



Library Services and Technology Act State Library of Louisiana



2003-2007 Evaluation

STATE LIBRARY OF LOUISIANA



**State Library of Louisiana
LSTA Plan 2003-2007
Evaluation**

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Section I: Introduction and Executive Summary

LSTA funding is crucial to fulfilling the essential service mission of libraries in Louisiana. The State Library of Louisiana relies on these funds to carry out the real demands of its public. Combined with the LSTA goals, the federal funding does more than facilitate service; it enables it. All of the LSTA funds are expended by the State Library on behalf of the public libraries for statewide initiatives such as databases, interlibrary loan and delivery service, summer reading programs, workshops and training, the annual book festival and similar essential programs.

This report will reveal that Louisiana libraries have embraced technology and the citizens are hungry for more. During this period, usage of public access computers increased, a broadband telecommunications network was installed and bandwidth greatly upgraded. Interlibrary loan continues to provide needed resources throughout the State. The next step on the telecommunications ladder will be for more public libraries to be able to offer end-user technology training to their public and to upgrade bandwidth again so that technology will not limit the services libraries can offer to their communities.

During this period, an intensive marketing effort was undertaken to promote the value of books, reading and libraries. The Louisiana Book Festival was introduced in 2002 and then won the John Cotton Dana Award in 2004. The Book Festival is chosen as the program for in-depth analysis in this report. The Summer Reading Program twice surpassed its goal of 100,000 participants and the State Library prepared for an introduced an emergent literacy program for libraries.

Due to the hurricanes of 2005, staff turnover at the State Library and a freeze on spending, travel and hiring, not all continuing education goals were met for the period. However, considerable improvements are seen in FY06-07 with a very enticing and demanding schedule of workshops planned.

Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (SBPH) entered a new phase with the installation of a digital recording studio that prepares us to create and distribute talking books on digital media when the new digital machines are distributed by the National Library Services in 2008. One Louisiana recording was accepted by NLS for national distribution, which is a testament to the technical quality of our recording studio.

Lastly, lessons learned include a recognition of the role of libraries in their communities in the event of a major disaster or crisis, the long road ahead in improving basic literacy skills among the population of Louisiana and the increased need for succession planning/preparation and leadership development among public library directors.

Section II: Goals

Goal 1: To maintain and enhance wherever possible the infrastructure of Internet and informational database access, so that a ratio of one workstation for every 2000 citizens is maintained; and so that every citizen in Louisiana has access to the Internet within 20 minutes of driving time from their home, and access to informational databases at their local libraries and through home or office computers.

Objectives

Progress Toward Objective/ Target

Objective 1: Maintain the 1/2000 ratio of Internet workstations as a benchmark; maintain the workstations in every public library building.

Surpassed Goal

The number of public access computers in public libraries increased by 23% from 2003 to 2005 (the latest year for which we have statistics.) Even with the destruction of 10% of our libraries by hurricanes in 2005, the number of computers continues to increase. In each year, Louisiana surpassed the national average of 2.55 PCs/5000 population.

One target of this time period was to conduct a user survey to ascertain what percentage of the population were aware of the Internet access and had used it. We were not able to conduct the survey due to the restraints imposed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita; however, the fact that FEMA told people to go to their local libraries to file forms indicates that knowledge of this service was fairly widespread; some libraries reported that their usage doubled immediately after the storms.

Objective 2: Insure support for telecommunications performance at minimally T1 and 64Kb speeds.

Met this Goal.

Speeds range from 64Kb to 12meg. All libraries have dedicated Internet access. The State Library continues to provide support to the public libraries' technical staff, to assist with Erate-filings and to monitor bandwidth usage and needs. During and immediately after the hurricanes, the public libraries were often the only source of free Internet access in many parishes. It was to the public libraries that evacuees flocked to search for loved ones, file insurance and FEMA applications and to just find a

piece of “normal” in their lives. The libraries were not only places to get information, but provided stability and continuity in the lives of the displaced.

In FY05-06, in partnership with the public libraries, we installed broadband Internet to every public library headquarters, upgrading speeds when needed. This partnership allowed public libraries to upgrade the connectivity at their branches as necessary. Louisiana is unique in that it has offered dedicated (non-dial-up) Internet access at every public library facility since 1998. This was the first major upgrade since that time.

We are planning another major upgrade in FY07-08 due to increased bandwidth requirements. We are finding that libraries want to continue to be able to offer a range of services to their patrons and the general consensus among Louisiana libraries is that they do not want the technology to limit what they can offer to their users.

The overall benefit of offering Internet access at public libraries is that it narrows the “digital divide” between those who have ready access to and know how to use technology and those who do not. Louisiana, at 45.7%, remains below the national average of 56.5% for the percentage of households with computers; the same divide is seen if we look at Louisiana with only 40.2% of households having Internet access, compared to 50.5% at the national level (*NTIA*, 2001 – latest data available.) For these “have-nots”, free Internet access at the public library is their only means of accessing online research, school work, government services, email and entertainment. The State of Louisiana is moving very quickly into the realm of e-business and e-government. Those citizens found on the wrong side of the digital divide may miss out on basic government services. Public library Internet access is often the only way these citizens can obtain needed services.

