

Chapter V. Case Profiles of Services and Collaborations

Introduction

To appreciate the diversity and richness of the roles public libraries have in facilitating economic activities, we developed a series of case profiles. Some illustrate how libraries have helped small businesses, entrepreneurs, and even large, established companies. Other profiles show how libraries have had positive economic impacts for job seekers, job training, and workforce development. Still others are so unique as to defy easy categorization. Both innovative library activities and collaborations between libraries and business groups, organizations, and businesses are described. These case profiles may be viewed as “best practices” or “success stories,” although some activities and collaborations are fairly widespread.

The cases highlight libraries in all parts of Texas and of all sizes. The majority of cases were identified initially from the survey of library directors in spring 2012. Two questions solicited information. The first question was:

Does your library have any special services, on-going programs, or strategic partnerships with local businesses or business groups and associations? If your library does, please describe them briefly.

Of the 411 survey respondents, 223 directors provided some type of response.

The second question was:

We are seeking specific examples in which a public library’s services/programs have generated economic benefits for individuals and businesses in its community. Examples might include:

- a. Enabling local residents to obtain occupational certifications and job training;*
- b. Locating reference information that increases sales of an existing product;*
- c. Providing regular Internet access for self-employed individuals, local entrepreneurs, and ranchers;*
- d. Allowing local residents to apply for disaster assistance or other government programs;*
- e. Hosting regular meetings of business leaders/economic development staff;*
- f. Finding information to help a local resident start a new business or market a new service/product.*

Does your library have a possible example which might be of interest to others and about which you could provide more information? If so, please describe briefly, and we will contact you by phone.

On this question, 191 directors provided a response of some kind.

Additional possibilities were suggested by knowledgeable library officials in the State of Texas. A winnowing process was conducted by research staff, and directors were contacted then by email, asked to provide further information, and if they desired to participate further. Nearly all directors contacted provided further information and indicated they would be interested in being contacted again by phone or email. Based on these responses, staff narrowed further the candidate libraries.

The main criteria used in the selection process were that the activities entailed a collaboration between a library and one or more local businesses or business groups, or demonstrated a unique or innovative way to serve self-employed individuals, job seekers, or members of the local business community. Once the data collection process had begun by telephone, email, and the first field trip, it became apparent that the criteria generally were fine, but that new activities and collaborations were being identified that deserved inclusion as well.

Based on the number of possible cases, field trips were conducted to West Texas, the Dallas-Fort Worth region, and South Texas. The majority of library directors were contacted, however, by email and telephone. All directors were asked about the specific information they had provided and then were asked a series of additional questions soliciting other information that might be included in the profile. After the initial contact (field visit, in-depth phone call, etc.), a draft profile was developed and sent to the respective library director to ensure accuracy and proper perspective. All of the case profiles provided below have been approved by the directors. The two sets are primarily distinguishable in two respects: (a) length of the profiles; and (b) manner of data collection (i.e., most of the first group of profiles were based on field visits, while the second group involved data collection via telephone and email).

Benbrook Library District

The Benbrook Library District was created in 1999, following approval by Benbrook voters of an initiative to devote 1/2 of 1 percent of sales taxes to what had been previously an all volunteer library, funded by Friends of the Benbrook Public Library. The sales tax allocation provides approximately \$1 million annually to support the library located in southwest Tarrant County. Benbrook's population is estimated at 23,500.



While reliance on the sales tax has proven adequate in the past, the library's annual budget is particularly sensitive to local economic conditions. A construction project on Benbrook's main transportation corridor is about to begin, and businesses affected by the project have been warned that their businesses might see sales decreases of up to 25%. If that occurs, the Library will suffer temporarily as well—it is anticipating an 8% revenue decline in FY2013. After construction is finished, district revenues should increase, and the library has a reserve fund which has been built up over a period of 30 years that can be tapped in FY2013.

"We are particularly attentive to and cooperative with local businesses because we are a tax district library that gets all its revenue from the local sales tax. Thus the more they sell, the more revenue we receive." — Mike Baldwin, Benbrook Library Director

Because of its direct reliance on sales by local businesses, the library devotes substantial time and effort to working with local businesses and business associations. The library is a member of the local Chamber of Commerce, provides meeting space for many of its board and committee meetings, hosts informational meetings sponsored by the Chamber, puts program information on the Chamber website, includes information from the Chamber on its website and in-library monitors, and occasionally provides informational programs on library services.

The library district works with local businesses to provide information programs on topics of interest to the public (e.g., organic gardening and natural living involves

several local nurseries, supply stores, etc.). The library also sponsors a bi-monthly program on Natural Living, which promotes organic gardening, water conservation, wildlife preservation, energy conservation, recycling, etc. This program has been in effect for three years. These programs are done in cooperation with a local landscaper, local organic supply store, and several other local businesses. As part of these programs, in spring 2012 the library sponsored a Green Gardens Day program with a large outside tent in which 10 local vendors provided information and several speakers gave talks. According to the vendors, these programs have stimulated sales for them.

In addition, the Benbrook Library District schedules and markets special free programs in cooperation with local businesses that present their expert information to the public. The library allows local businesses to provide strictly informational (no selling allowed) programs about their areas of expertise. In the past, this has included topics such as identity theft and financial planning. Sharing of business cards in a central location also is encouraged.

Other library initiatives include:

- Providing training, upon request, to Chamber members in the use of business-oriented databases such as A-Z, Plunkett Research, etc.
- Preparing “Readers Advisories” on special topics such as retirement; and
- Helping patrons with legal databases and forms for creating businesses and fulfilling state regulatory requirements.

A possible future activity is the creation of a Business Support Center within the library. This would entail replacing the current black and white copier with a more sophisticated color printer that will support saddle stitching and other more professional publications for small businesses, self-employed individuals, and mobile professionals. This Center may also include more space for mobile businesses needing a temporary location to check email, prepare invoices, print documents from laptops and flash drives, etc. and a more concentrated selection of the library’s business books and periodicals. The library conducts a monthly survey on issues of interest, and it is planning a survey more focused on business support activities in fall 2012.

Cedar Hill

Zula B. Wylie Public Library

The Zula B. Wylie Public Library promotes local businesses to the extent possible in keeping with Cedar Hill's economic development strategy. Various local entrepreneurs are highlighted and given an opportunity to showcase their services and goods at library programs which are a reflection of the program theme and their services/goods.

One example is the vendor booths at the Women's Hat Brunch. This event, held at the Recreation Center, drew more than 60 women, predominantly African-American, after being marketed to Cedar Hill churches. Booths were primarily jewelry makers, home decor, and apparel retailers from the community. Because of its popularity, the program will be expanded next year.

Another large event, with more than 175 participants, was an Earth Day celebration with local authors. This is in line with Cedar Hill's recycling and environmental activities as illustrated by solar powered trash compactors and windmill at the city hall, and scholarships facilitated by the library and provided by the local Waste Management contractor. The library cooperates with the school district by promoting the essays required for the scholarship competition through the high school counselor. Waste Management also cooperates with the library, along with Home Depot and Keep Cedar Hill Beautiful, on a community garden that promotes sustainability efforts.

Patrons requested a GED preparation class and Strayer University's local campus prepared the pre- and post-assessment tests and recommended instructors who developed the GED class curriculum. The library paid the instructors and weekend tutors, provided the meeting space, negotiated a minimal refundable fee (\$40 for 8 classes) for individuals who attended all class sessions, and paid for one GED test per student. Seven individuals attended, and six finished.

After the classes, students were offered weekly tutoring sessions as part of a more comprehensive effort to ensure their GED success. A "Celebrate Your Future" event was developed to mentor students towards their career goals. Because of the success of the collaboration with Strayer, in the fall of 2012 another set of classes was conducted. Strayer provided classroom space, and the library provided the pre- and post-assessment space and handled registration and financial transactions.



Other Cedar Hill library partnership activities have included:

- A holiday decorators and bakers celebration that promoted local restaurants and interior designers.
- A resume writing class that promoted a local employment agency recruiting candidates for positions at JC Penney's.
- A half-day women's health exposition that drew many health vendors and more than 100 attendees. As part of the exposition, the library arranged for a mammogram bus.
- An adult summer reading program finale at which Friends of Seniors (Senior Citizens) displayed, promoted, and sold their handmade jewelry. At the same event, an individual provided Karaoke and passed out business cards, and a local face painter was recognized as well as the local restaurant in which the event was held.
- More than 40 adult computer classes in 2012 across a variety of topics, including websites compiled by librarians on health, travel, investments, and cooking for "silver surfers;" a free prep class on college and graduate school entrance exams such as SAT, ACT, and GRE; a summer series on email basics, e-readers, word processing, spreadsheets, photos, and selling on Ebay. Adult computer class attendance doubled in 2012 from 2011.
- A new personal finances workshop series in cooperation with the Texas Trust Credit Union: "A Better Financially Fit YOU." The six workshops, each 90 minutes in length, held on Monday and Thursday evenings every two weeks, will be provided without cost and cover: My Future Checking, Spending Plans, Improving Your Credit Score, Using Credit Wisely, Tips on Car Buying, and Understanding Insurance.

Possible future initiatives include an application sharing party in which the library intends to involve local businesses who would like to share these types of technology. Another program is Mango tutoring, which will include a local Spanish tutor who will base class lesson plans around the newly purchased electronic Mango language program.

The Cedar Hill library also has served as a launching point for a new business. Former children's program volunteers/teachers have now formed a business called MAPS (Multi Academic ProgramS). This small business recently conducted the library's Rocking Reading Camp and worked with children in the Positive Parenting Classes (family literacy programs).

Coleman Public Library

The Coleman Public Library has a decided technology orientation, with most of the technology assets acquired via grants written by a local rancher who has volunteered her services to the library. The library has a large training room with a 16-computer mobile laptop center and Promethium Board (Smart Board). It is utilized extensively for webinars and seminars by the Texas Extension Service, educational and economic development workshops, workforce development training, and computer classes. Other activities include regular informational sessions by a local investment firm, local area water board meetings, town hall meetings, law enforcement training sessions, Kiwanis Club banquets, and private social events.

Three other sections of the library also have computers: a 12-computer lab, five public access computers, and a 5-computer section reserved for students taking online courses or job testing.

As one example, the 5-computer reserved area was recently used in a GED class for local employees of a wind energy business.

Located in a former grocery store, now remodeled, the Coleman library also has a second floor study lounge extensively utilized by junior high and high school students working on their laptops after school hours. This has been facilitated by a Broadband Technology Opportunities Program grant, administered by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, that upgraded the wireless connection so all students could utilize the library's server. (All students in grades 4 through 12 of the Coleman ISD are provided laptops by the local school system as part of a state grant.)

Other specialized, popular room/services by the Coleman library include donated art, artifacts from a local hunter's African hunting trips, a Genealogy Room, and a puppet loft. In addition, the library was part of a collaboration with the City of Coleman, Coleman County, a local historical group, and a local cattlemen's association to develop a Coleman County Ranchers Center, which would showcase area historical ranching materials and honor those who have been instrumental in one of the county's two primary industries.

The library's technology orientation is due in part to the director and the volunteer grant writer attending a 2008 conference supported by the Gates Foundation about libraries becoming community learning centers. The technology focus also has been furthered by the community's lack of high-speed broadband capabilities—many local ranchers, for example, have only dial-up computer connectivity

and some lack any connectivity for parts of the day. The library's unique resource is exemplified by the increasing number of permanent retirees and especially by the large number of temporary residents ("snowbirds") who park outside the library in the evening to access the library's wireless network.



