

THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE

A NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

July 2007

Former Sussex County Administrator Robert Stickles initiated this study of Sussex County public libraries. Mr. Stickles convened a meeting on August 18, 2005, of all of the libraries in Sussex County, plus members of the County Council and the Delaware Division of Libraries (DDL), for the purpose of presenting the concept of a countywide study. The DDL indicated that it would fund the study.

The DDL requested that the consultant submit a proposal for the study. A proposal was prepared by the consultant and accepted by the DDL. A contract was signed October 2005, and the study was initiated November 2005. The first series of on-site meetings with the different libraries were held during the first quarter of 2006.

A draft report was delivered to the DDL in early May 2006. Following a review by the DDL a revised draft was prepared and sent to the DDL two months later.

In September 2006 a joint-use library study involving the Jack F. Owens Campus of Delaware Technical & Community College, Sussex County, the Georgetown Public Library, and the DDL was initiated. A final presentation of the study findings was presented January 2007 to College officials, Sussex County officials, the Georgetown Public Library, and the DDL at the College campus. A second presentation was made before the Sussex County Council on March 13, 2007.

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SUSSEX COUNTY TODAY AND TOMORROW

There has been substantial population growth in Sussex County. The official population in 2000 according to the U.S. Census was 156,638. The 2006 estimate according to DecisionWhere, Inc., a California-based market research firm, was 179,841. That is an increase of 23,203. The percentage increase is 14.8 percent.

Projections calculate that Sussex County’s population will increase in the years to come. DecisionWhere projects growth to the year 2011 of 198,486, which is an additional gain of 10.4 percent.

The chart below projects the population for the County to 2027, using an aggressive rate of 2.5 percent annual increase, a conservative rate of 1.7 percent, and a middle-of-the-road rate of 2.1 percent.¹ The rate of growth between 2000 and 2006 averaged 2.5 percent per year, projected to slow slightly between 2006 and 2011 to 2.1 percent.

**Table 1
Sussex County Population Growth**

<i>Year</i>	<i>1.7% Growth Rate</i>	<i>2.1% Growth Rate</i>	<i>2.5% Growth Rate</i>
2007	182,898	183,337	184,337
2010	195,656	199,534	203,474
2015	212,862	221,384	230,212
2020	231,581	245,626	260,463
2025	251,946	272,523	294,690
2027	260,585	284,089	308,609

¹ The rate of growth between 2000 and 2006 averaged 2.5 percent per year and is projected to be 2.1 percent average between 2006 and 2011.

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MOST SIGNIFICANT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The demographic characteristics of a population can point the way to the potential for public library usage. The most telling characteristics are:

- Educational attainment level
- Families with children living at home
- Home ownership
- Employment levels.

For Sussex County the 2006 demographics, according to DecisionWhere's estimates, are as follows:

- Educational attainment level – 42.7 percent with some college, a BA or BS degree, or a graduate or professional degree of persons age 25 and above
- Families with children living at home – 36.7 percent of married households
- Home ownership – 50.3 percent of homes
- Employment levels – 56.3 percent of persons age 16 and above.

These numbers for Sussex County suggest usage of public libraries should continue to increase in the years ahead.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Other characteristics of interest suggest that Sussex County will continue to grow and prosper.

A Median Age of 41.1 years

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The breakdown of the 2006 estimated population is shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Age Range by Percentage

<i>Range</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
0 – 9	11.4%
15 – 24	12.1%
25 – 44	24.9%
45 – 64	26.4%
65 – 84	17.2%
85 +	2.4%

Females in the primary childbearing age range, 25 – 34, constitute 11.4 percent of the total female population.

Table 3 presents the ethnicity of the Sussex County population

Table 3
Population Ethnicity

<i>Race</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
White	80.7
Black	15.8
Other *	3.6
Hispanic Origin	6.1

* Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, Multiple Races

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The average household income is \$55,719 and the median figure is \$43,877.

The average family income is \$62,616 with the median amount \$51,851.

Just over one in four households have an income of less than \$25,000 while at the other end of the spectrum 2.3 percent have an income of \$200,000 or more. The complete breakdown is shown in the next table.

Table 4
Household Income Distribution Levels

<i>Income Level</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
< \$25,000	25.6
\$25,000 - \$49,999	23.5
\$50,000 - \$74,999	22.0
\$75,000 - \$99,999	10.2
100,000 - \$199,999	9.8
\$200,000 >	2.3

The average household size is 2.63 and the average family size is 3.1.

Almost 42 percent of the households have two vehicles. Single vehicle households numbers 33.3 percent whereas only 5.6 percent of all households have no vehicles.

Readers are referred to Appendix A for the complete population/demographic report.

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THE MAJOR ISSUES

Several major issues evolved as a result of the 16 individual site visit meetings with each library in Sussex County, including the Sussex County Department of Libraries (SODL) and its Bookmobile operation.

The several major issues are discussed, followed by the consultant's thoughts and/or recommendations.

CENTRALIZED SERVICES

The consultant raised the concept of centralized services at each of the meetings. Centralized Services could include:

- Sussex County Department of Libraries would provide technical services for any or all of the Independent libraries who wished to enter into an agreement for such services
- Sussex County would provide other services for the Independent libraries such as a Youth Services specialist and/or a Technology specialist.

With regard to centralized technical services:

- Sussex County would receive from the participating libraries, on a schedule to be determined, requests for the acquisitions of new materials (books and non-print media)
- Sussex County would not veto any request. Sussex County would combine the orders from the participating Independent libraries with the requests from the three County libraries for the purpose of achieving the largest possible discount from suppliers
- Sussex County would receive the materials from the supplier(s) and proceed to classify, catalog, and physically process the materials and deliver them to the participating libraries.

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As for the specialist position(s):

- The specialist would work from the Department's office, working with both the County and Independent libraries on an "as need" basis as well as following a pre-determined schedule for such activities as staff training and development, broad-based programs, and the like.

Consultant's Thoughts and/or Recommendations – Centralized technical services will help the Independent libraries in several ways:

- Shift the "back-of-house" operations to the County thereby allowing staff at the local level to spend more time in serving the users of the Independent libraries
- Stretch the acquisitions budgets of all public libraries in the County by increasing the discounts offered by vendors for library materials.

The specialist positions will help all of the libraries by the staff training that will ensue, professional program planning, and coaching.

Centralized technical services should be phased in over a three to five year period starting in FY08 provided the County Council will fund the added staff for the Library Department and the Department moves into a larger space.

The specialist position(s) should also begin in FY08 and be fully operational by FY10.

ANCHOR LIBRARY (What, Where, When, How, Funding)

The Anchor Library Concept was a key recommendation of the Statewide Study of Library Services completed in 2005. The Statewide Study recommended that

An Anchor Library will be the largest type – in every respect – in the state. It is recommended that there be at least one Anchor Library in each of the three counties, and the more populated counties may well have two to four anchor libraries within the 20-year timeframe of these recommendations.

