

SUMMARY OF BENZONIA & DARCY 2015 LIBRARY SURVEY

In a joint effort to improve services to the community, the public libraries in Beulah and Benzonia conducted a survey of residents and visitors. The survey period ran from July 24 through October 31, 2015. Survey forms were available at the libraries, at tables outside of local supermarkets, and on-line.

The data gathered will guide in planning for enhanced services and additional partnering opportunities. Percentages are rounded. Not all survey participants answered every question, and some answered questions regarding one library but not the other. Highlights follow:

There were 295 surveys returned. 253 of those responding (86%) referred to themselves as full or part-time Benzie County residents. (Q1)

About half of those who identified themselves as Benzie County residents indicated that they live in Benzonia Township, and about half said they reside elsewhere in the county. (Q2)

Of the 286 respondents who gave their ages, 168 (59%) were 61+ years old; 65 (23%) were aged 41-60. Of the remaining 18%, 28 were 30-40; 12 were 18-29; and 13 were 17 and under. (Q3)

Of the 276 who answered the question about funding sources, 119 (43%) were aware that the two main sources of operating funds for the two libraries are the Benzonia Township Millage and Court Penal Fines from the five townships in their service areas; 157 (57%) were not aware. (Q4)

Of the 266 who said they used either library in the past year, the top two uses were borrowing books and DVD's. Eight respondents indicated they do not use the library, and a few skipped the question. (Q5)

Of the 266 answering the question as to which of the 2 libraries they use, 178 (67%) specified Benzonia and 181 (68%) specified Darcy. 99 of these said they use both libraries. (Q6)

Although the vast majority of respondents rated the libraries' open hours to be either excellent or satisfactory (77% for Darcy; 85% for Benzonia), this question generated considerable comment. Additional morning hours were suggested for Darcy, and longer hours (including some desire for additional weekend hours) were suggested for both libraries. (Q7)

Of those expressing an opinion, most (over 80 %) rated the selection of books at both libraries as satisfactory to excellent. Numerous positive comments were made as to the quality of the collections, considering size of community and operating budget. (Q8)

A little more than half of the respondents (54% for Benzonia, 59% for Darcy) found the selection of DVD's and/or audiobooks on CD to be excellent or satisfactory. More than a third (40 % for Benzonia, 38% for Darcy) had no opinion. (Q9)

82% of the respondents found the ease of locating materials at both libraries to be excellent or satisfactory, and 17% had no opinion. (Q10)

Of those answering the question, a little over half (55% for each library) found the availability and ease of use of public computers at the library to be excellent or satisfactory; about 43% had no opinion. (Q11)

Regarding the availability and ease of use of Wi-Fi, nearly half (46% for Benzonia, 50% for Darcy) found them to be excellent or satisfactory; approximately 50% had no opinion. (Q12)

Of those responding to this question, 36% found the number and quality of children's and/or teen programs for both libraries to be excellent or satisfactory; over 60 % had no opinion. (Q13)

Concerning the number and quality of adult programs, about half (46% for Benzonia, 50% for Darcy) found them to be excellent/satisfactory, while about half had no opinion. (14)

A very large majority of respondents (87% for Benzonia, 85% for Darcy) found the knowledge and helpfulness of their staffs to be excellent or satisfactory; only 12% had no opinion. The comments received were overwhelmingly positive for both libraries. (Q15)

More than two thirds of those responding to the question about services (72% for Benzonia, 67% for Darcy) found the library's services such as loans from other libraries, book/author suggestions, tech support, and reference assistance to be excellent or satisfactory; almost one third had no opinion. (Q16)

The vast majority of respondents (87%) rated the two libraries' comfort and cleanliness as excellent or satisfactory. A little more than 10% had no opinion. (Q17)

Survey data clearly show that most respondents value their local libraries. Each library received individual accolades and suggestions for additions and/or improvements. All comments are appreciated and valued and will be taken into consideration as we seek to grow and improve. Both libraries thank all who took the time to fill out our survey.