The Coleman library also serves a local religious community as described in the following testimonial. An elder of a local community that considers themselves Sovereign Grace Amish provided the following comments about the Coleman Public Library:

"Many of our people have benefited greatly from the Coleman Public Library. Some folks do not have (or want) any alternative power at their homesteads, and so being able to stop by the library allows them to use the computers and Internet for research, communication with family, etc. without having to (as they believe) have the corrupting influence of ubiquitous and omnipresent communication technology in their homes. They appreciate the ability to print out documents, sermons, or teachings, as well as being able to utilize services to order things (from stores like Amazon, etc.) that they might not be able or willing to travel to a larger town to purchase. My family has used the library in the more traditional way, borrowing books or the occasional book-on-tape. We definitely look forward to the Friends of the Library book sale every year, and have been able to build up our own library of older encyclopedias and reference works. While we are obviously not anti-Internet or anti-Technology, we do try to limit its more corrupting influences. One of our community members does not want to pay for Internet at his homestead, that he might rarely use or that might begin to use up his time, so he finds that stopping by the Library to do what little Internet work he needs to do, is quite helpful. This member often prints articles and sermons for other folks in the community who do not have access to Internet or printers."

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Crockett County Library

The work could not have progressed without safety training, and the library was the only place in town to provide it. Forty individuals were rotated from their jobs and received the required OSHA training online through the Crockett County library.

The Crockett County Library, located in Ozona on IH-10 between San Antonio and Fort Stockton, has a number of business-oriented initiatives. In early 2011 the library helped a small construction company, Rows Field Services, that was putting an electrical transmission line through Crockett County. Their employees needed to complete safety training, and they used the Library's 10 computers to access the training online. (See information below in italics.)

Joseph Adan Valadez is the owner of Rows Field Service, a small business based in Alice, Texas. Mr. Valadez started working in Ozona in early 2011, where his company was helping to locate an electrical transmission line. To perform this work, Mr. Valadez hired approximately 40 local residents. The work could not have progressed without safety training, and the library was the only place in town to provide it. Forty individuals were rotated from their jobs and received the required OSHA training online through the Crockett County library. "If it hadn't been for that place," Valadez said, "I would have definitely lost a contract that helped a lot of people out. Because the library was capable of meeting our needs as far as computers and space, 40 local families had incomes they wouldn't have had otherwise." According to Mr. Valadez, the alternatives to the library were either shipping the employees to Alice, Texas and back or bringing in computers and getting Internet access somehow. Both alternatives would have been prohibitively expensive and would have meant losing the contract. Mr. Valadez was extremely grateful for the library, saying, "For us small companies, these places [libraries] are very important."

The library's computers, free Internet access, and wireless are used regularly due to the difficulty ranchers have in obtaining good Internet access in the rural areas. The library also has proved valuable as an official test proctor for home schooling tests, as noted by one patron. (See later information.)

Recent changes in Crockett County's library services have occurred because of changes in patron behaviors. For instance, whereas the library used to purchase non-fiction materials regularly to support students in their classroom and debate topics, that has changed dramatically as students generate fewer reports and term papers, and increasingly rely on Internet sources rather than physical library materials. (New purchases are now approximately 25% reference and non-fiction, with 75% being adult and children's fiction.) The library participates in an e-book consortium of 8 libraries.

A major outreach initiative began early in 2012 in cooperation with the PEARL Grant Program administered by the University of North Texas, with support from the Robert and Ruby Priddy Charitable Trust. The Media Book Club initiative is comprised of a series of interviews and book reviews on radio and in the local newspaper by influential people in the Ozona community. The interviews and newspaper articles were highly concentrated, with 21 programs in the first 10 weeks. (Each interview introduced the reader/person being interviewed, described their reading preferences and/or a particular title, and also included library services.) The Media Book Club will continue on a less concentrated basis in coming months. It has been very popular and had a profound impact in raising the library's profile within the community. According to library data, in a two-month period, the number of patrons with library cards increased by about 9.5% and the number of memberships for Friends of the Library went from 115 to 140. The library director believes all of these changes were due entirely to the Media Book Club outreach.

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The Crockett County Library works closely with the local Chamber of Commerce. The two groups co-sponsor programs, particularly speakers and authors from outside the area, and the library also provides the Chamber with free Internet access, business reference materials, and a meeting room. Because of the close cooperation between the two organizations, and due to financial cutbacks at the state government level, the Chamber of Commerce chose the library as its recipient at its annual fundraising banquet. Approximately \$10,000 was contributed, which offset the funds lost over a two-year period due to state cutbacks. In addition, the Chamber of Commerce selected the Crockett County Library as its 2011 Business of the Year.

A married couple in Crockett County uses the Crockett County library as both an office and a school. He is self-employed and uses the public library to support his business for office tasks such as faxing, while she has homeschooled their son, from grades six through twelve. Although they have computers and Internet access at their house, the library supplies books and unbiased test proctoring services. Depending on what projects they were working on, the family would visit the library anywhere from several times a week to once every few weeks.

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“My son was doing a homeschool program for high school, checked out books, and they proctored his exams. Texas Tech was who we were doing the homeschooling through, and they suggested it.” She was uncertain who else she would have approached if the local librarian had not been able to proctor the exams officially. Also, “I think as far as Ozona goes, the library is a very useful tool for a lot of people. It’s definitely a blessing to have in a town like this. We’re, what, ninety miles from a town with a Walmart or any large book store.”

Other examples of how the Crockett County Public Library has helped individuals are provided below:

A temporary employee of an oil field survey firm used the library to communicate regularly with his home office located in the Rio Grande Valley. The library gave him access to email, fax machines, printers, and a copier that he needed to perform his temporary job. Purchasing these items would have been prohibitive.

A local patron has a small business selling merchandise online via Craig’s List and other websites. While he has home Internet access, it says it is not very reliable.

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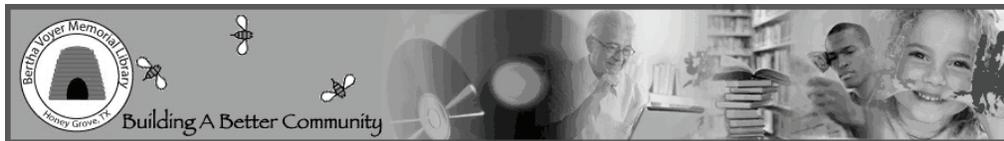
Another of the Crockett County library patrons uses the library’s computers at least three times a week to access industry information and purchase supplies for his full-time position related to horses. If he didn’t have access to the library, this rancher said he would have to purchase a more expensive home computer and rent an office in Ozona where he could get cable or DSL.

Honey Grove

Bertha Voyer Memorial Library

Honey Grove is a community of approximately 1,600 residents, 90 miles north-east of Dallas. The library, however, has more registered borrowers than residents because it attracts individuals from nearby small towns and rural areas. The library receives very limited funding from the city, although the city provides free water and trash service, and a reduction in electricity charges. The bulk of funding is from proceeds of the Hall-Voyer Foundation, with supplemental support from grants obtained by the library director.

The Bertha Voyer Memorial Library is the hub of activity in this community. According to three friends of the library/community leaders, the library is the “heart and soul” of Honey Grove. Without the library, Honey Grove, already declining in population, would “go down the tube.”



The library:

- Serves as a meeting place for the Texas Workforce Commission, Fannin County 4H, Fannin County Homeschoolers Association, Honey Grove Nursing Home, Dodd City ISD, Fannin County Ari-Extension Service, Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Boy Scouts, and Teen Council.
- Completed the most well attended Summer Reading program in recent history. The first camp was summer reading with the theme “Get a Clue,” with 65 students in attendance. The second was a week-long Nature Camp, attended by 77 students, including a bus load of students every day from the Dodd City ISD about 15 miles west of Honey Grove.
- Started regular social events, called BEE Social, on the first Wednesday of each month for adults (mostly seniors) from 1:30 to 3, followed by teens from 3 to 5 p.m. Some seniors stay for the teen social, one of the few occasions in the community for intergenerational mixing. In addition, the library

One of the classes was called “Cowboys and Computers” and aimed at individuals from local farms.

hosted the Teen Council’s Gaming Night because of its Wii, PS3, and Kinect equipment.

- Provides the Chamber of Commerce with office space and hosts their monthly meetings. Because of its relationship with the Chamber of Commerce, the library plays a prominent role in the local activities for the US Hwy 82/287 Yard Sale in North Texas and Southern Oklahoma. This event, held on two days in June 2012, involved yard sales, garage sales, antique stores, sidewalk sales, farmers markets, and flea markets along 425 miles of the two highway corridors. The Honey Grove Chamber worked with the proprietor of a new antique store in Honey Grove to promote the local activities.
- Is a key player in community activities such as Davy Crockett Day and Christmas on the Square, and the locale for the holiday food bank.
- Offers the only free Internet service and free Wi-Fi in the area—Internet access is crucial as the alternatives are dial-up service over telephone lines last upgraded in 1952, and satellite service at \$90/month with frequent disrupted service. Soon the library will be moving from a T1 to a T3 cable.
- Provides the Preservation League with space and has a library edition of Ancestry.com, which not only has more information than the home version, but also enables patrons to access the services without charge, via a free account.
- Offers GED classes via PEARL grant, with \$65 fee reimbursed for course completion and successful passage of the test.
- Serves as a site for residents to take online classes for college credit and ACT/SAT prep classes.
- Hosts computer classes for different ability levels and holds a monthly class for help with resumes, on-line job search, and application help. One of the classes was called “Cowboys and Computers” and aimed at individuals from local farms. The library stressed that patrons could come in “work clothes” and 6-8 “cowboys” participated.
- Runs a Honey Grove Nursing Center (HGNC) Book Club. A library staff person started the book club and currently meets with about 12 nursing home residents every other week to discuss what types of books, DVDs, etc. they would like to obtain. The staff person then makes the rounds of those who cannot leave their rooms, making a list of what items they would like for her to bring on her next visit. This same staff person also takes library

materials to individuals' homes if they are sick, recovering from surgery, or just cannot manage to visit the library.

Library Director Pattie Mayfield believes their activities are critical to the future of Honey Grove: "This small town library is not dying, and we're not going away."

Laredo Public Library

Local builders use the library's reference book resources for information on cost of construction (RSMeans). While this business reference is used sometimes in new building, both for residential and commercial jobs, it is most frequently used for remodeling.

The Laredo Public Library serves a population of more than 235,000 residents on the U.S. side of the U.S.-Mexico border as well as many individuals located elsewhere in Webb County and special populations such as children and youth from Nuevo Laredo who attend schools in Laredo. Laredo's city population is the tenth largest in Texas and within the top 100 in the U.S. The main library is a striking facility built in 1998, which has seven-sides on its tower, representing the seven flags that have flown over the city. (Please see image below.)



The library increasingly emphasizes electronic resources and features various online databases. For instance, owners of small auto repair shops in Laredo often use the library's online database on auto repair. The database, Mitchell's Auto Repair, is accessed through terminals at the library and provides step-by-step instructions for repairing all types of models, various bulletins about recalls, and features for estimating parts and labor costs. On average, this database is used at least 10 times a month and in March 2012, it was utilized 32 times by patrons. Besides this online database, the library also offers hardcopy materials (several manuals) with detailed specifications for auto repairs.