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Anchor libraries will have the:

- *Largest and strongest collections of library materials in terms of depth of all types (print, media, and electronically-accessible)*
- *Largest staff due to extended hours, extensive usage by the public, and the support role for the Regional and Community libraries within their respective counties*
- *Greatest number of professional staff (librarians with a master's degree from a graduate program accredited by the American Library Association [ALA])*
- *Computer training facilities and "classes" for public and staff*
- *Most meeting room and conference room space for public and staff usage.*

Anchor libraries will be:

- *Full service facilities*
- *Sized from 40,000 – 60,000 SF*
- *Open seven days a week, 52 weeks per year, 90 hours per week.*

The Anchor Library concept is intended to:

- Raise the level of public library service for all of Sussex County
- Provide supplementary services to other libraries in Sussex County
- Provide resources and services that are physically impossible to provide in the existing libraries.

An Anchor Library, according to the Statewide Plan, must be County owned.

At each of the meetings with the Independent libraries, and to a somewhat lesser degree the meetings with the County library, the Anchor Library concept generated a great deal of discussion. Two major concerns emerged:

- How would an Anchor Library impact other libraries in the County?
- Who would use an Anchor Library?

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The impact question revolved principally around money, with there being concerns that an Anchor Library would drain funding away from the Independent libraries. Of somewhat lesser concern was the potential loss of “business” that the other libraries would experience.

The Director of the Division of Libraries is supportive of the Anchor Library concept provided that such a facility **would not result** in any loss of funding for either the Independent libraries in Sussex County or the three libraries that now constitute the Sussex County Department of Libraries or its headquarters/bookmobile operation.

The Board of Trustees of the Georgetown Library is on record as being supportive of there being an Anchor Library in Georgetown.

The Seaford Library Board of Trustees has expressed similar thoughts (although they have not taken a formal position as has the Georgetown Board).

Consultant’s Thoughts and/or Recommendations – The Anchor Library concept is sound. As presently constituted there is no independent library that could ever aspire to providing the size of facility and the range of services that has been recommended for an Anchor Library. Georgetown is the logical location for the first Anchor Library in Sussex County. A joint-use facility with the Jack F. Owens campus of Delaware Technical & Community College, Georgetown has a lot of merit. A special “Joint-Use Library Planning Study” was undertaken during the course of this overall study. See the Joint-Use Library Study section later in this report.

Seaford is the logical location for a second Anchor Library. Seaford’s site for its proposed new library is large enough and the design of its new building lends itself to expansion to a size of + or - 40,000 SF.

An Anchor Library should not result in any loss of funding from either Sussex County or the State of Delaware for any existing independent library other than the library(ies) where the Anchor Library would be located.

The consultant believes that many people will be surprised by the usage that will be made of an Anchor Library once one or more are in place. The distance and lack of transportation as seen by several meeting attendees to be barriers will, the consultant believes, disappear once an Anchor Library is operational.

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ADDITIONAL COUNTY LIBRARY UNITS (What, When, How, Funding)

Many Independent libraries struggle each year to secure funding needed for day-to-day operations. A variety of fundraising activities absorb a considerable amount of time of the various Friends of the Library groups, the Library Boards, and often the staffs of the libraries. Interestingly enough, there does not appear to be the same difficulty in raising capital funds for building projects.

When asked by the consultant about becoming a County library (as are Greenwood, Milton, and South Coastal) four questions arose:

1. What would be involved?
2. When might it happen?
3. How would it happen?
4. What would the funding be?

The consultant cannot pretend to speak for the Sussex County Administration or the County Council. Nonetheless, based upon meetings and conversations with County officials the following thoughts seem reasonable at this time:

What would be involved? – The County Council would have to vote to expand from three to four, or more, the number of county-owned libraries. An agreement, signed by all parties, would have to be finalized that addresses such matters as (a) ownership of real property, (b) ownership of library materials, (c) ownership of library furniture and equipment, (d) matters concerning employment, salaries, and benefits of existing independent library(ies) staff, (e) existing endowment and/or other deposited funds, and (f) revision clauses if the County should cease to be active in the provision of public library services. All of these issues can be effectively and fairly dealt with – they have been successfully addressed in many other states.

When might it happen? – The very earliest that the County could add another library to its number would likely be FY2009. It would probably take six to 12 months to reach a satisfactory agreement with regard to the points raised above. Therefore, FY2010 might be more realistic.

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How would it happen? – It would, in all probability, require a motion or a resolution introduced into the record of a regular meeting of the Sussex County Council. Such a resolution would be triggered by a request from an independent library(ies). Once introduced, normal County policies and procedures with regard to the presentation, hearings, etc. would be followed prior to a final vote being taken.

What would the funding be? – It is not possible to predict at this time the level of funding that would be available. It might be safe to assume that the funding would be commensurate with that received by the three existing County libraries. One source of funding might be a reduction in the overall funding for the Independent libraries. That is, if the number of Independent libraries is reduced the overall funding might be decreased and that “savings” used to help fund a new County library(ies). However, the remaining Independent libraries should not experience reduced funding from Sussex County.

Another issue, or concern, expressed in some of the meetings revolved around the possibility of the County choosing to close a library if funding problems should arise in the future. The consultant can only suggest that there have been very few closings of public libraries anywhere in the United States once they have been established. It can happen, but it seldom has happened.

Consultant’s Thoughts and/or Recommendations – Based upon an analysis of the data as reported in the statewide statistics for 2006 the three County libraries have more financial support, are able to pay staff higher salaries, have better work benefits for the employees, expend more for materials, and have more physical space than the Independent libraries when comparing averages with averages.

The concern expressed by some of the Independent libraries that the County might close their libraries if economic hard times should return, or that unusual added expenses would surface, are not baseless. However, the history of the public libraries in the country does not reveal but a scattering of complete closure of public libraries – for any reason.

The benefits of the County operating an increasing number of libraries in Sussex County would prove to be beneficial those who pay the bills – the taxpayers of the County. For those who live in the areas of the County served by the Independent libraries they are paying twice for public libraries. They pay, in one way or another, for the support of their independent library as well as through their County taxes for the County libraries.

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Over the next five to ten years the goal should be to greatly increase the number of County libraries while decreasing the number of Independent libraries. Such a change should, of course, be voluntary on the part of the Independent libraries. And, of course, the County Council will have to agree to expand its role and financial support for public librarianship.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT – INCOME AND EXPENDITURES

Income

Funding by the Sussex County Council constitutes the largest amount of income for 12 of the 16 public library service units in the County. County funding is considered “local” income per the annual statistics developed by the DDL.

The funds allocated by the County Council for the three County branch libraries are part of the General Revenues and allocated by line in the budget as adopted by County Council.