Objective 3: Maintain subscriptions to information databases.

Surpassed this goal.

The State Library continues to provide a selection of

statewide databases accessible from any public library, home or office. Unfortunately, funding for the databases has not increased over this period. In early 2005, we brought online WebFeat as the statewide federated search engine for the databases. Usage increased exponentially after this time. The subject access (as opposed to vendor listings) approach made individual databases and newspapers more visible and usage increased.

The target was at least 300,000 database searches annually. Over the period of this report, we exceeded the target by 25%, with more than 400,000 searches conducted each year on the statewide databases. The number of uses would be even higher if we were to include the databases subscribed to by individual libraries.

In addition to the benefits that access to the databases provides, we also experience the “cost-avoidance” benefit as well. In 2005, we conducted a survey of our database vendors and found that, if each library had subscribed to these databases individually, the cost would have been over \$10,000,000 – that is a 10-to-1 cost savings.

Objective 4: Maintain a state-of-the-art interlibrary loan system in which 120,000 loans are made annually and items are delivered in 48 hours.

Met this goal.

We maintain two distinct ILL systems:

- LoanShark for sharing among public libraries, and
- OCLC, for borrowing from the academics or from out-of-state.

Over this time period, the LoanShark activity increased by 6%, despite the fact that a large portion of our libraries were closed for a significant amount of time following the storms. The number of public library requests generally hovers about 105,000 per year. This does not include the additional 15,000 requests that are made annually via OCLC. As part of this service, the State Library uses LSTA funds to provide a statewide van delivery service for interlibrary loan materials to 39 public and academic libraries. In 2006, 88,504 items were shipped via the delivery service just among the

public libraries. Had these items been sent via regular mail, the cost would have been \$139,000 to the public libraries. Many of these are small, under-funded libraries that would not be able to pay the postage. (These numbers do not include the borrowing and sharing among the academic libraries.)

According to the 2005 annual statistical report, public libraries in Louisiana average 2.67 items per capita in their collections. This is well below the Louisiana Library Association enhanced standard of 3.5. Thus, it is only through ILL that public libraries can even begin to meet the needs of their constituents. Historically, when budgets are tight and the economy poor, interlibrary lending and borrowing increases significantly.

Goal 2: To increase library awareness and usage through a diverse marketing campaign of reading promotions, including Center for the Book events and databases, summer reading campaigns, and intergenerational literacy efforts. Increase library card registration from the current forty-three percent rate (approximately 1.9 million) to fifty percent (approximately 2.25 million) by 2008. Reach more special customers, defined as those who are visually and hearing impaired.

Objectives

Progress Toward Objective/ Target

Objective 1. Conduct an annual Louisiana Book Festival, gathering authors, publishers, storytellers, and related book and literacy advocates for a celebration of these things.

Met this goal (except for 2005)

The State Library of Louisiana hosted the annual Louisiana Book Festival in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2006. There was no Festival in 2005 due to the hurricanes and so many authors being displaced.

In 2006, the most recent Festival attracted 12,5000 participants and almost 200 authors and exhibitors which represents a 25% increase.

Pre-conference workshops (called “wordshops”) provided would-be writers with access to the thoughts and advice of successful writers and speakers in small group settings. Each Festival also featured storytellers, arts & crafts, music and, of course, Louisiana food. The Festivals could not be accomplished without the 500+ volunteers each year.

The outcome of the Festivals is increased visibility for the role of and importance of reading and writing and books. There is a more in-depth analysis in Section III of this report.

Objective 2. Design and develop the State Library website to promote the Louisiana Center for the Book’s mission of promoting books, reading, literacy, and

Made progress toward this goal

In June of 2004, the State Library launched its new website with sections for citizens, libraries, state government and the visually-impaired. The new site is aesthetically much more attractive and begins to overcome the departmental-approach to content development.

libraries by the end of 2003.

Integral to the new website was a special section for the Center for the Book with the associated information about the Book Festival. We estimate that the site gets about 7000 hits per year. Total contributions to the Louisiana Library Foundation for the Book Festival have more than tripled since 2002.

Within 8 hours of staff being able to return to the State Library building after the 2005 hurricanes, we posted a website of resources for recovery that provided needed links to shelters, insurance and FEMA information, finding lost loved ones, etc. The daily update of the “Status of Louisiana Libraries” page was used repeatedly by libraries and library associations around the nation in order to ascertain the damage at each library. In fact, we continue to get inquiries about the information posted.

In 2006, the State Library launched an extranet for the public libraries. Library –specific passwords allow us to mount workshop information, E-rate instructions, statistics, links to training materials, ad hoc surveys, etc. that would not be appropriate to the general public. Although we have not officially tracked usage, we know that usage of the Extranet has increased greatly and it has become a very popular and easy way to share information.

Objective 3. Expand and promote Louisiana Author database, called the Louisiana Writers Directory, by 200 authors.

Made progress toward this goal.

The Louisiana Writer’s Directory came online at the same time as the new website in 2004. Since that time over 200 entries have been added. However a subsequent software glitch prevented continued updating. Plans are now being discussed to turn this site into an online interactive map in cooperation with the special collections library at Louisiana State University. This would replicate the same type of map currently available in Pennsylvania.