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building, both for residential and commercial jobs, it is most frequently used for remodeling.

A less specialized and even more popular online database is LearnATest.com. This database can be accessed remotely and is utilized for all types of exams and certifications. Library staff indicated it is frequently used for GED testing, SAT practice, as well as by such diverse occupational groups as brokers, teachers, and dermatologists. In the last year, it has been accessed on average about 70 times monthly.

Other popular databases offered by the Laredo library include AncestryLibrary.com, Atomic Training (online, on-demand software training tutorials to help businesses and organizations fulfill staff technology training and development goals), Facts on File-Science, ReferenceUSA (information on more than 14 million U.S. businesses), TexShare-EBSCO, and TexShare-Gale. By far the most popular, however, is TumbleBook Library, which accounts for more than 95% of all database logins in a typical month. All of the most popular databases are described on the library's website.

The library has helped local businesses and residents in a number of other ways recently. In early 2012, for example, the library's CyberMobile was used at a city-wide Job Fair that drew 6,000 potential employees. After hearing presentations by numerous oil, gas, and supplier companies seeking workers, attendees applied for positions using the CyberMobile's computers.

Other services it has offered either recently or on a continuous basis include:

- Distribution of hardcopy tax forms. The library has also been the mainstay of the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program in the city since 1999. Every year several library staff members obtain IRS certification to be tax preparers. Last year the library and its volunteers prepared 1,398 tax returns for a total of \$2,749,564 in refunds. Filing is done electronically and refunds can be directly deposited to taxpayers' accounts. Refunds are often received within two weeks. This is a free service.
- Facilitating a weekly knitting class for the past 8 years which has led to sales of products as well as many new patrons who otherwise would not visit the library.
- Proctoring exams for students, professionals, and small business owners needing to obtain a certificate or license.

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- Working with the U.S. Department of State to take passport applications on weekday mornings. Library staff members are certified as passport acceptance agents every year by the U.S. Department of State.
- Helping patrons use the library's computers to set up appointments for interviews with the U.S. Immigration Service.

As with other Texas libraries, computer terminals are facilitating economic transactions. The Laredo Public Library has an "academic" lab, which gives preference for educational and employment purposes including job searching, school work, testing, online forms, and PDF printing. In the Laredo main facility, one patron now regularly uses the library's computer terminals to answer numerous customer surveys posed by companies. According to a recent conversation with library staff, this individual said he is spending between two and three hours a day on the surveys, which yields a monthly income of approximately \$2,000.

In addition to having two new full service branches under construction, the library will be opening an "Express Branch" in far South Laredo. This branch will be open Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 10:30 to 12 noon to concentrate on computer training and ESL classes and from 3-6 p.m. on weekdays for afterschool computer usage. The branch will also have hardcopy materials including some reference resources to assist area youth with their school assignments. With the new facility being a city-owned concession stand that was never utilized and staff to be assigned from the library's main facility, the additional costs for this new Express Branch will be quite limited.

A likely future initiative is creation of business counseling sessions at the library that would be offered by the Texas A&M International University Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The library director, Maria G. Soliz, has received approval from the Laredo City Manager to develop an inter-local agreement that will define the responsibilities for each entity. Current discussions point to the counseling office being located in designated space on the library's second floor. In addition to office space, the SBDC will also be able to use the library's computer lab and meeting rooms for classes, as well as the library's business resources (databases and hardcopies).

McKinney Public Library

Roy and Helen Hall Memorial Library

In late 2008, librarians at the McKinney Public Library noticed two young men sitting at the same back table nearly every day. While generally not a problem, these two individuals, who turned out to be brothers, had a tendency to giggle and laugh louder than other patrons, so they needed to be “shushed” at times. Their activity eventually led to the development of the applications Chess with Friends and Words with Friends, games designed for the iPhone. According to the June 2010 issue of *DMagazine*, Words with Friends is infectious and liberatingly simple:

“If, by playing the first word, someone initiates a Words With Friends match with, say, a relative on the other side of the country, that relative will have a replica of the game board appear on his own iPhone and be free to take his turn in the game—to play a word of his making—at his leisure. This back-and-forth volley [...] might take two hours or two weeks. Users can juggle up to 20 games at a time [...] By very precise design, Words with Friends has become a casual and playful way for millions of people to stay connected...”³⁶



The two individuals, Paul and David Bettner, used the library because they had no other office available after leaving a Dallas-based video development studio in August 2008. For approximately nine months, the Bettner brothers worked side by side on their laptops in the corner of the library they viewed as their headquarters. They thought about setting up shop from home, but there were too many distractions there. So the 20-somethings opted for the McKinney library, which was quiet and allowed them to get things done.

“The main reason is I had a new baby,” Paul Bettner said. “We wanted to simulate an office environment ... but we didn’t want to pay for it.”³⁷

³⁶ http://www.dmagazine.com/Home/D_Magazine/2010/June/Words_With_Friends_Tests_Your_Vocabulary.aspx

³⁷ Dallas Business Journal March 25, 2010 <http://www.bizjournals.com/dallas/stories/2010/03/29/story3.html?page=all>

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*"We'd show up at nine o'clock when they opened and stay until five," David said.*³⁸

*"... they wrote software code and quietly conducted video conferencing with their partner and cousin, Michael Chow."*³⁹

Words with Friends was downloaded 4.5 million times between its release in July 2009 and June 2010 and has been downloaded more than 20 million times as of August 2012. It was named "The Multiplayer Game of the Year" for the Macworld's 2010 App Gems awards. As of August 2012, according to the site appdata.com, Words with Friends in the United States ranks as the #56 top paid application, #91 top grossing application, #34 top paid apps game genre, and #74 top grossing apps games genre.⁴⁰

Eventually, the Bettners' business, Newtoy, was purchased by Zynga for a reported \$50+ million, according to SEC filings. Now renamed Zynga with Friends, it is located in a converted cotton mill in the historic district of McKinney, several blocks away from the McKinney Public Library. As of August 2012, they had 37 employees and were hiring for several positions. Their current office space has proven insufficient, and they anticipate doubling their space by the end of 2012 after new offices are renovated in the cotton mill.

All of this would not have been possible or would have taken much longer to progress without the McKinney Public Library.

³⁸ <http://www.the33tv.com/news/kdaf-john-mayer-saves-newtoy-story,0,6881701.story>

³⁹ See introductory pages iv-v of *An Atmosphere of Enterprise* for more details about the early challenges of Newtoy. http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/shared/PDFs/Enterprise_Intro.pdf

⁴⁰ http://www.appdata.com/ios_apps/apps/4061-words-with-friends/95-united-states

North Richland Hills Public Library

North Richland Hills is centrally located in the DFW Metroplex, about ten miles east of Fort Worth and twenty-five miles west of Dallas. As the third largest city in Tarrant County with a population of approximately 64,000, North Richland Hills has over 1,200 businesses and more than 30 major employers. According to one organization, North Richland Hills has an award winning school district, a nationally recognized parks and recreation program, and one of the best public libraries in the state.⁴¹

The North Richland Hills (NRH) Library was the first public library in the nation to partner with a local SCORE chapter to offer regular small business counseling services. In 1996 Tom Fleming, a retired Bell Helicopter executive, began providing SCORE counseling in the library, because he found the environment welcoming and the library's information support valuable for his clients. Soon thereafter the NRH library and the local SCORE chapter developed a host agreement, with the NRH library providing a small private office space and administrative support for small business counselors, who work with individuals with small businesses or individuals with plans for starting small businesses. In 2008 North Richland Hills opened a new library, and SCORE was offered dedicated office space in the administration area on the second floor.

The library director who initiated this service and who has since retired, Steven Brown, believes the service is still a winning partnership for both SCORE and a library under the right conditions. He believes it is important for SCORE to be located in a welcoming and accessible environment, such as a library, and that it is important that the counseling service be located in a somewhat private area as well. Another asset for SCORE is to be surrounded by business resources—the NRH library has a variety of business databases, books and periodicals, and two librarians with strong backgrounds in business reference. The main limitation to this arrangement becoming more widely adopted by other libraries in their own communities is the availability of space that can be dedicated to business counseling.

While an in-depth analysis of the consultations has not been undertaken, it is believed that about 30% of users are from outside North Richland Hills. According to a former city official, city elected officials traditionally have viewed this as a service to the region, which promotes North Richland Hills as a community. The small business counselors have reported working with several hundred clients a year.

⁴¹ See <http://www.netarrant.org/Partners.htm>

The North Richland Hills (NRH) Library was the first public library in the nation to partner with a local SCORE chapter to offer regular small business counseling services.

I believe that meeting a SCORE client in a library environment is much more inviting than many of the alternate locations provided by cities for SCORE branch offices. Many times cities would provide a meeting place for our services in older facilities [...]

When I moved our SCORE branch to the North Richland Hills Library, I found the clients more receptive to our services and found the work more rewarding. [...]

Besides offering a comfortable surrounding, a library also has reference materials which our clients can take advantage of.

Because of the NRH library's success with SCORE, in 2009 another business counseling service was brought into the mix: an office from the Small Business Development Center of Tarrant County. In addition to one-on-one counseling, the SBDC counselors began offering a variety of classes designed to give entrepreneurs the skills they need to succeed in their enterprises.

Comments regarding the partnerships between the NRH library and SCORE and the NRH library and Tarrant County's Small Business Development Center are shown below.

Statement from SCORE Chapter (Fort Worth SCORE Chapter 120)

I believe that meeting a SCORE client in a library environment is much more inviting than many of the alternate locations provided by cities for SCORE branch offices. Many times cities would provide a meeting place for our services in older facilities [...]

When I moved our SCORE branch to the North Richland Hills Library, I found the clients more receptive to our services and found the work more rewarding. [...]

Besides offering a comfortable surrounding, a library also has reference materials which our clients can take advantage of.

The North Richland Hills (NRH) Library provides us our own office. A SCORE volunteer is requested to be available at least four hours a week. We come in by appointment only, and we are just adding our fourth volunteer. Most weeks my schedule fills up so I am seeing 3 to 4 clients a week. I believe the other counselors may be seeing 2 to 3 clients a week so we may be seeing 9 to 12 clients a week out of this facility. According to our national files I currently have 313 clients of which 143 are considered active clients (one recently seen and/or one who has returned for follow up consulting on several occasions in the last couple of years).

It is difficult to quantify how many of my clients actually opened a business in NRH as my clients come from neighboring cities as well. Oft times a client receives what he or she is seeking and we do not know if they actually got a business off the ground or not. [...]

Also, it is my goal to assist a client in making a correct decision regarding going into business or not. Having been an active Chamber member for many years, serving on the Chamber Board of Directors and then as a City Councilman, I have attended many ribbon cuttings of new businesses. Sadly I recognized "Didn't we just have a ribbon cutting at this site in the past year." At SCORE I often feel I may be serving a client better by assisting them to make the best possible decision before taking the risk, that is, preventing a

new business failure and helping someone not lose their savings seeking a dream which may be out of reach.

