



NEWS

from the Top of the Hill

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Slow Economy Fuels Surge in Library Visits

**American Library Association
August 26, 2008**

CHICAGO - With the nation facing tough economic times, Americans are visiting their local public libraries more often and checking out items with greater frequency. Libraries across the United States report that more people are turning to libraries in record numbers to take advantage of the free resources available there.

According to the ALA's 2008 State of America's Libraries Report, Americans visited their libraries nearly 1.3 billion times and checked out more than 2 billion items in the past year, an increase of more than 10 percent in both checked out items and library visits, compared to data from the last economic downturn in 2001.

ALA President Jim Rettig said, "During tough economic times, people turn to libraries for their incredible array of free resources, from computers to books, DVDs and CDs, for help with a job hunt or health information. The average annual cost to the taxpayer for access to this wide range of resources is about \$31, the cost of one hardcover book. In good times or bad, libraries are a great value!"

Library Hours:
Monday, Wednesday, Friday
11am - 5pm
Tuesday, Thursday
11am-7pm
Saturday 11am-3pm

231-882-4111
www.benzonia.lib.mi.us

At the Howard County Library in Columbia, Md., from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008, visits to its six branches exceeded 2.6 million - a 26 percent increase compared to past usage. Users borrowed more than 5.6 million items, an increase of 15 percent, and attendance at library classes, seminars, workshops and events set a new record of 140,000 attendees, a 12 percent increase.

Many library users have reported that high gas prices have kept their families off the road and in their homes. Families that cannot afford vacations are turning to their local library for free activities near home. For example, the Palmyra (Pa.) Public Library summer reading program increased by 163 percent over the past year; Guthrie Memorial Library in Hanover, Pa., experienced a 54 percent increase in program attendance; and the Adamstown (Pa.) Library summer reading program increased by 16 percent.

Library users are not only saving money on entertainment, but also finding savings related to Internet access. In South Florida a patron that paid \$60 a month for Internet access canceled his service, so that he could take advantage of the free Internet service offered at the Hollywood (Fla.) Public Library, a savings of more than \$700.

"As the economy slows, libraries continue to be changing and dynamic places that offer our nation's communities free access to information that can better lives and support lifelong learning," Rettig said.

Libraries are helping level the playing field for job seekers as well. Less than 44 percent of the top 100 U.S. retailers accept in-store paper

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The Economy and Libraries

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applications. Libraries continue to report that many patrons are turning to library computers to prepare resumes and cover letters, find work, apply for jobs online and open e-mail accounts.

Many libraries also design and offer programs tailored to meet local community economic needs, providing residents with guidance (including sessions with career advisers), career training and workshops, job-search resources and connections with outside agencies that offer training and job placement. Millington (Tenn.) Public Library has seen patron attendance double for free adult programs in education, small business development and job networking.

Such services have given libraries a reputation for offering local government an excellent return on investment. In Florida, a study showed that libraries create jobs, raise wages and increase gross regional product. Florida public libraries return \$6.54 for every \$1 invested from all sources. A study in South Carolina showed that every dollar expended on the state's public libraries by state and local governments brought a return on investment of \$4.48 — nearly 350 percent. Studies in Ohio, Seattle and Phoenix echo these findings.

There have been countless examples of how libraries encourage business development and help retain and create jobs. They serve as an important link to the business community, assisting with job creation and training programs, as well as contributing to business development initiatives.

To learn more about America's libraries, please visit the ALA Web site at <http://www.ala.org>. Additional library statistical data is available through ALA's Office for Research and Statistics at <http://www.ala.org/ors>.

The American Library Association (ALA), the voice of America's libraries, is the oldest, largest and most influential library association in the world. Its approximately 65,000 members are primarily librarians but also trustees, publishers and other library supporters. The association represents all types of libraries; its mission is to promote the highest quality library and information services and public access to information.

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Kylie Wichtner saves money by borrowing books from the Library rather than purchasing the books she likes. If our library does not have what Kylie is looking for, she connects to MELCAT from her home computer to borrow books. MELCAT books are delivered to the Benzonia Public Library from libraries throughout the state. Kylie, pictured below, recently picked up eight books sent to our library just for her!

Kylie is very pleased that MelCat is available to Benzonia Library card holders and she is not alone! During June, July, & August, our patrons borrowed 383 items from state libraries. We reciprocated by loaning 236 items to libraries from Ann Arbor to Ypsilanti.



If you need help using MELCAT, or any of our online resources, call the library or stop by for a demonstration.

