO provides Georgians with access to more than 100 databases that together index thousands of periodicals and scholarly journals. "For many users, GALILEO was their first introduction to the Internet," said **Carolyn Fuller**, director of the Henry County Library System and a member of the GALILEO Steering Committee. "GALILEO still provides the core resource for the libraries and media centers of Georgia, fulfilling its mission to be one statewide library by bringing high-quality, authoritative and secure digital materials of all kinds to the citizens of Georgia. More than 1 billion user experiences attest to its success."

As part of its yearlong celebration, GALILEO is sponsoring the "GALILEO Life Contest," which urges supporters to show their creativity by making a video, poster or PowerPoint presentation or by designing a GALILEO-inspired hand-held fan. Details about this and all other GALILEO birthday events, including contest guidelines, submission instructions and a design template for fans, will be available throughout the year at www.usg.edu/galileo/about/birthday. ■



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