One of my proudest claims is assisting a client who came to me seeking assistance in filing bankruptcy. They had received a \$250,000 SBA loan a year or so earlier. They had partnership problems and simply wanted to get out of the business, a restaurant. My first response to them was assisting businesses to file bankruptcy was not our task at SCORE, so let's look at your operation and problems, solve them and sell the business if you no longer have an interest in running it. I met with these clients many times over several months, taught them how to better maintain their financial records so that the records could be used as a tool to better manage the business, got rid of the unwanted partner, and improved personnel matters. That was four years ago, they are still in business, enjoying the business and visit with me 3 to 4 times a year to demonstrate their progress and seek periodic advice.

Finally let me mention that the Economic Development Department of the City of North Richland Hills and I work very closely. They also are a great supporter of SCORE; we are in frequent contact and refer clients back and forth depending on the needs of the client. I would love to see this relationship between cities and SCORE to be a norm.

*John H. Lewis
Treasurer, Past District Director
Fort Worth SCORE Chapter 120*



Statement from Director, Tarrant County Small Business Development Center

The North Richland Hills library projects a professional, yet welcoming, environment that compliments the image we aim to portray as an SBDC. We meet with approximately 5-20 business owners at our NRH office every month. We also offer a few workshops at that location that bring in another 10-20 people over the course of an average month. We expect both of those numbers to grow as we take a more thoughtful approach to spreading the word in the community that we have an office located in the NRH library. We also expect to soon have a

staff member present in the office 30 hours a week rather than the current 15-20 hours per week. There are several businesses which were counseled by SBDC which are now open for business and thriving in North Richland Hills.

*Wayne Huddleston
Director, Tarrant Small Business Development Center*

Rio Grande City Public Library

The Rio Grande City Library is housed in a former grocery store. Beginning in 1951, Pete Diaz and then Pete Diaz, Jr. built the IGA Starr Grocery Company and a chain of Valley Mart stores in Rio Grande City and across the Rio Grande Valley. In 2000 one of the original buildings was donated by the Diaz family to the city for a library. The first municipal library in this community of approximately 14,000 residents was officially dedicated on June 24, 2005.

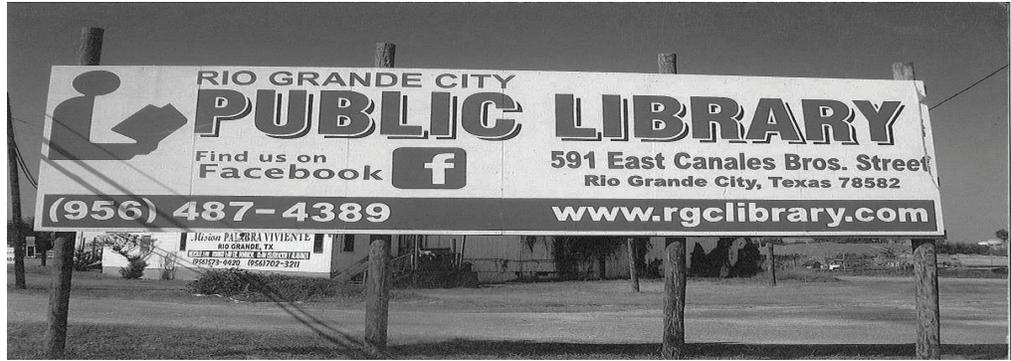
There are several self-employed patrons who use the library's computer terminals, software, and scanning equipment on a regular basis. One is a Mary Kay representative, and another is a surveyor. A third patron, an insurance agent, uses the library's wireless because he is able to smoke while working from the parking lot. Another patron who runs her own business is Raquel Lopez. A local artist, Rolando Gonzalez, credits the library as being partially responsible for his recognition as an artist. (Please see their statements below.)

"The RGC library has helped me start my own business in all aspects. I am really grateful to Rio Grande City for having a library with all these resources (Internet, copies, and their other facilities)." — Mrs. Raquel Lopez, co-owner of a printing company and Mary Kay consultant.

"I am very thankful for the services that the RGC Public Library offers to the community.[...] I attend the library once or twice a week to get my images of the projects that I'm going to be making. I use their computers and their programs... copier, transparencies, and other facilities that they provide. [...] Thanks to all the services that are being provided there, my art has been more appreciated, [...] people are recognizing my talent as an artist." — Rolando Gonzalez

The library also is involved in collaborating with individuals and organizations that provide services to patrons. For instance, a local Avon consultant has presented her insights about marketing and sales to library patrons in a workshop. The library also is working with a local business owner who wants to hold workshop sessions on "How to fill out a job application" and "Preparing for a job interview." This business owner owns two local businesses and is a library board member. When this workshop was discussed at a recent board meeting, another board member volunteered to conduct a workshop on legal matters.

"The RGC library has helped me start my own business in all aspects. I am really grateful to Rio Grande City for having a library with all these resources (Internet, copies, and their other facilities)."



The library also is collaborating with the University of Texas at Pan American Entrepreneurship Project. The library publicized and recruited patrons for eligibility processing for a two-day workshop in July 2012 entitled, “Make Your Dreams A Reality: Start or Grow Your Own Business.” A picture of the flyer describing this event is on the next page.

The library also has begun a major association with the Rio Grande Chamber of Commerce on a series of citywide art walks. A statement from Cecilia Olivarez of the Greater RGC Chamber of Commerce describes the past and future events in more detail. (Please see statement from Ms. Olivarez.) As a result of the Art Walk, the number of people sharing stories on the library’s website and Facebook page as well as liking or commenting on posts has increased significantly. Online activity increased about 15% initially and rose by approximately 40-50% over the course of the month following the event.



Our friends at the RGC Public Library and the Greater Rio Grande City Chamber of Commerce partnered up at our 2nd and 3rd Keep'n It Rio Art Walks which took place at our Historical La Borde Hotel on March 23rd and on April 03, 2012. 2012 was the very first year that the RGC Chamber of Commerce ever put together an Art Walk for all our local artists to display their talent and at the same time give our members a networking opportunity not only with fellow business owners but with the general public as well.

The partnership between the two entities (RGC Library and Chamber) includes promoting both the event and the entities themselves. For the Art Walk, all members of the Chamber had booths where they could give out information on their businesses. The Library set up a booth for donations and provided the attendees with information about library membership....

The Art Walks were a huge success and our community really embraced the idea of ART! We look forward to 2013 when we will again partner with Norma Fultz, RGC Public Library and all the Friends of the Library members to bring Keep'n It Rio Art Walks in January, February, March, and April.

*Cecilia Olivarez
Greater Rio Grande City Chamber of Commerce*

The local Workforce Solutions donation of three computers, the first donation of its kind in the region, which makes it easier for patrons to find a job, access career building tools, and learn about childcare assistance



Numerous other examples of past and possible future collaborations exist, such as:

- The local Workforce Solutions donation of three computers, the first donation of its kind in the region, which makes it easier for patrons to find a job, access career building tools, and learn about childcare assistance;

- A Rescuing Texas History Grant for \$18,000 from the University of North Texas program to digitize copies of the local newspaper, *Rio Grande Herald*, which has now ceased operations;
- A rare appearance by Ronald McDonald, who talked to 48 children and their parents about topics such as recycling, friendship, bullying, character, and giving back to their local community;
- An agreement with the local Economic Development Corporation (EDC) that pays for staff and gasoline for a trolley to and from the library;
- Annual jewelry fundraisers the week before Thanksgiving by Silpada representatives, who donate 100% of their cash profits to the Library;
- A series of workshops at the library on financial literacy with the Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid (TRLA), a non-profit organization that provides free legal services to low-income residents in sixty-eight counties of Southwest Texas; and
- Working with the local United Way to hold federal income tax counseling assistance at the library.

The library's importance to local businesses and its role in the citywide Art Walk events has led to the library director, Norma Fultz, being selected as Parade Marshall by the Chamber of Commerce in the annual Christmas parade. She will be in the first vehicle of the parade.

Southlake Library

Southlake, a very wealthy community of approximately 27,000 residents in north-east Tarrant County, has established a virtual library branch at Sabre Corporation, a major local employer. Southlake's library director, Kerry McGeath, had an idea about offering services through storefronts and other locations away from the main library, and he raised that possibility with a Sabre senior vice-president who was attending the same leadership class. After some discussion of how this arrangement might benefit both entities and an agreement about the operational details, the plan was implemented in fall 2007.



About 3,000 employees are located at the Sabre (Travelocity) headquarters facility in Southlake. The plan began with magazines and other materials in a common reading area near the entrance to the cafeteria. It has since expanded to a dedicated computer/separate library catalog onsite, used by employees to check out materials. Twice a week those items are delivered via courier (a library employee) to the Sabre mailroom, which then distributes the materials to end users within Sabre. While at the mailroom, the library courier also picks up returned materials. Sabre employees may check out anything in the Southlake catalog, and it is estimated that more than 90% of the materials are personal, not business related. The checkout period is one week longer than for non-Sabre patrons to accommodate distribution

Southlake has an agreement with the local school district (Carroll ISD) to borrow materials from school libraries during the summer months when the schools are inactive.

and return times within Sabre. Overdue charges are the same as for other patrons, and all individuals are contacted via email about their overdue materials. Activities at the virtual branch now account for approximately 10% of total checkouts from the Southlake Public Library. (A testimonial from a senior Sabre executive appears later.)

Because of the benefits to both organizations (an added service/quasi-fringe benefit to Sabre employees and expanded service at minimal additional cost for the library), Southlake has created another virtual library at a local senior citizen retirement facility. Like Sabre, there is a dedicated computer/separate library catalog, deliveries are made to a central location by the library courier, and the retirement center staff distributes items internally.⁴²

In addition to its virtual libraries, which increase services without requiring further space, Southlake has a number of activities underway with business organizations and major cultural entities:

- The Chamber of Commerce book club meets monthly at the library to discuss a business book.
- The library highlights its sponsors on a website page.
- The library established a cultural passes program that provides discounted prices to Fort Worth's Amon Carter Museum, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Holocaust Museum, Dallas Museum of Art, and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.

Finally, in another collaboration to improve service at minimal/no cost, Southlake has an agreement with the local school district (Carroll ISD) to borrow materials from school libraries during the summer months when the schools are inactive. This enables students and preschool children to access books on summer reading lists and Bluebonnet books, and reduces the need for the library to purchase as many copies, thereby saving taxpayers. According to the director, "We are using materials that are just sitting when we could use them most. This agreement just kind of makes sense."

⁴² Plans are underway for a third virtual branch at a community Nature Center. This location, in a different part of the community, will facilitate access by patrons who do not wish to drive into the central shopping square of Southlake where the main library is located. A fourth virtual branch at a corporate facility is in the planning phase.

Testimonial from Sabre executive:

I believe this joint partnership was the first of its kind in Texas and perhaps the U.S. We inform employees about the service in new hire orientation, and it is permanently on our employee intranet. The virtual library provides resources for employees' continuous learning and their families. The virtual library also provides a work-life balance service, because employees don't have to travel to the library, and serves our environmental sustainability efforts, saving fuel of many in lieu of the few staff who go back and forth from our building to the library. In addition, the physical "library" space is almost always in use, by employees and visitors thumbing through the magazines. Because the library has customized our magazine selection, the materials are a current resource for the technology and travel industry stories. We are very grateful to Kerry McGeath (Southlake Library Director) and his team for this fantastic service to Sabre!