Funding of the Independent libraries by the County is by appropriation, as revised November 2005, in the budget as adopted by County Council. There are four funding sources utilized by the Council:

1. 4.3 cents of property tax revenue is set aside for independent public libraries.
2. Special grants from general revenues can be used to “equalize” funding.
3. 1% Mobile Home Placement Tax is based on a law passed in 1995 with the distribution based upon tax collected. There is no base or cap.
4. A County capitation tax on all adult residents with distribution based on a formula developed by SCILTA (Sussex County Independent Library Trustees Association).

The per library average local income, defined as funds from the County and the cities, of the three County libraries is \$362,927. For the 11 Independent libraries the average is \$196,636. Including the County Department of Libraries (SODL) and the bookmobile service the combined average of local support in Sussex County is \$255,196.

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All of the libraries as well as the SODL and its bookmobile receive state aid funding. The County libraries average is \$55,466, Independent average is \$47,080, and total average is \$49,838.

The Independent libraries receive, on average, \$204,696 from donations, fees for service, fund raising, and earned interest whereas the County libraries receive an average of \$5,306 from donations, and nothing from the other sources. The Income Per Capita comparisons for all sources of reported income for 2006 was as follows:

- County Libraries - \$46.89
- Independent Libraries - \$38.53
- All Sussex County Libraries - \$39.57

The calculation of the Independent libraries includes over \$900,000 credited to the Laurel Public Library for capital improvements. If that amount is subtracted from the totals for the Independent libraries their per capita income support falls to \$31.46.

Consultant's Thoughts – When all income sources are examined a clear picture emerges – without “Other” sources of income, e.g. donations, fundraising, etc., the Independent libraries would be unable to exist. Whereas Sussex County does provide over 43 percent of the total income for the Independents, an even larger percentage of their income comes from those “Other” sources,

**Table 5
Income Percentages by Source for all Library Services in Sussex County**

<i>Library Type</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>Other</i>
Sussex County Branch Libraries	85.66%	0.00%	13.09%	0.00%	1.25%
Independent Libraries	43.31%	1.21%	10.50%	0.02%	45.64%
SODL and Bookmobile	87.96%	0.00%	11.97%	0.00%	0.001%
All Library Services	56.74%	0.64%	11.15%	0.02%	31.72%

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A series of five charts, starting on page 49, provides income details for each library in the County.

Local Municipal Support

All of the Independent libraries are located in local municipalities (as are the three County libraries). The libraries receive some support from their respective municipalities in terms of water, sewer, trash collection, and snow removal services. Trash collection is the only service that all three County libraries receive from their respective municipalities.

Among the municipalities where the Independent libraries are located the local support most often takes the form of the provision of in-kind services. Four of the libraries receive cash, two are unrestricted and two are restricted. All of the libraries are entitled to free Cable TV from the local cable company.

The value of the in-kind support is estimated to range from a few hundred dollars to about \$14,000 per year.² Table 6 on page 15 provides additional information for each library receiving support.

Consultant's Thoughts and/or Recommendations – For reasons not fully understood by the consultant there appears to be a reluctance on the part of the Independent libraries to actively and consistently lobby the local municipalities for cash support of public library service. There is substantial population growth taking place throughout Sussex County. New properties are being added to the tax rolls at a steady clip. New business establishments are being opened to provide goods and service to the new residents. The construction trades are busy keeping pace with the demand for new housing, office space, and retail developments. There must be additional revenues flowing into the coffers of the local municipalities.

The municipalities get to take credit for having a public library. With the exception of the South Coastal Library (which is a County library) every one of the Independent libraries bears the name of the municipality in which it is located, e.g. the Millsboro Public Library, the Laurel Public Library, the Georgetown Public Library. Yet there is no meaningful financial contribution forthcoming. Yes, there are some in-kind services. Those services have value. Nonetheless, the consultant believes that the municipalities could do more. They could provide cash in addition to the in-kind services.

² The information is somewhat dated inasmuch as it was contained in an e-mail sent to the consultant by the SODL on May 3, 2004.

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For this to happen the library boards of the Independent libraries will need to prepare their requests in advance and consistently bring forth their needs to the local officials. Over a five-year timeframe a goal of each library receiving no less than 10 percent of its annual operational budget from the local governments is not unreasonable.

**Table 6
Municipal Support of Public Libraries in Sussex County**

Library	Unrestricted <u>Cash</u>	Restricted <u>Cash</u>	<u>In-Kind Services</u>				
			Water	Sewer	Trash Pick-up	Lawn Mowing	Snow Removal
Georgetown			X	X	X	X	X
Milton					X		
South Coastal			X		X		
Bridgeville	\$1,000		X	X			X
Delmar	\$1,000		X	X	X		
Frankford					X		
Georgetown			X	X	X	X	
Lewes *			X	X	X	X	X
Milford					X		
Millsboro			X	X			
Rehoboth Beach		\$8,000		X	X	X	X
Seaford		\$2,000					
Selbyville				X	X	X	

* Lewes also receives electrical service as part of its in-kind services package.

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Expenditures

For many years the conventional wisdom in public librarianship was that an effective public library would expend

- 60 percent of its income on personnel (salaries, wages, and work benefits)
- 20 percent on library materials
- 20 percent on other elements such as supplies, utilities, postage, and the like.

Over the years it became apparent – at least to the consultant – that few public libraries were able to expend their income according to the conventional wisdom. Very few libraries of any size approach 20 percent for library materials. Small and medium-sized libraries often spend more than 60 percent on personnel.

As for the “other” costs these percentages can range from 10 to 30 percent, and now can be significantly influenced by technology and communications costs.

For the libraries in Sussex County we find the following patterns as reflected in the next table.

Table 7
Annual Categorical Expenditures by Percentage of Total Expenditures

<i>Libraries</i>	<i>Percent for Personnel</i>	<i>Percent for Library Materials</i>	<i>Percent for Other</i>
County Libraries	66.70	16.44	16.86
Independent Libraries	52.76	15.18	32.06
SODL Library Services	75.38	6.77	17.85
All Libraries In the County	60.15	13.97	25.88

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When the percentage of total expenditures for library materials is translated into dollars and cents a huge disparity emerges when comparing the average of collection expenditures between the three County libraries and the 11 Independent libraries. The average for the County libraries is \$67,561 whereas the Independent libraries expend only \$41,471 on average (see Chart 6 on page 54).

When computing the expenditures on a per capita basis the customers served by the County libraries have access to twice as much money for library materials as those of the Independent libraries -- \$7.48 per capita for the three County libraries and only \$3.56 for the 11 Independent libraries.

The average overall expenditures are equally stark when comparisons are made:

- County libraries operating expenditures = \$410,933, or \$45.48 per capita
- Independent libraries = \$273,153, or \$23.46 per capita

Chart 7 on page 55 provides additional data.

Consultant's Thoughts and/or Recommendations – The low percentage of total expenditures expended for personnel by the Independent libraries is a result of the very low amount of money that is used for work benefits (see below). As for the SODL and its low percentage figure for Library Materials its primary mission is not direct service to the public but rather the provision of support services for the three County branch libraries.