Objective 4. Continue reading promotions: the statewide Summer

Surpassed this goal in 2004 and 2005

The statewide summer reading program surpassed its goals in the years of 2004 and 2005 with 104,299 and

***Reading Program;
Young Reader's
Choice Award, each
year with an annual
goal of 100,000
participants (SRP
registrants plus
LYRC ballots).***

107,669 participants respectively. Each year a library consultant at the State Library works with an advisory committee of public library children's staff to choose a theme, design graphics and plan activities. This is the most important children's program in public libraries. Because of the chaos and so many families being displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, participation in the summer of 2006 only reached 84,000. However, we do expect the number so improve in 2007, although a number of libraries remain closed and in many areas, the population has not returned yet.

Begun in the year 2000, the Young Readers' Choice Award Program has attracted a total of almost 100,000 total readers since its inception. Between 2004 and 2007, participation increased by 26 percent. This is a popular program coordinated by the State Library in conjunction with the schools. The State Library publishes a list of books each year for grades 3-5 and for 6-8. Children are encouraged to read books from this list and then vote for their favorites. An award is presented to the winning books' authors later in the year at the Book Festival.

***Objective 5. Develop
partnerships with
statewide groups to
promote early
childhood reading
and library usage.***

Made progress toward this goal.

An early childhood literacy specialist works full time at the State Library to implement emergent literacy programs. Examples of the programs include:

Nursery Rhymes Name Song – This project teaches children to spell their names by putting the letters to the tune of known nursery rhymes. It is being piloted in over 400 libraries, schools and child care facilities.

Let's Read – This is a series of workshops for public library staff that teaches them how to read aloud to young children. A later piece of the program will be to put together multi-format kits built around a theme of interest to children of a specified age.

Big Books Collection – This is a new endeavor intended to encourage public libraries to borrow or purchase Big Books for their story hours. A significant collection is being created for both

interlibrary loan purposes and for the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. These books are being added to the State Library's online catalog so that they will be available for interlibrary loan. A future project will provide a Big Big-Book Database on the State Library website.

Ideally, we would like to report that literacy in Louisiana has improved over the 5-year period. However, a comparison of 4th graders in Spring '02 with Spring '06 shows that the total number of children reading at the advanced and mastery level on the LEAP test has actually decreased (20% versus 19%). As a State, Louisiana has much to do to encourage education, reading and literacy.

Goal 3: To train public library staff in all technological processes to improve library service to library customers statewide. Maintain the network of continuing education that provides public library staff with knowledge and skills in computer operations and search procedures on the Internet and online databases.

Objectives

Progress Toward Objective/ Target

Objective 1. Training in reference and ILL services will take place annually, usually about four workshops per year for the front line staff of public libraries throughout Louisiana.

Surpassed this goal.

For each year, from 03 through 06, the State Library more than met this goal with 13, 10, 10 and 6 workshops offered respectively. In addition, in late 2006, a concerted effort was made to offer workshops regionally so that more public library staff could attend.

Although Louisiana is often near the bottom of various lists ranking services and educational attainment, reference services are always ranked in the top 15 of the nation in terms of questions asked. The fact that this remains at this level year-after-year indicates that patrons are getting the answers they need and continue to return for more service. Interlibrary loan has continued to grow with workshops being offered quarterly and on-demand. The fact that the volume of interlibrary loan requests did not significantly decrease, even though a substantial portion of our libraries were closed after the hurricanes, indicates that this service is meeting a need.

Objective 2. Training in Internet navigation and searching, database searching, and other web-related workshops will take place at a rate of 40 workshops annually.

Made progress toward this goal.

In FY02-03, eighty-four workshops on these topics were offered; this was made possible by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grants. In subsequent years, many fewer technology workshops were offered as other topics took precedence. However, in the first half of FY06-07, thanks to another Gates grant, additional technology training was offered throughout the state with 11 sessions being held for 118 attendees. With help from EBSCO during the Fall of 2006, 33 vendor training sessions in the use of statewide databases was attended by 437 public library staff. Finally, an additional 29 workshops have been scheduled for the Spring of 2007; over half of these are technology-related. Three of these workshops are

train-the-trainer sessions designed to enable public library staff to be able to offer workshops for their general public.

With simple applications training often costing individuals upwards of \$150 per session, these library-specific training sessions are the only way that libraries can keep their staff up-to-date on technology. The fact that the training is geared toward library applications makes it even more valuable. Once more public libraries have computer labs and are able to offer end-user training, the value of the library and its free technology and resources will become even more important to its communities.

Objective 3. Other workshops for administrators and children's services shall continue at the rate of 10 workshops annually.

Surpassed this goal.

From FY02-03 through FY05-06, 21, 23, 43, and 18 workshops were offered throughout the state for administrators and children's staff. These are, by far, the most popular of all the workshops. The summer reading program kick-off workshops often have more than 75 attendees each.

The semi-annual administrators' conferences generally have about 120 attendees. The training provided at these conferences keeps public library directors current on changing laws and legislation, technology and library trends; they also offer a chance for networking.