*Barbra Anderson
Director Global Corporate Responsibility
Sabre Holdings
Southlake, Texas 76092*

Abilene Public Library

In 2011 the Abilene Public Library loaned 866,915 items to library patrons and conducted 2,488 programs attended by 46,656 library patrons. Many of these programs involved collaborations between the library and local businesses and/or the Chamber of Commerce. Several illustrative programs are:

- Workshops every three months about lawn care by a local landscaping company;
- Workshops on digital cameras and other new electronic equipment by Best Buy employees;
- A class on how to appraise antiques and collectibles;
- A class on designing a website;
- A class on making greeting cards; and
- A workshop about selling on eBay by the local Small Business Development Center.

Besides the training and informational classes listed above, the library supports both residents and local businesses through hosting a variety of networking opportunities and participating in business exhibitions.

Alvarado Public Library

Alvarado is a small community south of Dallas-Fort Worth on Interstate Highway 35. Traditionally reliant on agriculture and to a lesser extent, oil and gas, increasingly the community is becoming a residence for commuting to Fort Worth (24 miles) and Dallas (48 miles). There is one large employer of galvanized pipes which is expanding, and there have been numerous new lodging and fast food restaurants built in the past three years.

Despite having fewer than 4,000 residents in 2010, the community's library serves a much larger geographical area containing 17,600 people, and has nearly 5,000 cardholders. Out of town residents may obtain a full-service library membership for \$10 per year (\$15 a year per family) or a computer use card for only \$1.50, which covers the cost of making a laminated card. The library's computers are a major attraction:

- Several library patrons use the library's public access computers to fulfill their customers' orders for Avon or Scentsy products. (Please see comments below.) One library user buys and sells automobiles via online auctions. Another user conducts real estate business, and one local resident uses the public access computers to sell her artwork.
- With help from library staff, residents create and update their resumes, do homework, file applications for government programs, and take home-schooling and university exams (with library staff as a proctor);
- A color printer is used extensively by residents to create promotional materials for their services and for personal activities such as birthday invitations.

The library "houses" the Alvarado Chamber of Commerce, answers its telephone, and regularly hosts its meetings along with those of the Lions Club, Girl Scouts, and the CLIO Club. The library director, Leanna Cowan, is currently secretary for the Chamber of Commerce and is a past president.

If I did not have access to the web at the library, I would have to travel to Cleburne or Burleson to use the library there. I do my Avon orders online at the library and it really helps me out. I have no printer at home and the library prints out my orders and invoices.

*Alvarado Library Patron
Avon Representative
Alvarado, Texas*

If I did not have access to the web at the library, I would have to travel to Cleburne or Burleson to use the library there. I do my Avon orders online at the library and it really helps me out. I have no printer at home and the library prints out my orders and invoices.

Aubrey Area Library

Aubrey is a small town (pop. 2,595 in the 2010 census) located just north of the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area. In 2011 the Aubrey Area Library loaned 27,727 items to library patrons. Besides providing traditional circulation services, the library assists patrons with job applications, allows businesses to hold meetings, and proctors exams. In addition, local realtors and other professionals who are required to maintain certain levels of continuing education often use library resources to maintain their licenses. One of its unique services is basic graphic design software and printing supplies. Many restaurants as well as other companies use these resources, including librarian assistance, to create flyers and business cards.

Bremond Public Library

Bremond, a small community in central east Texas, had a population of 929 as of 2010. The Bremond Public Library is closely connected to the local economy, receiving donations and grants from many of the large energy companies in the area, assisting unemployed residents with their resumes and job applications, and advertising the services of many of the local retail stores and independent contractors. The library keeps a particularly nice oak display case for business cards and brochures on the circulation desk so that library visitors will see the materials as they enter and leave the library. Library Director Theresa Crawford explained that this helps build the community by highlighting “restaurants, boutiques, people that do lawn work, painting, handymen, and things like that.” The glass front door also acts as a display window for any special events. As part of a small rural town, the library is dedicated to developing and maintaining connections with both the local units of large energy corporations and the small businesses owned and operated by local residents.

Cleveland

Austin Memorial Library

Cleveland, in east Texas, had a population of 7,675 as of the 2010 census. The community’s public library, Austin Memorial Library, loaned 102,016 items to patrons and provided 129 programs that were attended by 4,555 library patrons in 2011.

The library assists patrons with resources for copying and faxing, as well as projectors and screens that individuals and organizations are able to use for presentations. One local sales representative comes in to the library regularly to fax order forms to her corporate headquarters.

In addition, the library offers local businesses and organizations a corporate library card. This allows businesses to check out equipment and books rather than relying on a single employee. Those with current corporate library accounts include a Ford car dealership, several grocery stores, a law firm, a number of churches, and the nearby state correctional facility. The law firm uses the library for detailed research projects, while the correctional facility, operated by the for-profit GEO Group, uses library resources to support continuing education for its employees.

Dilley Public Library

Located on Interstate Highway 35 approximately 70 miles southwest of San Antonio, Dilley has a population of about 3,600. The library was started in 1996 by the Friends of the Dilley Library on a budget of \$9,000. In 1998/1999 the Friends transferred the library to the City of Dilley, and a library director was hired. Currently the library has roughly 10,000 books, an annual budget of \$70,000, and 500 visitors monthly. To supplement its local funding, the library director regularly applies for grant funds, and has been successful in obtaining resources from the Strake, Bush, and Tocker foundations.

Known historically for its watermelons, Dilley's economy increasingly is dependent on the petroleum industry. The regional drilling and construction boom has drawn new residents to the area, primarily to the ten RV parks, and also benefited town residents. This has increased library activity as well. A number of major companies (HESS, Chesapeake, Strike, JC Fordale, MO-Vac, Eastex, Padco Inc., FTS, etc.) have hired truck drivers recently. These drivers are required to have the Hazmat Materials Endorsement License, a license for drivers of commercial trucks hauling hazardous materials. The Dilley library frequently is used by applicants to practice for, and to take, this test on one of the facility's 18 computers.

The library also is regularly used by local employees of Tex Best and Exxon companies when they need to take a Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission test. Periodically individuals take tests at the library to obtain healthcare certification. Dilley residents who want to work at the local Dollar General store come to the library for a job application. According to the librarian, a few ranchers and ten or so local business owners use the library each week to print or fax documents when their printers or fax machines are down or just to make copies of applications, forms, etc. for their businesses. These include oil business people such as supervisors, head men, secretaries, and workers.

The library's fax equipment is used frequently by Dilley's older residents for purposes involving social security, food programs, and health care paperwork. One part of the library is a small Caregiver Resource Center, an area devoted to pamphlets and information primarily from the Alamo Area Agency on Aging in San Antonio.

As the central facility in this small town, the library frequently is used by patrons and organizations for meetings and for space to conduct interviews. The local U.S. Army recruiter interviews students at the library, as does the local education spe-

A number of major companies (HESS, Chesapeake, Strike, JC Fordale, MO-Vac, Eastex, Padco Inc., FTS, etc.) have hired truck drivers recently. These drivers are required to have the Hazmat Materials Endorsement License, a license for drivers of commercial trucks hauling hazardous materials. The Dilley library frequently is used by applicants to practice for, and to take, this test on one of the facility's 18 computers.

As the central facility in this small town, the library frequently is used by patrons and organizations for meetings and for space to conduct interviews.

cialist who assists students with college admission and financial aid applications. The library is also used by the Brown Hearing Center and the local Good Samaritan case manager who meets with half-day students on-site. Library staff help residents download tax forms and also provide one-on-one computer instructions when time permits.

Because of the library's physical condition and increased service demands by permanent and temporary patrons, there is serious discussion about renovation and expansion of the existing facility. While no final decisions or detailed plans have been approved as of September 2012, the discussion is beyond the preliminary stage.

Duncanville Public Library

Duncanville is a suburb of Dallas, Texas, with a population of 38,524 as of the 2010 census. In 2011 the Duncanville Public Library loaned 130,296 items to library patrons and hosted 346 programs which were attended by 8,477 library patrons.

The library works hard to assist the many local entrepreneurs according to Carla Wolf-Bryan, Library Director. The primary assistance comes "...through our collection of books—our business plan books and our how-to-get-started and ideas-for-starting-a-small-business books. We have a fantastic collection of books and a great librarian who does a wonderful job of collection development. We do our best to help businesses get started."

The public library also provides a wide assortment of courses for small businesses and local entrepreneurs, working in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and the Best Southwest Business Development Center (BSBDC). The Duncanville Public Library has had an active partnership with the Chamber of Commerce for nearly 30 years, while the BSBDC relationship has existed for more than 15 years.

Some of the courses provided in conjunction with BSBDC are small business orientation, how to get grants, how to start a business in Duncanville, and how to get financing. In the course "Small Business Orientation [...], they're going to provide a free overview of Operation JumpStart, a practical hands-on development program designed to help entrepreneurs test the feasibility of their business ideas." The courses are tailored to the patrons' needs. While the librarians are always available to help where they can, there is not enough staff to provide each patron with the one-on-one assistance that they might need. So in a lot of situations, "We try to get

them started, get them to the website, get them to where they need to go. And then when they say they need further help, we refer them to other sources.”

In addition to the courses and the book collection, the library has a large number of business-related periodicals and digital databases that serve as important resources for small businesses.

Fort Stockton Public Library

The Fort Stockton Library is pilot testing a program to teach basic computer skills to patrons. Training is being provided individually, twice a week in one-hour training sessions. The individual session approach was chosen rather than a classroom setting because each of the individuals has a very different background and quite different goals.

Each individual receives basic introductions to email, Internet, Windows, a word processing program, a presentation program, and a social media site. Then more specialized training is provided on those areas of greatest interest for each patron. One person has received specialized instruction on transferring photographs from a digital camera to a software program and editing and printing them. Another patron is finishing a master’s degree and has needed help with blogging and using discussion boards and school sites listing assignments. A third patron, a retired teacher whose children live outside the county, is learning to use email and a social media site. A retired couple with thousands of photographs from their extensive travels is learning about SD cards and how to obtain hard copy photographs at a local merchant. A number of individuals were most interested in learning basic computer skills, obtaining and using an email account, and conducting Internet searches. At the end of the tutoring sessions, each patron/trainee completes two evaluation forms assessing their skill level and other training characteristics.

The tutoring/training is provided by a library employee with a Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) degree. The tutoring takes about one-fourth of her time presently. (Other duties include technical support on hardware and software, advice and support for obtaining licenses, handling instances of computer viruses and malicious actions by a small number of library patrons, and working with donated computers. Based on an initial group of 10 patrons who have completed training, the Library Director, Elva Valadez, has decided the tutoring will be continued in the same format. She believes the training program “... was successful with happy patrons and achievements in learning.”

The Fort Stockton library supports several small business owners who use the library regularly. One patron has a small landscape design business. A second was a stockbroker for 24 years and then an oil and gas leasing representative who now utilizes Fort Stockton library services for private investment activities.

The Fort Stockton library supports several small business owners who use the library regularly. One patron has a small landscape design business. A second was a stockbroker for 24 years and then an oil and gas leasing representative who now utilizes Fort Stockton library services for private investment activities. He has access to several newspapers at the library and investigates and monitors potential stocks/companies using the library's Internet access. He performs stock transactions online as well. While he has Internet access at his residence, he prefers the combination of the library's services. Recently he has begun the personalized computer tutoring class mentioned previously.



Because of the local economic situation, the Fort Stockton library is not planning any grand future initiatives. The largest local employer has reduced their workforce, and there are rumors that another reduction may occur soon.