Tuesday Book Chat

**Everyone welcome!
4th Tuesday at 11 a.m.**

Sep.23rd,
Oct. 28th, Nov. 25th

**Talk about books you have read and listen to ideas
for books to read.**

YOUTH SERVICES

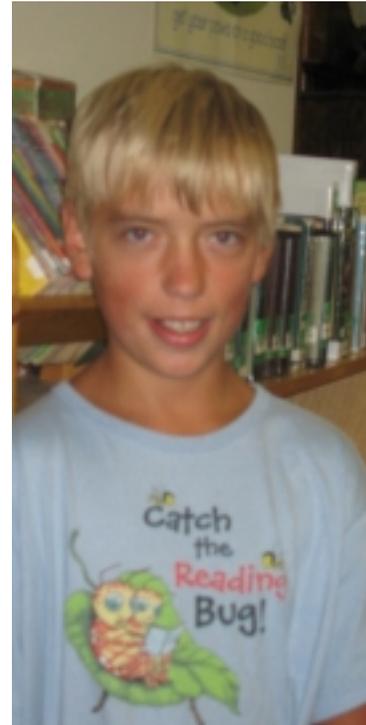
Attention all beginning and reluctant readers! Check out the new EARLY READERS fiction section at the end of the picture books section. This area was created in response to patron requests. The books are sorted by reading levels and by series. Nonfiction early readers are still inter-filed by Dewey number with other juvenile nonfiction.

Fall programming includes the return of *Baby Bears Storytime* for babies and older children. Join Flower Bear and Barbara at 11am on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month for finger plays, movement, craft and a story.

Teens can celebrate this year's Teens Read Week theme *Books with Bite* @ your Library at 1pm on Saturday, October 17th.

Book Girls! book club for ages 9-12 continues to meet the second Saturday of every month. The club is girl directed. They lead the discussion, bring the snack, and choose what to read next. It's a lively and welcoming group for girls who devour books.

Boys will have an opportunity to join a group of their own starting Saturday, December 6th at 1pm.



Congratulations to James Messersmith!

James is the winner of the Summer Reading Program family pass to Crystal Mountain's Water's Edge. Thank you to all of the businesses that offered coupons, area professionals who presented exciting programs each week, families and caregivers who ensured that children made it to the library throughout the summer, and to the Friends of the Benzonia Public Library for funding the program. Planning is already underway for a fun-filled 2009 summer!

Continuing their support of children reading, the Friends purchased Grollier's exceptional, 50-volume *World of Animals* series to update the children's non-circulating reference collection. Both children and adults will find these books a fascinating, impressive addition to the collection. The series is located in the Children's Room near the circulating nonfiction books about animals. Plan ahead for assignments as these volumes may be used at the library only.

Helping Hands

After a very busy summer, we would like to give special thanks to:

Those individuals who shared their knowledge during the weekly programs offered for our youth participating in the "Catch the Reading Bug." Program: **Shelly Szymanski, Todd Warren, Kyle Axtell, Sally & Doug Cook, Peg Burman.**

Helen Dewey who once again solicited area businesses included in the Summer Reading Program coupon book presented to children who read 24 hours during an 8 week period.

Our regular volunteers who show up week after week and have contributed in so many ways : **Helen Dewey, Betty Wilcox, Paul Michalek**

New Volunteers : **Maryellen Paull and Teresa Stolz**

Harold and Linda Saffron who continue to organize and make information from our historical collection available to the general public. The Saffrons have indexed birth, death, and marriage announcements from the Benzie Banner/Record Patriot dating from 1888. They have also photographed and indexed tombstones from Benzie County Cemeteries. Currently, the Saffrons are creating pictures discs making old articles electronically accessible.

Our **Library Friends**, who pay for the printing of this newsletter, purchase our audio books and publications the too costly for the regular library budget (e.g. BookPage and the new World of Animals set), and who serve the community and raise money for the library through the used book sale and the jigsaw puzzle sale. These efforts take many hours of work.

Dick Kishline who has served on the Friends Board for many years. Dick has decided to use his time in different ways, but his efforts are visible in the library every day.

Those who donated books following the guidelines set forth in our new brochure, "**Too Many Books?**". It helps everyone on the staff and our Friends when the donations we received are clean, in good condition and are items we can either add to the collection or easily sell at the book sale. Pick up a brochure in the lobby or at the desk.

Judy and Keith Westphal who provided the Friends the use of a storage unit during the past year. That allowed us to better manage the many boxes of donated materials we received that were placed in our annual used book sale.

To **Fortress Security** for providing and installing security equipment in the library.

To our regular users and guests: During the months of June, July, & August, **5486 people** visited the library.

Support Your Library by Joining the Friends.

Please make checks payable to

Friends of Benzonia Public Library

P.O. Box 445

Benzonia, Michigan 49616

2009 Membership Dues

Individual	\$5.00	_____	Patron	\$25.00	_____	Business/Professional	\$35.00	_____
Family	\$10.00	_____	Contributing	\$50.00	_____	or more		

NAME _____ e-mail _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____ I WOULD LIKE TO BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER. PLEASE CALL ME. _____

All Membership Dues and Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.