

AUBURN – PLACER COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Background

The Auburn-Placer County Library was created 29 years ago with the dissolution of the Auburn City Library. At that time the Auburn Library donated 12,000 books to the new County Library system. At present, the system serves about 150,000 people, has a budget of 3.16 million dollars, and operates 11 branches. Eighty-two percent of the circulation is in Rocklin, Granite Bay, and Auburn. The Law Library, located in Auburn, is an additional branch and charges the Auburn Library a \$10,000 fee for its administration to the system. There is a total of 79 staff in the system and about 45% serve as full time employees.

The system is a unique special district with approximately 1% of the budget coming from property taxes and \$205,000 from the County's general fund. Current projects include the expansion of the children's library at the Tahoe City Branch, disabled access at Auburn, and the recent opening of a new branch in Meadow Vista.

The Grand Jury received verbal concerns from some employees regarding the operational policies and procedures of the Auburn-Placer County Library. After an investigation, which included visits to four of the 11 branches of the library system, the Committee met with the Director of Library Services. The Director addressed these concerns and explained the operational policies and procedures of the library. Visits to branch libraries brought to light some possible improvements.

Discussion

The committee found areas of concern with the Auburn-Placer County Library system. The Library does not have a system-wide procedure for security at branches with two or fewer employees. The employees of some of the branches have developed their own systems.

The second area of concern was the lack of a system-wide policy and procedure concerning monitoring of Internet access within the library branches. Staff was used, as available, for monitoring Internet access.

The third area of concern was the limited resources available to the Director of Library Services and her staff. A recently published article in the Auburn Journal stated, "Librarians banded together to take a low pay scale problem to the Placer County Civil Service Commission. County librarian salaries are the lowest of any professional classification in its system. Yet, the job requires a bachelor's degree for library assistants and a master's degree for librarians." The Placer-County Library has experienced extensive circulation growth in the last six years.

Budget for the libraries and their staffs should be increased, if feasible, in order to attract the best possible candidates for available positions. There should be a study to ascertain the salary ranges from other comparative library systems to insure that long-term employees are retained. Attached is a table showing the increase in library use, by branch, over the last six years. In these six years there has been 39% growth in circulation.

Finding 1

Evening security at branch libraries, particularly those libraries with two or fewer employees, is seriously lacking.

Recommendation 1

The library staff should provide a more institutionalized method for a security system. The staffs at the libraries we visited have implemented their own, albeit informal, systems for their own security.

Finding 2

The current procedure of relying on the staff to monitor Internet use is inadequate and time consuming for staff.

Recommendation 2

A more positive, pro-active system for the monitoring of minors' use of computers with Internet access should be implemented. Automated systems of monitoring computer time use are feasible to free the staff from these duties. Whenever possible adult computer use should be separate from the areas used by minors.

Finding 3

County librarian salaries are the lowest of any professional classification in its system.

Recommendation 3

Placer County should look at the current pay scale of its library personnel to bring the employees in conformance with other professional classifications.

Commendation

The 2001-2002 Grand Jury was particularly impressed by the professionalism and dedication of the head librarian and her staff. They make good use of current resources.

Respondents

Placer County Board of Supervisors
Placer County Director of Library Services

RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:

The Honorable James D. Garbolino
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Placer
Historic Court House
101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603

Auburn-Placer County Library

CIRCULATION STATISTICS

	FY 1995-96	FY 1996-97	FY 1997-98	FY 1998-99	FY 1999-00	FY 2000-01
Applegate	18,898	21,598	19,375	19,297	19,796	^f 25,437
Auburn	352,315	^a 346,166	389,438	381,717	380,809	414,542
Bookmobile	13,853	15,987	14,064	^d 17,171	20,992	18,251
Colfax	12,685	12,381	13,793	16,317	19,303	20,306
Foresthill	18,972	21,979	22,543	19,544	^e 20,633	22,396
Granite Bay	47,988	62,157	75,221	77,406	85,944	91,570
Kings Beach	11,416	12,922	14,004	14,658	17,247	18,035
Loomis	27,900	27,836	25,614	26,637	27,486	32,289
Penryn	10,018	8,503	7,481	7,041	8,626	9,729
Rocklin	86,701	101,435	115,919	130,260	149,862	182,164
Tahoe City	23,581	23,415	^c 22,583	22,058	24,205	34,980
TOTAL	624,327	654,379	720,035	732,106	774,903	869,699

- ^a Auburn Library - Closed for remodeling project 4 weeks 8-9/96
- ^b Bookmobile - Out of service for chassis replacement 4 weeks 1-2/98
- ^c Tahoe City Library - Closed for remodeling project 1 week 2/98
- ^d Bookmobile - Out of service for major service 4 weeks 7/98
- ^e Foresthill Library - Closed for expansion project 2 weeks 12/99
- ^f Applegate Library - Closed for remodeling project 4 days 6/01