Frisco Public Library

Frisco had a population of 33,714 as of the 2000 census and a population of 116,989 as of the 2010 census. Mirroring the rapid increase in population has been an explosive increase in library use. In 2011 the Frisco Public Library loaned 1,266,866 items, answered 145,223 reference questions, and provided 697 programs attended by 53,305 library patrons.

The Frisco library provides businesses, entrepreneurs, and job seekers with a wide array of resources, including assistance with job applications, space for business meetings, and access to governmental and financial databases. Library patrons make good use of these resources. One library patron said:

Whatever your task or reason to visit the facility, you will be surprised by the availability of resources and the quality of accessible services. One can literally start and manage a business here. I know, because I did it. I also know of others who have been successful starting their dream business here too.

Another library patron spoke about the assistance the library gave her with her resume:

[It] really made me feel good about my resume for the first time. [...] I am working now, which I attribute to the success of my resume.

The library also provides an extensive children’s section with activities and presentations designed to attract children to reading and assist with early literacy. A married couple wrote that,

I know [our four children] would not read as much if we couldn’t get these great books from the library because I wouldn’t spend the money to buy that many books. They each check out about 10 books and 1 movie about every two weeks... I love it! [...] We love our library and are so grateful that our tax dollars go to make our library a comfortable, useful and fun place for our family.

I know [our four children] would not read as much if we couldn’t get these great books from the library because I wouldn’t spend the money to buy that many books. They each check out about 10 books and 1 movie about every two weeks... I love it! [...] We love our library and are so grateful that our tax dollars go to make our library a comfortable, useful and fun place for our family.

Gaines County Library

This library is part of a government complex that includes a museum and a county agency. The physical facilities are comprised of a small central library and one very small (less than 900 sq. feet) satellite library in the northern part of the county. Very recently, discussions have occurred about the possibility of expanding the library, and the satellite facility as well.⁴³

The Gaines County Library offers a small business database (Gale Cengage) that is used regularly by the Chamber of Commerce and Seminole Economic Development Corporation.

Another library resource used by local businesses is a large selection of Texas legal forms. This database has 77 main categories of forms available from which library patrons may choose.

The library offers Internet access through computer terminals and wireless, with Wi-Fi offered a few hours before and after normal library hours. Wi-Fi is available in the parking lot.

⁴³ Gaines County Commissioners Court is proceeding in its informational gathering stage about presenting voters with several bond elections in November 2013. One would be for a new facility in Seminole that would house the library along with space for senior citizens, MHMR, and the museum. A second bond election would decide if a new building should be constructed in Seagraves to house the branch library, Justice of the Peace, law enforcement, the county tax assessor-collector, and senior citizens.

Partnerships have been established with a number of local businesses. Walmart periodically offers the library \$25 gift cards to be used for purchasing needs not covered in the budget. The local Lion's Club has responded to grant requests, as did HESS Oil, the largest local private employer that provided resources for a Summer Reading program not covered in the library's budget.

Very recently, the library has started a Friends of the Library group. A future focus will be on attracting more teens, from the ages of 12-18. According to Library Director Jane Bering, they have been extremely successful in building children's programs. Children's programs expanded from 12 programs in 2006 with 240 kids attending to 230 programs in 2011 with 6,684 kids attending. Another future focus will be devising innovative programs involving both seniors and teens.

Groesbeck

Maffett Memorial Library

Proctor exams for
real-estate and
insurance training

This relatively poor community with fewer than 5,000 residents according to the 2010 census, situated approximately 40 miles east of Waco, opened its library in June 1976 in its City Hall. Mr. Harold Maffett donated half a city block for a library and, with support from the Chamber of Commerce and many local citizens, the current library building was opened in 1981. Activities offered include Internet-capable computers and Wi-Fi access; computer classes; adult literacy tutoring; resources for public and home schooled students; assistance with online employment applications; and printer, copier, laminating, scanning, and fax services.

In recent years, the Maffett Memorial Library, funded mostly by the City of Groesbeck and Limestone County, with additional support from the newly formed Friends of the Library:

Provides regular
Internet access to
several chicken
farmers who live in
the county.

- Helped a new, small businessman, who has an expanding business, with immigration forms;
- Assisted two local residents to obtain nursing certificates who otherwise would not have been able to stay in the community—neither had a personal computer or home Internet access;
- Proctor exams for real-estate and insurance training; and
- Provides regular Internet access to several chicken farmers who live in the county.

The library also distributes tax forms to local residents. In the most recent year, 3,000 tax forms were distributed from an automated magazine rack donated by a local workforce development center that was closed. (The library also received some used furniture from the workforce center.)

Also the Maffett Library provided assistance to Texas residents who fled from Hurricanes Ike and Katrina. Texans and Louisianans fleeing the coast were told to utilize local libraries for respite, communication with loved ones, to check email and pay bills online. Because of Groesbeck's unique central location on Highway 164 between Interstate Highways 35 and 45, it served 504 dislocated mobile residents.

Job-related and educational programs have been important at the library because of residents' interests and needs. Patrons have been able to take beginner and advanced computer classes, job search and resume classes, and access the Learning Express Library. The latter is an online website with over 800 online courses, tests, and e-books to help patrons with all aspects of finding a job, resume preparation, career licensing and certification, workplace and academic skills improvement, as well as tests and preparation for SAT, ACT, Advanced Placement and CLEP, GED, Recursos para Hispanohablantes, and U.S. citizenship.

According to the library director, the Maffett Memorial Library has seen substantial growth in recent years. In 2009 the library served over 15,000 patrons, with patron computer usage over 4,500.⁴⁴ In 2011 the library served 17,000 patrons, and in 6 months of 2012 served 9,500 patrons with computer access for 5,120. An increasing number of library patrons are job commuters and visitors who utilize the library Wi-Fi access while having a safe, comfortable place to check their email or update their mileage logs and charts.

Also the Maffett Library provided assistance to Texas residents who fled from Hurricanes Ike and Katrina. Texans and Louisianans fleeing the coast were told to utilize local libraries for respite, communication with loved ones, to check email and pay bills online. Because of Groesbeck's unique central location on Highway 164 between Interstate Highways 35 and 45, it served 504 dislocated mobile residents.



⁴⁴ All data provided by the Maffett Library Director in an on-site interview conducted August 3, 2012.

Some early steps have been taken to renovate and expand the existing 3,800-square-foot facility. Nothing has been approved or is certain as of September 2012. The city council has approved publication of a notice to issue certificates of obligation and will be holding two public hearings. A decision may be made in fall 2012 to authorize issuance of the certificates. Initial plans are to add approximately 2,000 square feet, attain ADA compliance and renovate and replace certain items such as the library's single pane windows, which are currently taped closed with dowel rods for security. If the renovation and expansion occur, there would be a new children's section, more computer space, and an additional teen area, which the library director believes are critical needs in this rural area.

Gunter Library and Museum

Gunter is a small town in north Texas, with a population of 1,498 as of the 2010 census. The Gunter Library and Museum is located in a retail strip mall along with a donut shop and an Italian restaurant. The Library and Museum is operated by a dedicated group of volunteers intent on assisting in the community's future economic growth. The Friends of the Gunter Library and Museum partner with the Gunter Economic Development Council and the Gunter Area Chamber of Commerce to encourage prospective businesses and families to locate in the community and to support those that already are located there. The library is a Neighborhood Resource Center and provides free Wi-Fi access, not only at the library but also in the neighboring businesses to benefit their patrons. The facility also houses a popular small collection of historical items relating to the community and surrounding area.

Jacksboro

Gladys Johnson Ritchie Public Library

Jacksboro, a city in north Texas, had a population of 4,511, according to the 2010 census. In 2011 the Gladys Johnson Ritchie Public Library in Jacksboro loaned 23,971 items to library patrons and sponsored 64 programs attended by 2,064 library patrons. This library has been particularly successful as an incubator for small programs, hosting and growing them until they are beyond the scope of the library and can sustain themselves elsewhere. When a small GED class sponsored by the Education Service Center was slated to be canceled due to lack of students, Library Director Lanora Joslin took over as teacher and held the classes

in the library conference room. Over the course of three months, the class grew from three students to 18, and the Education Service Center agreed to continue the class. Similarly, in 2009 the Chamber of Commerce had only two or three attendees for their monthly meetings. The library began to host the meetings and provided inexpensive lunches. The Chamber of Commerce meetings were held at the library until their regular attendance outgrew the library's 25-person capacity meeting room. While the meetings have since been moved to a different site, the library is still an active sponsor, and the Chamber of Commerce continues to grow.

The library assists individuals as well as organizations in expanding their abilities. With the recent economic recession, the library is assisting many local residents with job applications. Often, Joslin recounts, these are "people who haven't changed jobs, who've worked 25 years, and suddenly lost their job and they have to apply for a new one." These job seekers often have no experience with computers. Now Joslin says, "almost everybody requires online applications for jobs."

Jasper Public Library

Jasper, in east Texas, had a population of 7,590 as of the 2010 census. In 2011 the Jasper Public Library loaned patrons 54,521 items and provided 29 programs attended by 819 patrons. The library is an important resource to the community as well as a central meeting place, as it is part of the only shopping hub for a 15-mile radius. Given the sizable number of area commuters, the library is frequently used as office space when people are in town. Library Director Denise Milton estimates that between 15 and 20 people settle in to work on their computers at the library each day. Access to an inexpensive copy machine is the most highly used resource in the library, with patrons making copies of both business documents and other materials.

The library was originally founded by the Woman's Civic Club in 1936. It has since been transitioned into a city department, but the Woman's Civic Club continues to provide volunteer and financial support. The library also has a close working relationship with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to support the many local residents who grow, bale, and sell hay. Another partner of the library is The Arboretum, an organization that creates gardens, greenhouses, and butterfly houses for educational purposes on the library grounds.

The library is a well-used educational resource not just for young people, but also for adults taking continuing education. One service the library provides is exam

With a recent change in law, a local tow truck driver also had to complete continuing education certification online.

According to the library director, this posed a particular challenge because the driver had never used a computer before.

proctoring for online courses. Also, a number of local real estate agents fulfill their continuing education requirements at the library. With a recent change in law, a local tow truck driver also had to complete continuing education certification online. According to the library director, this posed a particular challenge because the driver had never used a computer before.

Kinney County Public Library

Kinney County had a population of 3,598 in 2010 census. The Kinney County Public Library is located in Brackettville, a community of 1,688, located 125 miles west of San Antonio and 30 miles east of Del Rio. To meet the needs of this lower-income community, the library is expanding beyond the traditional role of a library. Two increasingly important services this library provides are meeting space for patrons and personalized reference services that support employment and social services.

The library maintains an annex building that serves many different kinds of organizations. To mention just a few, Library Director Sarah Terrazas said, “The Ground Water Board uses it, as do the city and the county, we have Alcoholics Anonymous, and groups from out of town such as the Community Council Center out of Del Rio. We work particularly closely with Southwest Texas Junior College, which sends down representatives to meet at the library to assist students with their registrations. Southwest reps do everything from here.” The annex includes both a screen for presentations and a small computer lab.