The great disparity between the County and the Independent libraries with regard to library materials helps explain the differences in usage between the County and the Independent libraries. For example:

- County libraries average over 23,000 more circulation per year than do the Independent libraries
- About 15,000 more persons per year visit the County libraries than do the Independents even though the 11 Independent libraries provide over 300 more service hours
- Total customer contacts average 23.4 at the County libraries and only 14.3 at the Independent libraries
- On a contacts-per-service-hour basis the County libraries average 92 contacts per hour while the average for the Independent libraries is but 64
- County libraries average one public use Internet computer for every 821 persons in their service areas whereas the average is 1,076 among the Independent libraries.

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The Independent libraries do have a higher percentage of their service areas populations registered as borrowers than do the County libraries – 67.8 percent for the Independents as opposed to 59.2 percent for the County libraries.

Charts 8 – 11, pages 56 – 60, provide further data and information.

Salaries

Low salaries make it difficult to recruit and retain staff, especially professionally trained librarians. The average director’s salary for all of the public library services in Sussex County, including the Sussex County SODL and bookmobile, as reported in the State of Delaware Library Statistics for FY2006, was \$33,277. The average for the three County Library directors was \$34,939. The 11 Independent library directors averaged \$31,059. The average salary for a library director of a public library in Sussex County in FY2006, including the director of the County Library Department and the Bookmobile, was \$33,277 (see chart 12, page 60).

As a point of comparison, the 2006 edition of *Public Library Data Service*³ reported the following:

- For libraries serving 10,000 to 24,999, the average Director salary was \$56,785 and the average salary for a Beginning Librarian was \$33,775
- For libraries serving 5,000 to 9,999, the Director salary average was \$42,716 and the average salary for a Beginning Librarian was \$29,707.

Consultant’s Thoughts and/or Recommendations – Without an increase in the salary levels it will be increasingly difficult for the libraries in Sussex County, especially the Independent libraries, to recruit and retain librarians with advanced degrees. The County libraries must also continue to have steady increases in salaries at all levels.

³ *Public Library Data Service STATISTICAL REPORT 2007*, Chicago, Public Library Association, p. 52.

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Work Benefits

Progress has been made in this area at some of the Independent libraries. When the Statewide Master Plan study began it appeared that work (fringe) benefits for the staffs of the Independent libraries were almost totally absent. Now, three years later, the consultant finds some benefits in place where none were previously. This progress is to be applauded. However, there is much more to do.

For the 11 Independent libraries the annual costs of the provided work benefits averages but 11.6 percent of the total staff costs. The range among the 11 libraries is 1.8 percent (the low) to 16.5 percent (the high).

In comparison, the three County libraries average 40.1 percent. The average for the two SODL entities is 37.1 percent.

Consultant's Thoughts and/or Recommendations – For many employees and potential hires, regardless of where they work or what they do, work benefits – especially health insurance and a retirement plan other than Social Security – are as important – if not more so – than the amount of their salaries.

As indicated there has been some improvements in the work benefits for the staffs of the Independent libraries.

Consideration should be given to the establishment of a funding pool for the purpose of purchasing some level of health insurance for all Independent library staff that does not now have any health insurance. This could be another centralized service.

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THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

There have been several studies measuring the economic impact of public library services completed over the past three years.

The basic findings of five of the studies:

- Seattle, New Central Library in Downtown Seattle – Library responsible for \$16 million in net new economic activity in its first full year of operation; projected to total \$80 million over 5-year period, \$160 million for 10 years, and \$320 million over a 20-year period⁴
- South Carolina – Total direct and indirect return on investment for every \$1 expended on public libraries by state and local governments is \$4.48⁵
- Florida – Florida’s public libraries return \$6.54 for every \$1.00 invested from all sources.⁶
- Southwestern Ohio – The economic impact of nine public libraries in Butler, Clermont, Hamilton, and Warren counties was studied in 2005. Library customers received direct benefits from library services during the study period of about \$190.4 million. For every dollar expended on library operations the public received about \$2.56 in directly quantifiable benefits.⁷

⁴ Birk & Associates. THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY CENTRAL LIBRARY; Economic Benefits Assessment, April 2005

⁵ Barron, Daniel D. and others. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES ON SOUTH CAROLINA. University of South Carolina, January 2005 <http://www.libsci.sc.edu/SCEIS/home.htm>

⁶ Griffiths, Jose-Marie and others. TAXPAYER RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN FLORIDA PUBLIC LIBRARIES: Summary Report. September 2004

⁷ Levin, Driscoll & Fleeter. VALUE FOR MONEY: Southwestern Ohio’s Return from Investment in Public Libraries. June 22, 2006.

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- Urban Libraries Council – The study discusses how the public library can impact the building of work force participation via technology training, centers for job information, classes and materials on the preparation of resumes, and Internet access for online job applications.⁸

The report of the Urban Libraries study provides strategies for effective work force development which includes connections to all types of employment agencies and potential employers in a library's service area.

These studies document that there is substantial economic benefit that has and will accrue to municipalities, counties, and states *if* there is adequate tax support for public library services and facilities.

⁸ Urban Libraries Council. MAKING CITIES STRONGER: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development, 2007.

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SPACE AND SPACE PLANNING

With the exception of Laurel, with their renovation and expansion project now complete, and Selbyville, which completed an expansion project two years ago, all of the Independent libraries are significantly undersized. Seaford's proposed new building will solve its space problems. Rehoboth Beach has a new library and has adequate space at this time, but it will soon be too small. Georgetown is moving ahead on a new, much larger facility. Milford is exploring how it can add space.

Both Greenwood and the South Coastal County libraries now are quite undersized. South Coastal will solve its space problems with its planned expansion project as will Greenwood. Milton has recently completed its expansion project.

The most severe cases of inadequate amount of space among the remaining Independent libraries are Bridgeville and Frankford. These two buildings cannot be effectively expanded at their present locations.

Presently the largest facility in Sussex County is the recently renovated and expanded Laurel Public Library with a total of 24,835 square feet (SF), or nearly 2.00 square feet per capita. The second largest is in Milton with 16,676 SF; also almost 2.00 SF per capita.

Conversely, the overall two smallest facilities are in Bridgeville (1,180 SF) and Frankford (1,896 SF). On a per capita basis Georgetown with 0.16 SF and Bridgeville with 0.17 SF provide the least amount of space for their respective service area populations.

Table 8 on the following page provides a complete picture.

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Table 8
Square Feet of Library Space by Library

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Overall, Sussex County libraries provide an average of 0.69 SF per capita. This figure is slightly higher than the long-held “standard” of 0.60. However, the 0.60 “standard” is now over 50 years old, dating back to 1966. The “standard” now is 1.00 SF per capita, which the three County libraries exceed by a fraction, having an average of 1.05 SF per capita. The 11 Independent libraries average 0.70 SF per capita. Three of the 11 Independents exceed 1.00 SF per capita – Laurel with 1.97, Selbyville with 1.39, and Lewes with 1.09. Rehoboth Beach is close behind with 0.97 SF per capita. Chart 14 has information for each library in the County.