Total workshop offerings

Made progress toward this goal.

Providing continuing education and training for public library staff is one of the most important activities undertaken by the State Library. There are many library directors in the state that do not have the MLS degree and these administrators and their Boards of Trustees rely heavily on the training and consulting provided at the State level. Number of workshop offerings declined from 2004 through 2006 due to the State Library's restricted travel budget, staff turnover and the state-wide freeze on hiring after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. However, in the first half of FY06-07, 73 workshops were presented for 1852 participants.

In all, since FY02-03, 8561 public library staff have participated in 306 workshops on a variety of subjects.

Need 4. To provide special services to visually and hearing impaired citizens of Louisiana.

Objectives

Progress Toward Objective/ Target

Objective 1: Add 500 registrants annually to the services of SBPH.

Surpassed this goal.

Between 2003 and 2006, SBPH registered 785, 944, 874, and 769 new users respectively. In Louisiana, SBPH serves patrons throughout the state; we do not have sub-regional libraries. The overall number of active registrants has increased by 6%; current number of active users is 7142. This is remarkable in light of the high level of attrition of this elderly population. For the first six months after the hurricanes in 2005, staff spent much time tracking down displaced patrons and / or helping them to obtain services in other states.

Often we receive comments such as the following, which shows the value of this service:

Dear SBPH,
I am returning this tape player, since my father, ____, the person to whom the player was loaned, is deceased. He truly enjoyed reading, and this service enabled him to continue this activity, even with his blindness and physical limitations. It was a real blessing for him to be able to enjoy reading, and for a time, to be able to forget the difficulties that life and old age had brought. He always looked forward to the arrival of the book tapes with great anticipation, to see if there were any interesting new books or any "old friends" to enjoy again. Thank you for many years of service. He spent many hours each day and night reading, and it really made a difference in the quality of his life."
[Letter received 6/21/04]

Objective 2. Employ new technologies to improve readers' advisory service and circulation procedures.

Met this goal.

Over the past five years, Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (SBPH) has used technology to improve service to patrons. The

Keystone Library Automation System(KLAS) allows SBPH to keep extensive requests lists for patrons, and to select books based on patrons' expressed preferences and dislikes. KLAS also simplifies the collection of statistics and maintaining records on the extensive collection of tapes.

Although Hurricane Katrina displaced many SBPH patrons, some temporarily and some permanently, SBPH patron numbers have rebounded because the service receives hundreds of patron referrals every year from doctors, occupational and physical therapists, and librarians.

Objective 3. Expand and improve Louisiana Voices program by producing 20 works annually for visually impaired readers.

Surpassed this goal.

Since its inception in 2002, the Louisiana Voices recording studio has completed recording 183 titles. This represents the number of unique Louisiana titles that are now available to the blind and physically handicapped in Louisiana (and nation-wide) that would not have been available otherwise. There are only two full-time staff assigned to this activity. Reading, producing and quality control are all done by volunteers.

In 2005, a digital recording booth was purchased and installed in addition to the existing analog booth. This has allowed us to begin digitally recording books in preparation for the NLS move in 2008 to providing digital readers.

In 2006, one of our Louisiana recordings, *If I Only had a Horn*, a book about Louis Armstrong, was accepted by NLS for distribution nationally. This was a great honor and speaks well of the technical quality of our productions.

Objective 4. Develop media resources in Audio Visual Resource Center by 500 items annually to supplement the needs of local public libraries for non-print resources,

Surpassed this goal

In the past 5 years, 8370 items have been added to the AV collection. This is one of the most heavily used collections within the State Library. Not only do we provide these items to State Library

particularly Louisiana related music and culture.

patrons, but we also are one of the few libraries that will provide AV materials via interlibrary loan. Substantial numbers of AV items are loaned via ILL to supplement the collections of the public libraries.

In December of 2006, the State Library took the next logical step of moving the AV collection to the first floor to make it more visible and accessible to walk-in patrons.

At this time, a concerted effort is being made to acquire all audio-visual materials related to the hurricanes in 2005, as this represents the history of our State.

Section III: Results of In-depth Evaluations – Annual Louisiana Book Festival

Need

The LSTA five-year plan identified a lack of understanding of the importance of literacy and reading throughout the state of Louisiana. Overcoming this cultural indifference is not easy nor is the effect of any program immediate. It will take many years to show progress in this area. During the past 5-year period, the State Library has undertaken several programs to attempt to instill in the populace a respect for literacy and reading. Examples include:

- The annual summer reading program
- Adding a full-time reading and literacy specialist to the staff of the State Library
- The Young Readers' Choice Awards Program
- The Louisiana Center for the Book, which administers the annual Louisiana Book Festival, a Mini-Grant Program supporting public presentations by authors, and other literacy initiatives.

We would like to be able to report an increase in children reading at or above grade level in the 4th grade, as measured on the LEAP test. However, such is not the case.

At the same time, there is a need throughout the state to increase awareness of libraries and what they can offer. Public libraries are uniquely positioned to be able to promote reading on an intergenerational basis. No other agency provides services on a daily basis for citizens from birth through old age. All public libraries provide programs for every generation.