In addition to providing a space in which individuals and organizations can meet and work, the library often provides the work itself. They take volunteers both on a walk-in basis and scheduled community service. According to the director:

They come here and they do work here and they get the training to hopefully find a job. The volunteers gain experience working under a supervisor, doing regular indoor labor, and can gain a reference from the process. The other thing that we do is if we have a business that's looking for help, we post that for them. We go ahead and post that, we have people looking for work, they post what they're looking for, what their skills are, and we match them. We have people who come in and let them know, it's their responsibility to call them and interview, but we try to help them out that way.

The library has increased its employment assistance since the local Texas Workforce office closed, another is preparing to close, and the nearest alternative for employment assistance is 35 miles away.

In addition to helping match employers and potential employees, the library often provides referral services for various social services. “If there’s someone coming in needing help with medication, we do the research for them, looking up what’s available, what’s out there, what clinics, or resources, what agencies are out there, or what clinics, whether it be free or discount,” Sarah Terrazas said. Or, “Let’s say we have a veteran and he’s needing transportation. We contact the veteran’s program out of Del Rio. We find the resources for him, to get that transportation that he needs for his doctor’s appointment.”

As a hub for the entire community, the library had to go beyond checking out books, doing story hours, and providing computers, according to the director. That is why the library “...is doing a little bit of everything now.”

Kleberg County

Robert J. Kleberg Public Library

The Robert J. Kleberg Public Library is located in Kingsville, the county seat of Kleberg County, in south Texas and serves a population of 32,061 as of the 2010 census. In 2011 the Robert J. Kleberg Public Library loaned 45,420 items and provided 286 programs attended by 5,797 library patrons.

Knowing that the public library is the main public resource for advice and information on any given topic, H&R Block approached the Kleberg Public Library about a partnership. During tax season, every Saturday two to three H&R Block agents set up a small shop at the library to provide free tax consultation and advice to library patrons on a drop-in basis.

During tax season, every Saturday two to three H&R Block agents set up a small shop at the library to provide free tax consultation and advice to library patrons on a drop-in basis.

League City

Helen Hall Library

In addition, Library Director Jeanie Kunzinger noticed an increasing number of people coming to the library to perform job-related work as independent contractors. Some individuals are contractors of local companies, while others are contractors who work for multiple clients.

League City, on the Texas Gulf Coast, grew from a population of 45,444 in 2000 to 83,560 as of the 2010 census. The entire population is served by a single public library, the Helen Hall Library. While the community is generally a wealthy one, the combination of the recent recession with the large population increase has pushed Helen Hall Library to maximum capacity. In 2011 the library loaned 753,981 items and provided 638 programs attended by 30,193 library patrons. While many of the program attendees are youth, a growing number of them are adults who've been laid off due to space shuttle program cutbacks. These newly unemployed include both blue-collar and white-collar workers. Many laid off individuals have advanced degrees but need training in, and updating of, skills in modern technology and online media. The library has created a partnership with the Texas Workforce Solutions to provide programs for job-seekers and employees who want to further their careers.

In addition, Library Director Jeanie Kunzinger noticed an increasing number of people coming to the library to perform job-related work as independent contractors. Some individuals are contractors of local companies, while others are contractors who work for multiple clients. A third group of self-employed individuals has set up their own online businesses, buying and selling, and now use library computers to communicate with customers, wholesalers, and subcontractors. To meet the needs of some new patrons, the library has offered an array of classes, including:

- “Yahoo! Contributor Network tips: Make your writing work for you;”
- “Etsy and eBay: Make your crafts work for you;”
- “Web pages for freelancers: Make your skills work for you;”
- “Amazon Mechanical Turk Orientation;” and
- “Make surfing work for you.”

McCulloch County

The F.M. (Buck) Richards Memorial Library

The F.M. (Buck) Richards Memorial Library in Brady serves McCulloch County (population of 8,283 as of 2010 census) in central Texas. Library Director Ann Shuffler described how “this community has always been very supportive of the library.” There’s good reason for that support as the library has been vital to many local businesses. One of the largest employers is a sand mining corporation. They’re a large employer and pay a good wage, Shuffler said, but they don’t accept hardcopy job applications. Even though many of their jobs have no computer literacy requirement, it is still necessary to submit the job application online, and job applicants are often sent to the library to send in their applications. Similarly many of the county’s minimarts and restaurants rely on the library to assist their employees to obtain licenses with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission or food server certifications with the Texas Department of State Health Services. In addition some local cosmetologists take their continuing education courses at the library. Shuffler estimated that well over a hundred people a year are taking courses at the public library that are essential to their employment.

Memphis Public Library

Memphis is a small town (pop. 2,290 in the 2010 census) in the Texas Panhandle. In 2011 the Memphis Public Library loaned 4,682 items to library patrons, answered 1,243 reference questions, and hosted 163 programs attended by 636 library patrons. However, Library Director Jacquelyn Owens identified Internet access for job seekers, employees, and businesses as the most important service the library provides to the community. Ninety miles from any large town, the library’s Internet connection provides access most patrons could not otherwise obtain. Restaurant owners and nursing home employees, among others, use library computers to take online food safety courses and to apply for the licenses their jobs require. At least one small store uses the library’s Internet access to order new stock. The library is also a meeting place for local residents.

Nacogdoches Public Library

In 2011 the Nacogdoches Public Library loaned 153,799 items to library patrons, and provided 353 programs that were attended by 14,463 library patrons. In addition to these traditional services, the library works with both individuals and businesses to connect employers with potential employees and to train new employees.

The library provides the only computers available to the public in this community of approximately 33,000. Library Director Mercedes Franks described how the library worked with “one of the local window-manufacturing companies here. One day a week for a month, we had computer classes for free for their employees.” Many individuals also rely on the library’s computers. According to the director “... there are several people who can help themselves, but they don’t have a computer. We’re the only place in town that has computers for them to use.” The library also provides links on their website to useful resources for job-seekers who are comfortable online. For those library patrons who are not comfortable using a computer or the online job application process, librarians are available to help with creating resumes and helping patrons establish email accounts.

In addition to assistance for individuals applying for jobs, the library also provides assistance to owners, or would-be owners, of small businesses. The director recounted how “one person wanted to start a poultry plant [...] and he wanted to know the right shelter for the poultry. I found him the answer.” Another member of the library staff recently attended a luncheon hosted by the local Chamber of Commerce to highlight Hispanic-owned businesses in Nacogdoches.

The library provides a quiet place to meet for individuals and small groups, as well as exam proctoring services to both businesses and to individuals. They regularly work with the Texas Towing Association. “We are a site for the drivers to come in, and we proctor their exam.” The library has also partnered with the local legal aid office to place a kiosk in the library where patrons can complete and print legal documents.

New Braunfels Public Library

New Braunfels, in central Texas, had a population of 57,740 in the 2010 census. In 2011 the New Braunfels Public Library loaned 756,549 items and hosted 684 programs, attended by 15,084 library patrons.

Library Director Gretchen Pruett indicated that many patrons come to the library for business reasons and described three distinct types. One type is comprised of sales people and consultants, who come into the library for hours each day to file reports, conduct research online, make contacts, and print documents. A second type consists of tutors, who meet with students and conduct tutoring sessions, making use of both library space and resources. The third type consists of business people with home businesses who make use of the library as a way to be around other people and avoid isolation while still working.

Pruett estimated that 90 patrons use the library's Wi-Fi connection each week. Many of the patrons buy a cup of coffee and then settle in to work on their laptop computers for the day. To accommodate these regulars, the library has recently expanded their services to offer wireless printing and faxing services.

One New Braunfels Public Library patron is a financial planner for New York Life. This person has been using the New Braunfels Public Library for fifteen years and has no plans to stop. While he has a home computer, having access at the library has saved him a monthly Internet bill as well as the cost of specialty computer software and expensive reference materials. "Aside from the usual activities like checking out books and CDs," this patron said, "I go in and use the Internet and make phone calls. It's a quiet space away from the office."

One New Braunfels Public Library patron is a financial planner for New York Life. This person has been using the New Braunfels Public Library for fifteen years and has no plans to stop. While he has a home computer, having access at the library has saved him a monthly Internet bill as well as the cost of specialty computer software and expensive reference materials.

Newton County Public Library

Newton County in rural East Texas had a county population (2010 census) of 14,445 in 2010. The City of Newton, where the central library is located, had a population of 2,478, while Deweyville, the location of the branch library, had a population of 1,023. Both Deweyville and Newton County lost population from 2000 to 2010.

Ever since the main employer in the county, a lumber mill, closed some years back, jobs have been scarce. Sharon Long, Director of the Newton County Public Library, described how, "When the lumber mill here in Newton closed, it really hurt the economy. We are trying to find new and better ways to attract people to the area." Attracting businesses and creating jobs has taken two different approaches: (a) supporting local individuals in creating new businesses and helping existing businesses to expand; and (b) attracting outside businesses to the area.

The public library works both independently and in coordination with other groups to support both approaches. For small or start-up businesses, the public library is essential as it is the only public source in town for computers, fax machines, copiers, and printers. According to the director, “We absolutely are the only access that many people have. This is an economically deprived area, so consequently people do not have the money for computers or Internet access, and they rely on us to tend their business.” The absolute necessity of the libraries’ computers was specifically highlighted during the Hurricane Rita disaster, which left the area’s public libraries as the only organization in town that retained power and served as a hub for first responders.

In addition to supporting local small businesses, the library also supports groups that are attempting to attract established businesses into the area. “We [Newton County] have an economic development group that is trying to bring business into Newton. Recently a new Visitor Center has been built, and several new eating establishments have opened their doors. We are working with the Chamber of Commerce on a map of the area.”

The public library also helps many library patrons apply for jobs, helping them create resumes and complete online applications. By doing this, the library is also providing local employers with access to a higher quality applicant pool for their positions. Director Long: “We have a new Family Dollar store and applicants have to apply for those jobs online. That is just one company. Most all of the companies are doing that.”

Through the Newton County Chamber of Commerce, the public library cooperates with the Newton Area Business Association and a host of other organizations and businesses to create a shared pool of knowledge and resources. “For any new business that is coming to Newton, the Chamber of Commerce invites the owners or managers to come to the meeting and will introduce them. The Chamber hopes to make the public aware that a new business has come to town and tries to get a little bit of business thrown its way.”

The library is especially proud and supportive of local authors. “We have had authors come and present their books. ... Most recently, J. T. McMann just wrote his first book so we had him come to speak. He is a Newton boy and everyone was very excited about him having written his first book.” In his honor, the library held a luncheon. This event demonstrated the library’s unique spot as a lifelong learning and educational center for county residents, helping residents meet their personal, educational, and professional needs.

Director Long: “We have a new Family Dollar store and applicants have to apply for those jobs online. That is just one company. Most all of the companies are doing that.”

Olney Community Library and Arts Center

This library is a public library, arts center, and school library. It is a free-standing building on the edge of a central campus for all three schools, and serves both students and members of the public. Children are introduced to the library as students and continue using it as adults.

The library partners with many organizations and has key partnerships with the local Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Industry and Commerce, and the local newspaper, *The Olney Enterprise*, to support digitizing archival materials. Library Director Kathy Gilmore said “This project started when people came in to the chamber office to research who had owned some of the older buildings around town. They were sent to the library to gather that information, but we didn’t have very much to offer. We did have several boxes of old pictures and some local oral histories that had never been cataloged or made searchable for the public.” With support from the PEARL program (Promoting & Enhancing the Advancement of Rural Libraries) at the University of North Texas Department of Library and Information Sciences, this material is now more accessible to those researching the history and resources of Olney.