ADDITIONAL SPACE NOW BEING PLANNED

Three libraries are now actively working on additional space. The South Coastal Library in Bethany Beach will expand to approximately 22,500 SF. A new Greenwood Library will result in that community having between 12,000 – 14,000 SF of space. And the Milford Library will expand to a size of 21,900 SF. These three projects are anticipated to be completed within the next five years.

By 2012 there may be two libraries with larger facilities. Both Georgetown and Seaford have raised more than half of the matching funds required to qualify for state construction funds. As they are now planned, Georgetown will have a 29,500 SF building and Seaford 16,700 SF of space.

Looking even further ahead, to 2015, Bridgeville and Delmar may have larger library facilities of 10,000 to 15,000 SF each.

Consultant’s Thoughts and/or Recommendations - As a consultant who has been planning and programming library space for buildings of all sizes for the past 28 years the lack of effective space planning for most of the libraries in Sussex County is evident. In some instances, where the available space is so very small, the interior layouts are about as good as they can be. However, this is not true in every instance. The Statewide Master Plan has recommended a logical progression of planning steps be taken prior to the State of Delaware participating in the funding of library capital improvement programs. Those steps involve a Needs Assessment Study as a first step, followed by a Building Program if the Needs Assessment recommends an expansion and/or new facility.

If the recommendations of the Statewide Master Plan are followed there is no doubt that improved library facilities for Sussex County will be forthcoming in the years ahead.

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The Statewide Master Plan also included information on the needed size of each library facility in Sussex County based upon projected 20-year population growth and the stated goal of there being public library space in Delaware equal to the now widely accepted “standard” of one square foot per capita.

A next step for Sussex County would be to develop a long-range capital improvements program for library facilities using the Statewide Master Plan as a starting point. Such a plan would assist all parties – County, State, Municipalities, and Boards of Independent libraries – plan for the future in terms of land needs, funding requirements, and bond programs/fund raising.

A long-range capital improvements program should also carefully consider the operational costs of the facilities and strive to ensure that there are not larger buildings for the sake of community pride. Given the projected growth of the County and the probability of improved roadways a reasonable goal would be that there would be at a minimum of an eight to ten mile distance between libraries.

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OTHER ISSUES

In addition to the major issues discussed above the meetings produced several other issues that have impact on public library services in Sussex County

GOVERNANCE

All of the Independent libraries, by State statute and County ordinance, have appointed Library Commissions. Commission members are appointed by the Resident Judge of the Superior Court of Delaware based upon the recommendation of the current commissioners. The appointments are for five-year terms. While there are no term limits by law, some of the library commissions have established term limits in their by-laws. Conversations during the site visits as a part of this study indicate that in some cases board members have served several terms.

The County libraries do not have library commissions. County Council serves as the governing body for these libraries.

Most of the libraries in the County have Friends of the Library organizations. Their relevance, size, and activities vary greatly from library to library.

Consultant's Thoughts and/or Recommendations - Like boards of trustees/directors in any organization there are effective boards and board members and there are ineffective boards/members. Consideration should be given to a change in the statutes and/or ordinances that would result in putting into place a limit on the number of terms a person can serve on a library commission. The consultant believes that two consecutive five-year terms is adequate, or two full-terms plus the balance of the initial term if the appointee is first serving as the result of a vacancy.

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A Friends of the Library (FOL) organization can be a tremendous asset for any local public library provided its mission is clearly stated and adhered to, and it has a membership base that represents the broad service area of the Library. In order to strengthen the work of the various Friends, a “Council of Friends” should be formed with representatives from each library that has a FOL. The Council could assist with long-range planning so that the chances of competing events would be minimized.

OUTREACH TO THE COMMUNITY

Outreach is a proven way of bringing the public library to the larger community and increasing library relevance and usage.

Like most public libraries throughout the country most of the Sussex County libraries would like to increase their outreach efforts by means of visits to schools, day care centers, senior citizen centers, etc. Unfortunately, the minimal staffing that most of the libraries have precludes this to a large degree.

Consultant’s Thoughts and/or Recommendations – The centralized services concept will provide an opportunity for all libraries in the County to increase their outreach efforts via staff training and freeing up staff time now spent on technical services activities that could then be devoted to outreach programs.

PARTNERSHIPS

Public libraries, by the very nature of the breadth of their collections, have very few limitations in terms of the services they can provide given adequate funding. The same holds true in terms of partnerships that can be explored and developed provided the partnership(s) benefits all of the partners.

Public libraries have found that effective partnerships can be of tremendous benefit. They help by extending the services into the broader community, increasing public awareness of the library’s services, and enhancing fund raising possibilities.

Consultant’s Thoughts and/or Recommendations - Partnerships do require staff and/or board of trustee’s time to establish. Given the staffing complements of Sussex County libraries the formation of effective partnerships is of limited potential at this time. However, that does not mean that there should be no effort made. It does mean that the expectation level should be realistic. This is yet another possibility for Centralized Services being utilized for the benefit of all libraries by means of staff training and coaching.

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PROMOTING LIBRARY SERVICES

Most public libraries want to serve more people. Most public libraries have a good story to tell. And, most public libraries lack the funding and/or staff expertise to effectively promote themselves – especially in this highly technical and fast-changing world we all now find ourselves in.

Consultant's Thoughts and/or Recommendations - For Sussex County consideration should be given to the establishment of a pool of money that could be used to promote all libraries in the County. This is doable inasmuch as most of the libraries are offering the same basic services. A reasonable goal would be an annual pool of \$25,000 by FY2010.

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THE JOINT-USE LIBRARY STUDY

As part of the broader study of library service in Sussex County a meeting was held on the Jack F. Owens Campus, of Delaware Technical Community College, Georgetown, to discuss with the College ideas regarding how the Stephen J. Betze Library might participate in Countywide library services. Meeting participants were:

- Ileana M. Smith, Ed.D., Vice President & Campus Director
- June S. Turansky, Ed.D., Assistant Dean of Instruction
- Shirin Jamasb, Ph.D., Library Director
- Anne E. Norman, Director & State Librarian, Delaware Division of Libraries
- John Phillos, Facility Project Coordinator, Delaware Division of Libraries
- Carol Fitzgerald, Director, Sussex County Department of Libraries
- Richard L. Waters, Library Consultant, PROVIDENCE Associates Inc.

Based upon the meeting a proposal was submitted by Mr. Waters to the Delaware Division of Libraries for a design charette to study the feasibility of the Betze Library becoming a Joint-Use College/Sussex County Public Library and potentially being the site for an Anchor Library in Sussex County.

THE PROPOSAL

To develop a conceptual blocking space plan with general furniture and equipment items placed to test collection, user seating, and staffing capacities by modifying the existing Delaware Technical Community College Library facility to become a joint use library serving both the needs of the College and the general public of all ages, perhaps as an Anchor Library.