Goals

To increase library awareness and usage through a diverse marketing campaign of reading promotions, including Center for the Book events and databases, summer reading campaigns and intergenerational literacy efforts.

Strategy

It became readily apparent that reading must be seen by Louisianans as desirable, exciting and fun. The strategy was to create a daylong event celebrating reading, authors, and Louisiana's literary heritage. In so doing, libraries and books would become more visible and attractive places to visit.

Over the period, four Louisiana Book Festivals were held; no festival was held in 2005 due to the hurricanes. In every measurement, efforts were rewarded with increased attendance, popularity and a commitment on the part of the volunteers and participants to come back next year.

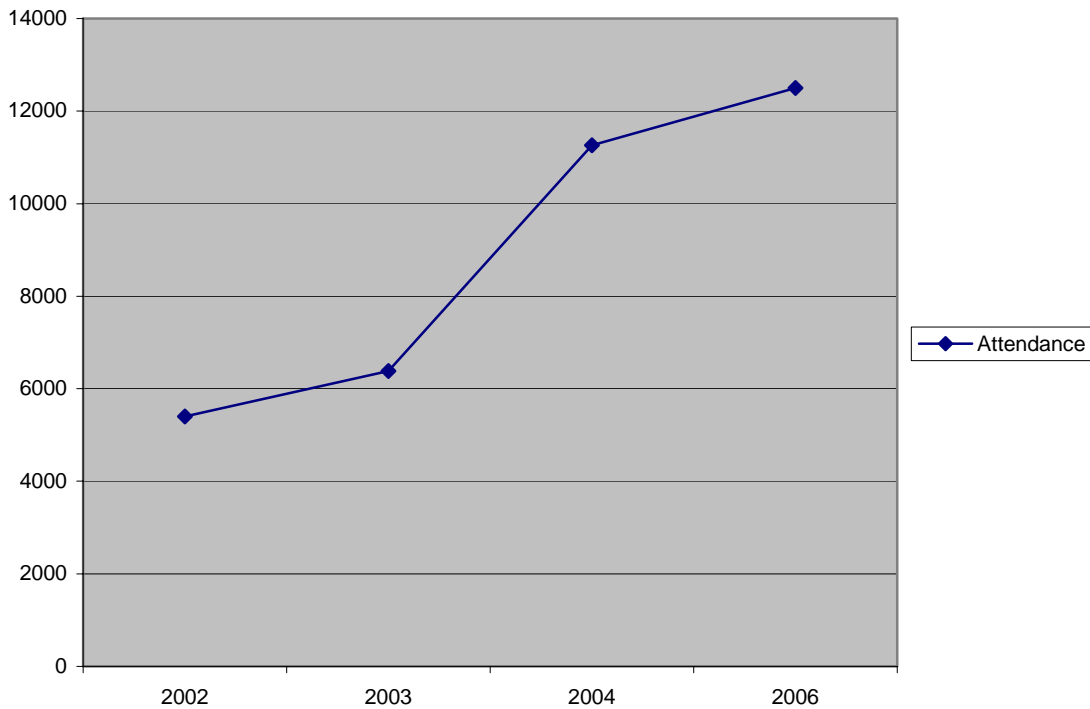
Results

If results of LBF are measured by attendance alone, then the entire event is a roaring success, as seen in the following Chart 1. This shows an increase of 131% between 2002 and 2006. Follow-up interviews and participant evaluations after the 2006 event showed that:

“The festival fills a real need in Baton Rouge; in its first year it attracted an enthusiastic audience, and through excellent planning and implementation, organizers have held onto and expanded that audience.”

Chart 1

LBF Attendance



The Louisiana Book Festival is committed to increasing the appreciation for books and reading among children and parents. In its inaugural year, less than 10% of those attending were children. Those who did come, participated in activities at the Young Readers Pavilion and told their friends. The word spread. The Pavilion presents a variety of fun, book-related activities and performances and has enjoyed increased attendance every year. Thus, by 2006, 29% of festival attendees were children, representing a three-fold increase over 4 years. Chart 2 shows that the greatest increase in attendance has been among children.