The library has a variety of other partnerships with schools, businesses, and non-profit organizations. Each year for instance, teachers assign projects to their students to research the town’s history. Lately construction on the Trinity Wind Farm brought many temporary managers and workers to Olney and to the library for business and recreational needs. In addition, the library serves as the meeting site for the police department, early voting, Veteran’s Administration appointments, and other community-wide events.

Managers from several local eateries and other small businesses use the library technology for their business needs. Nursing home directors rely on the library to provide books and movies for their patients. One local pastor even uses the special collection areas as his office to prepare his sermons uninterrupted.



The library works with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to provide resources for small business administration and to assist patrons with business plans. According to the director, SBDC staff offer programs and classes on how to start small businesses, and frequently refer clients to the city's librarians for help in developing a business plan.

The most important resources are in some ways the ones taken for granted the most. Director Gilmore explained that:

Of course job seekers come in and use the computers all the time, while continuing to focus on the more specialized and unique services provided to local businesses and entrepreneurs. Managers from several local eateries and other small businesses use the library technology for their business needs. Nursing home directors rely on the library to provide books and movies for their patients. One local pastor even uses the special collection areas as his office to prepare his sermons uninterrupted.

The library also displays art from local artists and craftsmen in two, three-month-long exhibits each year. According to the director, the last exhibit featured works by members of the Wichita Falls Art Association. This provides artists with free advertising and other residents with an additional way to enjoy both art and their community.

Due to the library's dual status as both a public library and a school library, it provides a large number of programs. In 2011 the library hosted 80 programs attended by 11,674 library patrons. These programs included weekly story times and class visits in its role as a school library as well as summer reading programs for children, youth, and adults in its role as a public library.

Plano Public Library

The Plano Public Library System, made up of one central library and four branch libraries, loaned 3,444,837 items to library patrons and hosted 2,533 programs attended by 101,076 library patrons in 2010.

Library Director Cathy Ziegler identified classes in computer usage as an important resource the library provides to this city of nearly 270,000. A variety of classes cater to a diverse population with different needs. A local information technology company, for instance, provides free computer courses, taught by their employees during working hours, to low-income, Spanish-speaking residents. These free courses included four twelve-week courses on basic computer topics ranging from hardware and Microsoft office suite to resume building. The library also partners with the University of Texas at Dallas to provide robotics classes to grade-school children.

The library works with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to provide resources for small business administration and to assist patrons with business plans. According to the director, SBDC staff offer programs and classes on how to start small businesses, and frequently refer clients to the city's librarians for help in developing a business plan.

The library also provides assistance to community residents seeking legal documents and forms for purchasing a home, filing taxes, writing wills, and other activities. Some documents and forms are online resources while others are physically housed in one of the library buildings.

Access to documents also includes licensing resources as some businesses and contract workers are required to maintain up-to-date licenses, which can only be applied for or renewed online. The director described how "One person who I helped was an electrician, but if you look at any of those trades—plumbers, electricians, irrigation workers, cosmetologists, air conditioning specialists—they do not require computer knowledge for the trade, but computer knowledge is needed to obtain and maintain the license to practice the trade."

Two other types of businesses frequent the library. The first, private investors, "come in and use Morning Star and Value Line, online and in print," according to Administrative Support Supervisor Maryanne Dunnivant. "A second group of business people come in and ask for data on population and trends. They use that information to research avenues for expansion."

In partnership with two local Dairy Queen restaurants and the Carriage Inn Retirement Community, the Bell-Whittington Public Library uses the mobile computer lab to offer computer classes at five different locations. These classes have been phenomenally successful, with 1,493 attendees over the course of nine months.

Portland

Bell-Whittington Public Library

Portland, a city on the Texas Gulf Coast, had a population of 15,099 as of the 2010 census. The public library, The Bell-Whittington Public Library, loaned 153,473 items to library patrons in 2011. While the library has only one building and no bookmobile, it does have a mobile computer lab. A 2012 Cooperation Grant from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, through the Library Services and Technology Act, has allowed Bell-Whittington Public Library and Ingleside Public Library to jointly invest in a mobile computer lab. In partnership with two local Dairy Queen restaurants and the Carriage Inn Retirement Community, the Bell-Whittington Public Library uses the mobile computer lab to offer computer classes at five different locations. These classes have been phenomenally successful,

Because the convenience store sells alcohol, all employees have to be licensed through the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. Many of those employees take the required training using library computers.

with 1,493 attendees over the course of nine months. The computer trainings at the retirement community have been successful enough that the community now provides Wi-Fi access for its residents. Additionally, the library provides one-on-one training for individuals at the library, scheduled classes to employees of private businesses, and the resources for distance learning courses in one of the library meeting rooms.

Ranger City Library

Ranger, a small town in north central Texas, had a population of 2,468 in 2010 according to census data. Library Director Diana McCullough said the library's Internet access is vital to local residents applying for local jobs, enhancing their skills, and obtaining or maintaining necessary certifications. As one example, McCullough cited the experience of a local employer who runs a large gas station and convenience store on the nearby interstate highway. Because the convenience store sells alcohol, all employees have to be licensed through the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. Many of those employees take the required training using library computers.

"The library patrons provide their own motivation, but the library provides the resources that make their success possible."

The library director also recounted the time when a local resident came to the library in a police uniform. He explained that he wanted to thank her and the library for being there for him. He had taken all of his classes and online training at the library and was now a police officer. McCullough emphasized that, "He's the one that showed up, he's the one who did the work. He's an older man, but he decided what he wanted and he got it. The library patrons provide their own motivation, but the library provides the resources that make their success possible."

Another major service the library provides is answering reference questions. Questions have ranged from how to remove a dilapidated house and who could be hired to run a bulldozer, to how to deal with a child custody dispute. City Hall staff frequently pass along questions to the library to answer. The library also is an active referral center for businesses and has assisted both a local city beautification non-profit and the city government with purchasing signs, facilitating the acquisition of 200 street signs for the Ranger Citizens Task Force and the acquisition of 24 stop-signs for the City Administrator.

Seven Points

Library at Cedar Creek Lake

Despite having a population of just 1,455 in 2010, the northeast Texas community of Seven Points and its Library at Cedar Creek Lake loaned 73,868 items to library patrons 2011 as well as provided 290 programs attended by 19,988 people. The library and the Chamber of Commerce have an agreement to advertise each other's programs while the library and WorkForce Solutions cosponsor training in resume building and host job fairs. In addition, the library has arranged with the Texas Workforce Center (TWC) for its mobile unit to come to the library on a regular basis. TWC counselors provide labor market information, access to unemployment benefits, and advice regarding job applications.

Watauga Public Library

Watauga, a community of approximately 24,000, is a Fort Worth suburb. In summer 2011 the public library created a "Spotlight" on its business collection, which pulled books and other business-oriented materials into a single location. New signage directs patrons to the collection.

As part of the new business focus, a series of flyers on business subjects was produced:

- Business Management Topics—Big Ideas, Brands, Conflict Management, Crisis Management, Management, Marketing, Magazines and Newspapers, Computer Resources at the Library, Resources of Other Libraries Available to You;
- *The Truth about Leadership* by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner with quotes by reviewers of the book;
- *Enchantment* by Guy Kawasaki with quotes by reviewers and other business titles on interpersonal relations (see nearby image);
- *Macrowikinomics* by Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams with quotes by reviewers and other business titles on innovation;

Many Whitewright residents have small side businesses to help them supplement their incomes, often selling or trading collectable items online. Due to their rural location, most residents find that home high-speed Internet is either unavailable or prohibitively expensive, so they use library computers.

There are no alternatives available for high-speed Internet access, and some patrons make a half-hour commute to the library.



In conjunction with Woodforest National Bank, the library has offered a financial education series on personal budgeting: “Finance for the Rest of Us.” This five-part program was presented once a month on Tuesdays from 12 to 2 p.m.

The library also has developed flyers on its business partnerships, computer job search classes, computer literacy classes, and its classes for GED testing conducted with the Fort Worth Adult Basic Education Office. In July 2012 the Friends of the Watauga Public Library received \$5,000 from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to support part of the library’s “Learning for Life” program, featuring ESL classes. The Friends of the Watauga Public Library also has a “Community Partners” program with Albertson’s.

Whitewright Public Library

The Whitewright Public Library loaned 25,546 items to library patrons in 2011. That is an average of 16 items per resident in this community of 1,604 in northeast Texas. Despite that extremely high circulation figure, the library director identified Internet access and job application assistance as the most important services the library provides to the community.

“At any given time, a dozen or so people are conducting business at the library,” Library Director Chris Ely estimated. Many Whitewright residents have small side businesses to help them supplement their incomes, often selling or trading collectable items online. Due to their rural location, most residents find that home high-speed Internet is either unavailable or prohibitively expensive, so they use library

computers. There are no alternatives available for high-speed Internet access, and some patrons make a half-hour commute to the library.

Local businesses also advertise their businesses and services by putting up flyers at the library, knowing that is a central gathering place for the community.

Wylie

Rita and Truett Smith Public Library

The Rita and Truett Smith Public Library has a history of business support. In 1970 Rita and Truett Smith, owners of a local bank, started the library in their downtown bank building. In 1985 the Smiths donated \$250,000 for a 6,500 square foot free-standing library, located on city park land. The Smiths were awarded the “Northeast Texas Library System Benefactor Award” for their support of libraries. A new 44,000 square foot library opened in March 2011. When the new library opened with no space constraints, a variety of new business services started.⁴⁵ Services for small businesses in the community were of particular interest.

The library created a Small Business Resource Center (the Center) with a \$20,000 donation from the Wylie Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). The WEDC donated funds for two computers, a color printer, software, books in print, books in downloadable audio format, a whiteboard, and a display for brochures. The Center offers the online service, “Small Business Reference Center,” with more than 450 full-text reference books and 400 full-text periodicals on starting a company, operations management, and sales. Another online resource is “Reference-USA,” a leading provider of business and consumer research. The city’s Planning Department uses this software and introduced it to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The City Manager’s Office also used it when creating a list of guests for the Municipal Complex Grand Opening ceremony. Business and Marketing planning software is also available, and the library teaches classes on using this software.

The Small Business Resource Center is promoted on the library website, in the local newspaper, *Wylie News*, and on the WEDC website. Funds to create marketing materials for the Center were made possible by an Impact Grant from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The library director believes that a professional product is needed to promote services at the Center.

⁴⁵ Wylie is located 25 miles northeast of Dallas and has a current population of 42,804. The city experienced 67% growth from 2000-2003 and 68% from 2003 to 2012. This growth continues to attract new businesses.

The library received a Broadband Technology Opportunities Grant to purchase 16 computers for its new lab, and funds for instructors. Classes offered include Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, Marketing for Small Business, Creating Business Plans, and Social Networking for Small Business. The library offered 98 classes and served 818 people from September 2011-May 2012.

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The library will continue to offer classes to assist small business owners in the upcoming fiscal year, October 2012-September 2013. With the Impact Grant noted above, the library is adding QuickBooks classes. In addition, librarians are now offering one-on-one assistance to potential and existing small business owners.

The library is also planning ways to partner with the Downtown Merchants Association. Increasingly the new library is attracting visitors from the surrounding cities. This provides an opportunity to promote Wylie's downtown businesses during special library programs such as the Summer Reading Club Kick-off Celebration.