The proposal was accepted. The Delaware Division of Libraries provided the funding for the study.

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THE DESIGN CHARETTE

The on-site phase of the Joint-Use Library study was held in the Betze Library September 25 – 28, 2006. Participants included Dr. Smith and others from the College, Ms. Norman and others from the Division of Libraries, Ms. Fitzgerald and others from Sussex County, the Director of the Georgetown Public Library and the Chair of the Georgetown Library Board, and the three-member Consultant team.

THE JOINT-USE CONCEPT HAS WORKED IN OTHER STATES

The Joint-Use Library concept is not new. It has been tried and proven to be successful in other locations.

In Westminster, CO a 76,000 SF library serves as that community's public library and as the academic library for the Front Range Community College. Westminster is a Denver suburban community. In Broward County, FL the community college and the Broward County Division of Libraries have two joint-use facilities in operation for the past 10 to 15 years.

One of the newer examples is in Tippecanoe County, IN where a 35,000 SF building opened in 2001 on the campus of Ivy Tech Community College and serves as that county's public library. See Appendix B for further information about this successful project.

The most recent, at least as far as the consultant is aware, is the combination involving the Omaha (NE) Public Library and the Metropolitan Community College.

Joint-Use libraries involving the public library and four-year and graduate school institutions have also proven to be successful as witnessed by the 400,000 SF Martin L. King Library serving as the Central Library for the San Jose Public Library and San Jose State University, CA. And, in Broward County, FL that public library and Nova Southeastern University joined forces for the 300,000 SF Sherman Library.

In all of the examples cited both the capital and the operational costs are shared.

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POTENTIAL JOINT-USE LIBRARY BENEFITS

At the initial brainstorming session the participants identified several potential benefits of a joint-use library facility:

- Sharing of staff
- Shared operational costs
- Collaborative collection development
- Expansion of the customer base
- Expanded hours of service
- Potential for state funding
- Accessibility of College location.

JOINT-USE LIBRARY DESIGN GOALS

At the same session the participants identified 43 design goals. These included:

- Efficient delivery of library services
- Optimum use of existing resources
- Adaptable space
- Additional space for collections, seating, and exhibits
- Ability for College to support new programs
- Expanded technological capabilities including wireless
- Additional conference rooms
- A multi-purpose meeting room
- An aesthetically pleasing environment
- Energy efficiency
- Improved security
- Additional parking.

INITIAL CHARETTE CONCEPTS

Three design concepts were developed and presented on the afternoon of September 28, 2006:

- Concept B2 was a two-story addition to the Betze Library
- Concept B3 was a three-story addition
- Concept A2 was an all-new two-story Library.

All of the proposed new construction space would be built on the lawn that now separates the Betze Library from the parking along the Seashore Highway.

Following the presentation by the consultant team and a question and answer session it was the consensus of the participants that Concept B3, the three-story addition, should not be studied further.

Concepts B2 and A2 would provide the College with additional Library space as well as additional classroom space, B2 by means of freeing-up most of the first level of the Library and A2 by freeing up most of both levels of the existing facility.

Building Sizes of Concepts A2 and B2

Presently, the building housing the Betze Library contains a total of 30,801 net assignable square feet (NASF) of space. The total NASF is distributed as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| • Library 1 st Level – | 14,512 |
| • Library 2 nd Level – | <u>13,605</u> |
| • Total Library - | 28,117 |
| • Museum 1 st Level - | <u>2,684</u> |
| • Building Total - | 30,801 |

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The total NASF for Concept A2 is 47,110, distributed as follows:

- Library 1st Level - 24,591
- Library 2nd Level - 22,519
- Total Library - 47,110

The total NASF for Concept B2 is 51,911, distributed as follows:

- Library 1st Level - 24,779
- Library 2nd Level - 27,132
- Total Library - 51,911

Therefore, Concept A2 would result in an increase in Library space of 18,993 NASF, a gain of 67.5 percent. Concept A2 would also provide the College with approximately 28,000 NASF for other uses – classrooms, expanded Child Development Center, office space, etc.

Concept B2 would increase the Library space by 23,794 NASF, or about 84.6 percent (84.46%) as well as providing the College with about 14,000 NASF for other uses.

The Museum would continue to be housed on the 1st Level and its space would remain the same.

Programmatic Elements of Concepts A2 and B2

A series of programmatic elements were developed for each concept, including collections, customer seating, gathering spaces, and staff spaces. See Appendix C for a complete listing of the elements.

Staffing The Joint-Use Library

College Library Staffing - At the time of the charette the Betze Library had a staff of 10 working 289 hours per week. There were five full-time positions and an equal number of part-time posts. The FY2007 payroll budget was projected to be \$475,000.

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If the College were to meet Middle States Minimum staffing standards there would be a need for a total of 17 positions (9 F-T, 4 P-T, and 4 Student Workers). Their combined weekly hours would be 496 and the estimated payroll cost would be \$733,700.

Anchor Library Staffing - The recommendations for an Anchor Library in Sussex County, if a standalone facility, calls for a total staff of 21 positions (20 F-T and 1 P-T) at an estimated annual payroll cost of \$493,350.⁹ The total workweek hours would be 682.5. Appendix C contains detailed information.

The Joint-Use Library Staffing Projections - There would be a significant cost savings with a joint-use facility. Instead of a combined cost – if the Middle States minimum standards were met – of \$1,227,050 the annual cost would be \$888,730 (College share = \$506,230, County share \$382,500). The total hours per week would be 828. Appendix D provides comparative information.

Capital Cost Estimates

The consultant team developed cost estimates for Concepts A2 and B2. Concept A2, all-new construction with the existing Betze Library renovated for other College uses, has an estimated project cost of \$25,546,305. This sum includes \$3.5 million for renovation of Betze Library space.

Concept B2, the renovation of the 2nd Level of the Betze Library plus new space, has an estimated project cost of \$21,616,279, including about \$1.75 million for renovation of the 1st Level of the existing Library for other College uses.

Operational Cost Estimates

An operational budget for a Joint-Use Library would potentially be:

Contractual services and supplies -	\$300,000
Capital/library books -	200,000
Personnel costs (payroll) -	<u>888,730</u>
Total	\$1,388,730

⁹ Estimated annual payroll cost based upon Sussex County Council Job Classifications as of Fall 2006.

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There would be a reduction in annual costs of approximately \$375,000 as a result of there being a joint-use library instead of a separate Anchor Library and a separate College Library. The joint-use facility would allow the College Library to meet the Middle States minimum staffing standards.

Funding The Joint-Use Library

Without question a Joint-Use Library will be a significant undertaking. But before focusing solely on the costs it behooves all to look at the benefits:

- 21.5 hours per week of additional Library service for College students
- 50 hours per week of additional Library service for residents of Georgetown and the surrounding area
- Significant increases in the number of books, computers, seating for customers, and gathering spaces
- Dedicated spaces for service to children and teens
- Improved technological capabilities.