Chart 2

Percentage of Children & Adult Attendees

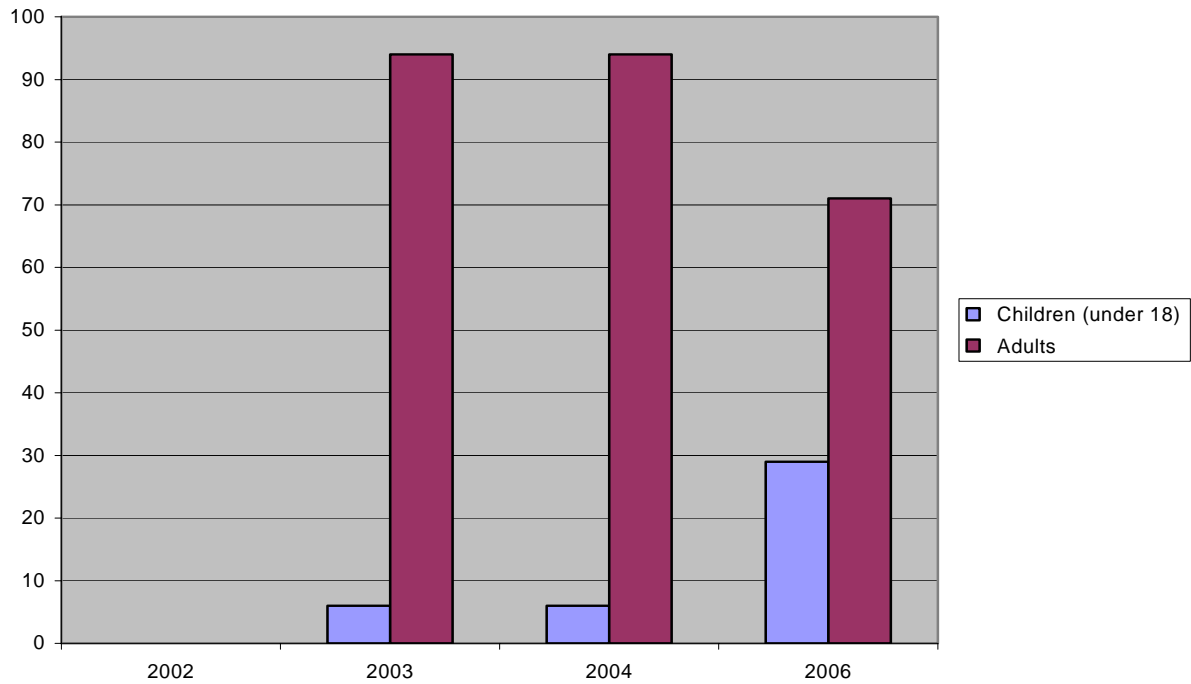
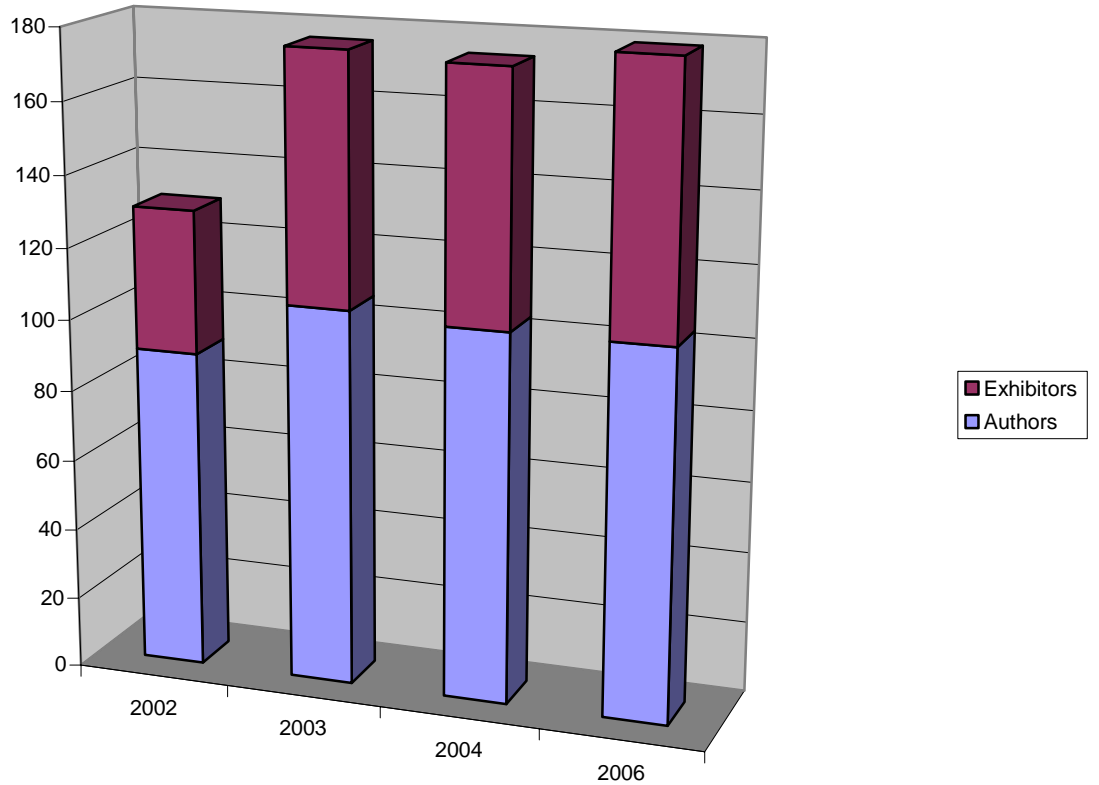


Chart 3 shows that the number of poets, authors and exhibitors has doubled since 2002 with a 16% increase in the number of authors and a 88% increase in exhibitors. The Festival is limited in size only by the number of rooms available for events and the energy of the volunteers!

