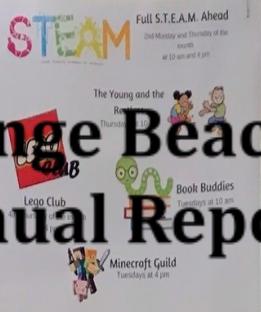


The Orange Beach Public Library Annual Report for 2021



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Superb. Staffing quality unspeakable for the customer satisfaction. I had forgotten how it feels to get exceptional service. Lifetime customer satisfaction is what it is All about.
-Stretch

This library may be a little library but it is well maintained and the staff is very helpful. They are not overly concerned with a little noise. I love to study here on my off time, it's been a very stress free library. Amazing staff for sure! -Christa J



This library is a treasure! From their policies, to their excellent service, to the location, the reading room and the outdoor setting! OMGosh, My husband and I LOVE it so! -Agnes A

A lovely and quaint library with a computer lab and a view. What more could a vacationing family ask for? We rode our bikes to the waterfront park and library. One of the things we love most about Orange Beach!
-Tori N

This is a real jewel of a library. One can sit outside in the rear of the building and get a water view. The staff is very helpful. -John O



Financial Statement for Orange Beach Public Library

Operating Revenue \$676,602

City \$659,577
State \$7,028
Library \$9,905

Operating Expenditures \$663,806

Personnel \$501,806
Materials (Physical and Electronic) \$85,627
Programming \$10,939
Other \$65,343

Annual Statistics for Orange Beach Public Library

Visitors 99,715
Circulation 116,320
Programs Offered 257
Program Attendance 5,988
OB Collection Size 46,959
Baldwin County Collection Size 514,156
Digital Collection 331,806
WiFi Users 29,158
Registered Borrowers 10,047

Executive Summary From Meagan Bing, Library Director

This Annual Report Executive Summary for fiscal year 2021 provides an essential overview of the Orange Beach Public Library's financial and statistical information along with highlights of the year. The Library continued to launch educational, informational, and entertaining activities to our community while also developing long-range plans for a future of hope and anticipation. Our teams continued to provide essential services and resources to our community.

The Orange Beach Public Library's mission is to provide our community free and open access to the trained professional personnel, information, materials, and services they need for life-long learning, civic engagement, entertainment, and the exchange of ideas.

The Orange Beach Public Library (OBPL) serves the citizens of Orange Beach (census population 8,095) and our surrounding area. Our new census numbers indicate a 32 percent increase in our local population. It is a member of the Baldwin County Library Cooperative and serves a seasonal population of "snowbirds" who are heavy library users.

Over 1,948 Orange Beach Public Library cards were used between October 1, 2020 and the end of September 2021 (The State Fiscal Year). This is a decrease from our 2020 numbers of 2,780. There are several factors that come into play for this decrease. These factors include: database update error, COVID-19, and Hurricane Sally.

The largest factor, we believe, stems from a mass user update error performed on our database during the early part of 2020.

Normally, all cards issued to patrons are set to expire two years from the day of issuance. If those cards remain inactive for a year after expiration they will be completely removed from the system. These deleted patrons would then have to reapply for a new card, and would be counted as a new patron by our statistics. The reason for the deletions is to ensure that our servers remain unfettered by superfluous data, and that we have the most up-to-date information on patrons for our systems and statistics. However, it came to our attention that our database administrators set all active cards to expire in April 2022. This caused many of our patrons who were near deletion to have the lifespan of their cards elongated. The lesser factors, COVID-19 and Hurricane Sally, we believe had some effect on these numbers but with no hard data this would only be speculation on our part based on our own interaction with our patrons.

HOWEVER, while fewer cards were used those that were really utilized the library materials! Circulation increased by 14.9% from FY2020. And this number does not take into account the e-resource check-outs that do not count toward card activity and therefore are not reflected in that number. With a full-time resident population of around 8,100, this activity level indicates the value our visitors place on the library.