Funding Sources for the Joint-Use Library

Funding the Joint-Use Library would be a three-part responsibility, and perhaps four. There could be:

- State aid
- College funds
- Sussex County funds.

In addition, there could also be private funds for both capital and operational expenditures.

The consultant does not underestimate the difficulty of convincing policy-makers and the general public with regard to providing additional monies. Nonetheless, with the leadership that has been exhibited to date, and a will to succeed, we believe this proposed Joint-Use Library could become reality.

The Service Area for a Georgetown-Located Anchor Library

The consultant believes that a Joint-Use Library will appeal to a great number of people. Projections were developed based upon three different service area scenarios using the intersection of Highway 113 and Seashore Highway as a central point. Based upon 2011 projections, and using a 10-mile ring, the service area population is projected to be 48,040.

Until the new facility is in-place and open for service there is no way to accurately forecast the true service area. Appendix E provides details of the projections including demographic data.

SERVICES AND PLANNING FOR SERVICES

It is the opinion of the consultant that the single biggest mistake made by libraries is attempting to be all things to all people!

As commendable as that concept may be in striving to appeal to the entire community it almost always results in not being able to provide any one service really well because the available resources are spread across so many different activities. The energy of the staff, the dollars for collection development, and the attention of the governing body can become stretched to a near breaking point.

The consultant strongly urges that this practice not become the standard for any of the libraries in Sussex County.

THE BUSINESS OF SERVICE

Personnel recruitment and training are of paramount importance for any service organization. A service organization deals with concepts and ideas. These concepts and ideas can be easily replicated.

Another way to look at the business of service is that a key unit of inventory is time. Time is a valuable commodity and one that can only be expended in fixed amounts. From a customer's perspective it has a liability because it cannot be stockpiled. Neither can it be returned, reused, or recycled.

In a public library time as inventory can be enhanced via the value-add of staff expertise. A library service value-add includes knowledge, brainpower, and the intellect of the staff.¹⁰

¹⁰ Sawyer, Deborah C. SMART SERVICES: Competitive Information Strategies, Solutions and Success Stories for Service Businesses. Information Today, Inc., c2002

GOOD TO GREAT

In Jim Collins' best selling *Good to Great*¹¹ the author discusses the Hedgehog Concept. The Hedgehog Concept, taken from the essay by Isaiah Berlin, "The Hedgehog and the Fox," is based upon an ancient Greek parable: "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing."¹²

For the public libraries serving Sussex County, what one big thing do they know?

Service. Service is the right answer.

In *Good to Great*, Mr. Collins presents "The Three Circles." The Hedgehog Concept is a simple and direct concept that flows from a well-founded understanding regarding "The Three Circles."

1. The first circle deals with excellence. In its geographic region, in what one or two services can a library in Sussex County be the best? Of equal importance, what are the services where it cannot be best? These discerning standards extend well past core competence and competencies. The possession of a competency does not necessarily mean that any of the libraries, or a staff member, will be the very best at that particular competency. Moreover, what a library can be best at may not even be something that the library is presently offering as a service.
2. The second circle deals with money. What drives the economic engine? All the good to great organizations achieved piercing insight into how to most effectively generate and then sustain needed cash flow and profitability. Public libraries do not, of course, seek profitability. But, they must have the necessary cash flow – and it must be sustained over an extended period of time – meaning years – in order to be great.

¹¹ Collins, Jim. GOOD TO GREAT: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't. HarperCollins Publishers, c2001.

¹² Berlin, Isaiah. THE HEDGEHOG AND THE FOX. Chicago, Elephant Paperbacks, 1993.

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3. The third circle deals with passion. What are the libraries in Sussex County deeply passionate about? What are the activities that ignite the passion of the organization? Each of the existing 16 library service units would probably respond differently to these questions. The concept here is not to stimulate passion but to discover what makes a library passionate. The passion will be manifested in the passion of the staff toward what they are doing that will be the best in the region.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT LIBRARY?

Can there be great libraries in Sussex County? If there can be – and the consultant certainly believes that is possible – then what will it take for one or more of the 16 library service units to become a “great” library?

Here are five ideas from the *Project for Public Spaces* as presented in the April 2007 *Making Places Newsletter*.

1. Offer a broad mix of community services such as “Health Kits,” a partnership involving the Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick, ME, the Mid Cost Hospital, and Parkview Adventist Medical Center.
2. Foster communication such as translation services, literacy programs, foreign language classes, ESL, and computer training.
3. Showcase history and information, especially local history and information because chances are no other organization will do so.
4. Build capacity for local businesses by serving as a think tank for local start-up businesses and community development advocates.
5. Be a community-gathering place, not only for library-sponsored programs but also for others who want and need a place to meet, to plan, and exchange ideas.

The *Newsletter* goes on to list and describe 14 different ways to “Make Your Library Great.” When it all comes together the local public library will become a place that anchors community life and brings people together.

For the description of all of the 14 ways please refer to Appendix F.

FOR SUSSEX COUNTY LIBRARIES

From a physical standpoint the libraries of Sussex County can be divided into three sizes:

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- 5,000 square feet (SF) and smaller
- 5,000 – 9,999 SF
- 10,000 SF and larger.

The consultant believes that the size of the physical space has a direct impact on the services that can be effectively provided. A building of less than 5,000 SF in size cannot possibly have as much collection depth as a building twice the size. For the smaller facility to strive to have as many materials available to it's public as the larger facility is bound to lead to a very crowded building – a building that is very user-unfriendly.

Considerations for Services

The consultant has developed a list of services that he believes is viable for the libraries of Sussex County. This list is not, by design, inclusive of all services that a library can provide its community.

The purpose of the list is to suggest, depending upon the size of the library, that a Sussex County library – independent or County-operated – could strive to be the very best – yes great -- in the region in the provision of the service. For the smallest group of libraries no more than three of the services should be emphasized. For the mid-sized libraries no more than four, and for the largest, no more than five, of the services listed should be emphasized.

In addition, there should be discussion among the libraries to strive to not duplicate the “good to great” concept too much. This would be especially true where two libraries are geographically close to each other, e.g. Bridgeville and Greenwood or Frankford and Selbyville.