Chart 3

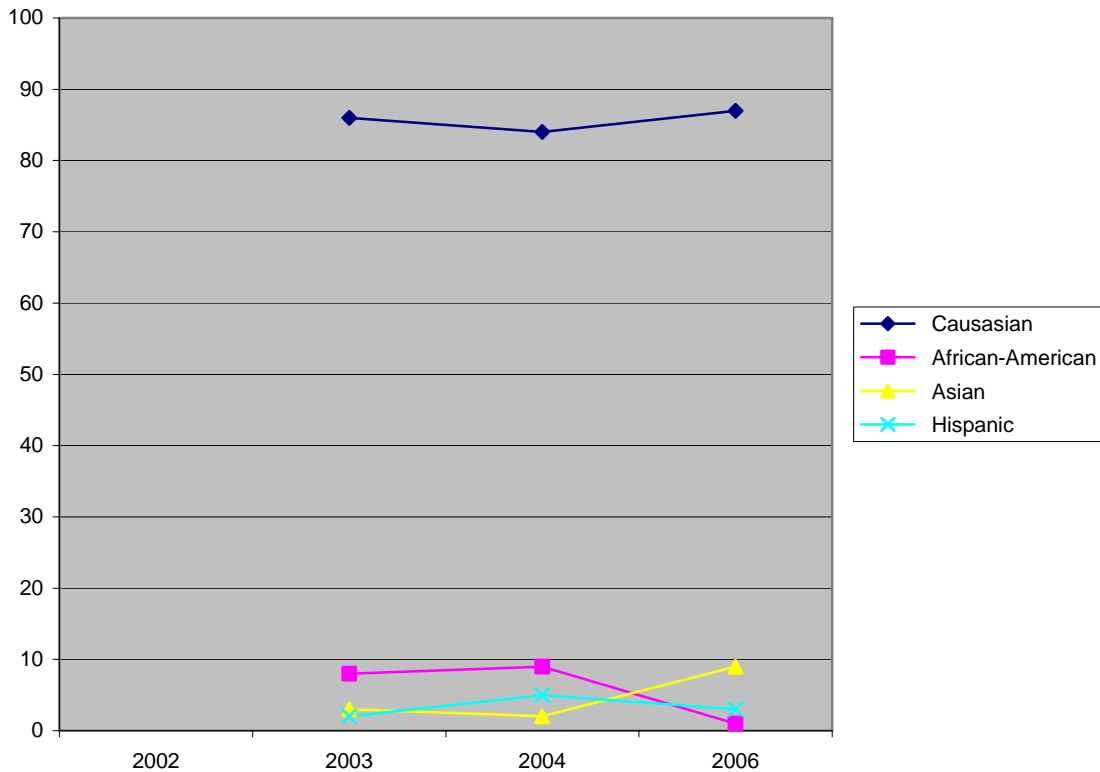
LBF Authors & Exhibitors



Another goal of the Book Festival was to attract a more diverse audience. Chart 4 shows that the Festival has not achieved this. By far, the majority of attendees are Caucasian, college-educated professionals between the ages of 30 and 60. There was some increase in Asian and Latino participation; no official increase among the African-American population. However, staff report that at least half of the attendees at the Children's Pavilion which offers crafts and face-painting are typically African-American children brought to the Festival in busses. Perhaps these groups were not in the sample of the attendees surveyed.

Chart 4

Diversity of Audience -- Percentage of Total Audience



Conclusions

The Louisiana Book Festival's first-steps toward awakening Louisiana's citizens to the value of books and reading and Louisiana's publishing accomplishment have been successful. Attendance and financial contributions have increased with each successive year. It was estimated that the economic impact of the Festival doubled between 2004 and 2006, injecting \$356,000 and \$784,210 respectively into the local economy. In 2004, the Louisiana Book Festival won the John Cotton Dana Award, which recognizes and honors outstanding achievement in library public relations and is the most prestigious of all library awards in the public relations field.

In attracting non-readers, the Festival does not show the same prodigious results. This is one area that will need to be addressed in future events. It is quite likely that the first step would be to examine the media channels and promotional events.

Resources

- Annual reports from each Book Festival
- Summary reports of questionnaires and evaluation forms

Section IV: Efforts Toward Outcomes Based Evaluation

Our parent agency, the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism (CRT), initiated a new formula for budgeting for the FY06-07 fiscal year. CRT created a *Roadmap for Change* and a plan for the *Rebirth of Louisiana* after the hurricanes of 2005. The new method, Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO), was based on the book by David Osborne, *The Price of Government*.

Using the BFO process, every program within the State Library had to be costed out separately, put out for “bid” and then staff had to bid to offer services and commit to achieving certain outcomes for the requested money. It was quite an interesting process – to arrive at a cost and a benefit of each program, rather than each department, since many programs cross over multiple departments. It made us truly define what we do in terms of benefit to the users and to attach a dollar figure to that benefit. We are in the midst of our first year of a budget that was created with the BFO process. We are tracking many expenditures by program, rather than department. While this has necessitated some changes in our accounting and purchasing procedures, we expect the data that will come out of the process will be invaluable. We have already submitted our second budget, that for FY07-08, using the BFO process.

