

Slow Economy = Busy Library

It's all over the news, both national and local. It's obvious to everyone by now, even those who haven't been directly affected. The economy is weak right now, and several local employers have had to let people go. In the midst of this downturn, library usage is surging. The services we offer are free of charge, a good fit for anyone's budget. More and more people are using the library; for serious research, keeping in touch, and just plain old entertainment. The Bartholomew County Public Library circulated 979,261 items in 2008, a 13% increase over 2007's total.

By looking at circulation totals for specific Dewey Decimal numbers, we can see how people's interests are reflective of the economy. Across the county in 2008, 963 titles were checked out on creating resumes and searching for jobs. Another 1462 books were checked out on personal finance and budgeting. Keep us in mind when you tackle these big issues, we have resources that can help. We're also available for the little things, too. We own 2163 cookbooks, and I'm sure one of them has something new for dinner.

Our computers are always popular too. Whether it's applying for jobs, unemployment benefits, or FEMA assistance, filing taxes, playing games, emailing friends and family or connecting with friends on MySpace, we have the technology and high speed access that many households don't. In 2008, the Hope Library had 10,282 people log onto our five public computers. While we don't track usage numbers for our wireless signal, it is heavily used too and has become *the* popular place if you have a laptop.

We're also a good place to escape for awhile too. The Hope Library circulated 13,894 DVDs last year, an increase of 47%. They check out for seven days, and we have a good selection of kids' videos and feature films too.

It seems that more people are turning to us for new releases and bestsellers rather than purchasing them. We've seen a 14% increase in requests for material and the Hope library circulated over 5000 books from our new book shelf in 2008. We try to stay on top of new book purchasing, so if you see something for sale that looks interesting, let us know. We most likely own it. If we don't, we're happy to place a request to have it purchased and set aside for you when it comes in.

As money continues to be tight, know that the library is here to provide you with the information you need. Sometimes that need is checking out books on family budgeting so that your limited income can stretch as far as it needs to, and sometimes that need is the latest big budget action movie. Either way, we have you covered.

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