The suggested services to be considered are:

- Community meetings – market the library meeting space widely to all groups, non-profits and for-profits alike; do not be fearful of charging for the space (the library will incur extra utility and custodial expenses, plus set-up time on some occasions)
- Children's services – with the age emphasis to fit the demographic patterns, if a lot of very young children then the caregivers should be included

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- Children's programming – a specialization within children's services – story times, puppetry, special programs, read aloud times, spelling bees, etc.
- Teen services – for those hard to reach (and sometimes control) young people ages 12 – 15 primarily, lots of technology – and good technology – and a “cool” space
- Teen programming – these youngsters can be hard to reach, so form a Teen Advisory Council first and listen to them, let them plan and stage many of the programs
- Service for seniors – large type materials, books on CD, enhancement equipment, and chairs that are not overly soft and that have arm rests
- DelMarVa (or local history) – the local library is probably the only place in the community that consistently can collect and preserve local history (but be somewhat selective in what is collected and retained)
- Media collections – DVDs (including entertainment movies), books-on-CD, and music CDs; videocassettes and books-on-tape are old technologies now, do not discard what is now owned but do not make any new purchases
- Current literature, e.g. best sellers – be the place in the community where a person can expect to get a copy of the latest best seller
- Computer classes – work with another organization to provide the instructor, consider a mobile laptop unit (takes up very little space) and with wireless can be set up anywhere in the library
- Adult programming – it is hard, if not impossible, to compete with television, so do not try to do so, be selective, and try to organize thematically, and serve refreshments (the refreshment concept certainly applies to teens)
- Information technology, including wireless – whatever you have in the form of technology strive to make it state-of-the-art, better one or two really fast, powerful, software loaded PCs than three times as many that are slow, poor resolution, with minimal software.

What is missing?

- Adult non-fiction (other than best sellers or materials that would support programs)
- Reference services
- Current periodicals and newspapers
- General adult fiction.

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There is nothing wrong with having an adult non-fiction collection. What is being suggested here is that such a collection would not be a priority, nor would reference services, having a lot of magazines and out-of-town newspapers, etc. Every library would have these collections, but they would not strive to have a “great” adult non-fiction collection or the “best” collection of current periodicals and newspapers in the region.

Again, striving to be all things to all people will more than likely render the library non-relevant to many.

Sussex County Department of Libraries Services

The Sussex County Department of Libraries should consider and plan to administer the following:

- Technical Services (phased in over a three to four year period) – as discussed above in the Centralized Services concept
- Friends of the Library Council – a County-wide group to coordinate some “big picture” events/activities and marketing on a broad scale
- Information Technology specialist – a roving specialist, but not a substitute staffer for one of the County or Independent libraries
- Youth Services Specialist – also discussed in the Centralized Services concept
- Multicultural Services Specialist – as the ethnic makeup of the County changes so must library services
- Delivery service – bring all of the libraries together via a van service that operates at night, thus avoiding a lot of traffic and the opportunity for staff to engage the van driver in conversation, will also assist with resource sharing
- Grants for Special Projects (total of \$25,000, with no grant greater than \$5,000) – to provide some incentives for the libraries to reach out and try something new and different.

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Delaware Division of Libraries Services

The Delaware Division of Libraries can further assist library development in Sussex County by considering the following:

- Web Sites, Enhancement of – work with the local libraries to upgrade and improve their websites
- Storage of seldom used collections – the shelves are crowded – very crowded – in most of the libraries and if the excess volumes which have a useful life but are not in high demand could be stored and retrieved as needed in Dover (or someplace managed by the Division) all of Delaware would be better off
- Inter county delivery service – improved delivery service of library materials between the libraries in each of the three counties
- Wireless – provide assistance to local libraries to go wireless
- New SIRSI benefits – implement these benefits and promote them widely, especially in the first two to three years.

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TWO NATIONAL OPINION SURVEYS

A random-sample telephone survey of 1,003 adult Americans, conducted by KRC Research and Consulting, revealed that two of every three persons surveyed visited their public library last year. Nearly all of those surveyed, 96 percent, believe that because public libraries provide free access to materials and resources, they play an important role in giving all persons a chance to succeed in life.

The survey, commissioned by the American Library Association, was taken January 3 – 13, 2006. The confidence factor of the survey was + or – 3.1 percent.

FINDINGS

Among the findings of the survey:

- 85 percent indicated that public libraries deserve more funding, including nearly six of ten (58%) who strongly agree
- 52 percent believe \$41 or more should be spent per person in local tax support (the national average now is about \$25 per person)
- 92 percent believe libraries will be needed in the future even with all of the information available on the Internet
- Over one in three persons ranked the benefits of libraries at the top of the public services list as compared to schools, roads, and parks (an increase of six points over a 2002 survey).

REASONS FOR USE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Americans' use of the services provided by public libraries has increased in most categories since the 2002 survey:

- Borrowing books – up 14 points

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- Consulting with a librarian – gain of seven points
- Checking-out media – an increase of 13 points
- Attending cultural programs – a rise of eight points
- 61 percent of library users report using computers in the library.

USE OF THE COMPUTER

When asked how they use the computer the respondents indicated:

- Checking for library materials via the online catalog of materials
- Connecting to the Internet
- Writing a paper
- Preparing a resume.

OTHER SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey results also revealed that:

- Nearly two of every three adults in the United States have a public library borrower's card
- Borrowing books and using computers and the Internet are the primary services they use
- Women, younger adults (those ages 25 – 44), college-educated adults, and parents of younger children are the most frequent users of public libraries
- Seven in 10 Americans are either extremely or very satisfied with the public libraries (up 10 points from the 2002 survey).

For additional information visit www.ala.org/ala/ors/reports/2006KRCReport.pdf

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A FRESH LOOK AT PUBLIC ATTITUDES ABOUT LIBRARIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

There were three key findings in a June 2006 report supported by the Americans for Libraries Council and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Those three key findings were:

- Libraries received the best grades of any of the community institutions covered in the study with 40 percent of those interviewed giving libraries a grade of “A”
- A majority of the public said that their local libraries use the money they receive well; this even among those surveyed who rarely use their local libraries
- Most people indicated that libraries perform an “essential” service in maintaining a productive community.

The survey report also stated “5 Things Community Leaders Should Know About Libraries and the Public.”

1. Libraries are highly valued.
2. Libraries are important 21st Century resources.
3. Voters love libraries.
4. Libraries use tax funds wisely.
5. The public welcomes a greater role for libraries.

The report also highlighted four specific opportunities for public libraries to integrate themselves more fully into the life of their communities and to position themselves as positive “community players.” Those identified opportunities suggest that the public libraries in Sussex County, Delaware and elsewhere should strive to become:

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1. A safe and engaging place for teens
2. A place for improving literacy skills for a strong workforce
3. A center for community information
4. A place with greater access to technology.

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NEXT STEPS

This report should be shared with the various libraries and the boards of the Independent libraries. A Countywide meeting should be held with all interested parties invited to thoroughly discuss the report.

The report should then be presented to the Sussex County administration, and if warranted, to the Sussex County Council.

**Chart 1
Local Income**

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Chart 2
State Income

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**Chart 3
Other Income**

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Chart 4
Total Income and Per Capita Income

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Chart 5
Income Sources by Percentage of Total Income

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Chart 6
Expenditures for Collections and Staffing

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Chart 7
Total Operating Expenditures and Per Capita Expenditures

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Chart 8
Usage Data Including Total Customer Contacts

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Chart 9
Total Customer Contacts Per Capita and Children's Circulation as Percentage of Total Circulation

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Chart 10
Public and Staff Computers with Internet Connectivity

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Chart 11
Registered Borrowers and Service Hours

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Chart 12
Director Salaries

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