Because of the BFO process we have been able to re-define our performance indicators; the entire State of Louisiana uses performance-based budgeting and we report progress on key indicators that are attached to our funding. For the FY06-07 year we have new indicators which we feel are more important and meaningful than the previous indicators which measured collection sizes and number of titles added. The following are some of our new indicators:

- a. Number of database searches statewide
- b. Number of items loaned among public libraries
- c. Number of items loaned from the State Library collection
- d. Number of workshops and attendance
- e. Number of libraries receiving site visits and consultations (as opposed to number of site visits conducted)
- f. Annual satisfaction survey of public library directors – percent satisfied or very satisfied with State Library services
- g. Number of children registered for Summer Reading Program
- h. Number of participants in Young Readers’ Choice Program
- i. Number of items circulated from Blind and Physically Handicapped
- j. Number of patrons using public access computers at public libraries

Although, in many cases we are still reporting outputs, rather than outcomes, we feel that some of these, especially the annual satisfaction survey, are moving us in that direction.

Section V: Lessons Learned

We have learned that public libraries are more recognized as valuable assets to their communities. It was to the public libraries that citizens flocked after the hurricanes in 2005 to find loved ones on the Internet, email home, file for FEMA and insurance claims, and just to find a sense of “normal” even if only for awhile. In the wake of the hurricanes, libraries opened their doors to their communities and even welcomed people from other parishes. Libraries were often the only safe haven and provided the only free Internet access. At the same time, it was very disheartening to have one of our libraries receive a letter from FEMA stating that libraries are not an “essential function”. We will need to continue to work to raise the visibility of libraries so that for the next storm, they will be considered essential and eligible for FEMA temporary facilities and aid and recognized for the services they provide.

Another lesson learned from the devastating hurricanes is that most current library disaster plans are woefully inadequate. The State Library and some other public libraries had new, up-to-date disaster plans, but nothing prepared us for the total breakdown in all communications media, the dispersion of library staff and the loss of basic governmental infrastructure. It will be many years before Louisiana and its neighbors rebuild. Future disaster plans must provide for continuance of business operations, not something found in most library disaster plans. The latter usually deal with drying out wet collections, etc. The State Library is working on a plan that will allow us to offer basic services from a location further north, in the event that the State Library building itself is destroyed or made uninhabitable for an extended period of time.

Many states offer sub-grants using LSTA funds. Because of poverty and the absence of MLS librarians in many public libraries at the local level, Louisiana uses all LSTA funds for statewide programs. In retrospect, looking at the past 18 months in the wake of the hurricanes, it is clear that this is the best avenue for Louisiana. When individual libraries were destroyed or faltering, we were able to continue van delivery of interlibrary loan materials, keep the databases up and Internet turned on for virtually all parishes. Had the funds been diluted by sub-grants, there is the chance much less would have been possible. By using LSTA funds at the statewide level for programs, we get a much greater return on the investment.

The in-depth analysis of the Book Festival revealed that we have made little progress in attracting non-readers and in diversifying the audience although attendance numbers have grown greatly. We will need to do better in this area in the future. We know that we have very appealing and professional promotional materials; we need to re-examine how and to whom these are distributed. In 2007, we will partner with public transportation to get our target audience to the Festival.

Unfortunately, we know that literacy in Louisiana has not improved measurably in the past 5 years. This is why we are targeting preschoolers for our new literacy efforts. We feel that we can have more impact in a room with 30 children than in offering one-on-one

literacy classes for adults. We get a greater return on our investment if we can catch the children early, before school age, so that they can be ready to learn by age 5. Although this will take years to show progress, it is really the only way possible.

Within the next LSTA grant period, a significant number of public library directors will retire. We do not see a cadre of competent and prepared staff which can take their places. Future continuing education activities will be built around management training and leadership development in much the same way that this past five years has been devoted to technology training.

Section VI: Evaluation Process

In FY04-05, a major strategic planning effort was undertaken with all stakeholders. Six focus groups were conducted with various end-user categories were held at the State Library. These were followed by eight regional planning meetings with public library directors and trustees. Finally, three planning sessions were conducted with staff. Out of this came a new overall strategic plan which we hoped would replace the State-mandated plan. The Plan was approved by our parent agency, the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, with an anticipated implementation date of July 2005. The new plan complimented the LSTA 5-year plan as well.

In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck and three weeks later, Hurricane Rita. For the remainder of that fiscal year, the State Library was under an executive order freezing all discretionary spending, travel and hiring. It was not until the fall of 2006, that the State Library began to implement the plan.

Because of the information gleaned during the earlier meetings with stakeholders and the disruption caused by the hurricanes, the decision was made to effectively evaluate the LSTA 5-year plan using pre-existing statistics and reports. The State Library operates inside a highly accountable environment – through published data required by statute (the annual statistical report in particular), through additional data provided quarterly to the legislature, through reports to the various advisory committees, and through occasional surveys like that conducted for the LSTA Plan. In addition, because the State Library already participates in the Louisiana Performance Accountability System (LAPAS) and the CRT BFO process, we have clearly defined goals and outcomes.

Diane Brown, Deputy State Librarian, compiled this report at a cost of approximately \$3500, chiefly staff time. Questions or comments can be addressed to:

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- LSTA Advisory Committee

- Database Advisory Committee

- Interlibrary Loan Advisory Committee

- Summer Reading Program Committee

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