These numbers include some county residents and people who work in but do not live within the Orange Beach city limits. We treat our greater area as "locals," as the library deems our workforce and regular visitors from nearby locations in Baldwin County to be part of our primary service

community. Over 605 new cards were created in our 2021 Fiscal year. Some of these are replacements for long-lost cards due to deleted accounts, but most of these are patrons joining the library for the very first time.

The rapid change in technology, local events, and world events demands that the library constantly evaluates the infrastructure we provide. We must position ourselves to respond quickly to changes in order to meet our community's increasing needs. The Orange Beach Public Library is committed to innovative planning and creative action in our organization, profession, and community.

The Orange Beach Public Library continues lending devices. We have acquired three new Kindle e-readers to purchase materials and provide instant access to patrons. As you can imagine, this has proven to be quite popular. These devices are checked out to the patron for two weeks and are based on availability. The advantages of this program are the elimination of wait times, savings on postage and staff time, as well as owning the item digitally in perpetuity. Like all interlibrary loans, we limit them to 10 per-year-per-patron. We have continued our unlimited 4G hotspots with 31 active units at a time. This service costs around \$17,605 annually, and we are expecting the costs to be on par for the 2022 for the program. Some of our hotspots are also losing the ability to hold battery charge or have aged out of their useful lifespan. We plan on working with T-mobile to replace ALL hotspots in the coming year so that our equipment is up-to-date.

We continue to participate in the Baldwin County Library Cooperative to provide an

expanded collection to our patrons. Five days a week, a courier runs between Baldwin County libraries. Most books ordered for delivery to Orange Beach are received the same or the next day. Our collection is in high demand, and for every book we borrow from the Cooperative, we lend out 1.6. Our collection development positively impacts the entire county.

Community support is a fundamental part of the public library mission. We continue to provide computers and resources like Cypress Resume, a service that helps create quality documents based on work experience, for our job seekers. We continue to inform patrons about the Alabama Public Library Service's Learning Express Library. Learning Express has career and college test materials, life-long learning tools, and is FREE with a public library card. Also, we like to remind learners that Homework Alabama isn't just for kids; Career Alabama is hosted on the same site and has resume help, citizenship help, ESL, reading comprehension, GED tutoring, and basic computer literacy tutors. Language learners can also access our Rosetta Stone database. In addition to our Camellia Net e-resource program, we added access to an amazing resource, HOOPLA Digital Libraries, that gives readers instant access to comics, books, audio books, movies, and tv series. We continue providing notary public services at the library, ensuring that a notary is available on all weekend shifts barring vacations or absences due to illness.

In the previous year, our in-house programming was greatly impacted due to COVID-19. Our previous children's librarian had adapted by doing virtual storytimes, virtual summer reading, and take home activity bags. Our new children's librarian,

Kaylen Bradberry, was able to begin implementing in-person programming during our 2021 Summer Reading Program and subsequently began to roll out more varied programs for children of all ages and several outreach initiatives.

The OBPL 2021 Summer Reading programming was generously funded by the Orange Beach Friends of the Library. This year the friends provided us with \$5500 to cover the expenses of the program. This covered the cost for the programs, speakers, summer reading finale party, and also the prizes for our young readers.

This year the theme for summer reading across the nation was "Tails and Tales". The theme was a celebration of all aspects of animals, pets and animal stories. This theme provided an easy segue into the ever popular live animal presentations in which two were held over the summer.

This was a record breaking year with 249 sign-ups, 422 program participants, and 3,792 books, 41 audiobooks, 232 children's movies, and 144 teen books checked out.

Kaylen also overhauled our methods for tracking participation. In prior years we have used everything from daily log sheets to tickets. This year Kaylen used an application called Readerzone that proved to be both practical and attractive in its implementation and use. The application was available for download on both IOS and Android devices, and the simple yet intuitive design made it easily accessible to all users. The use of this application made it possible for the library to track engagement with summer readers in real time. The ease of use, real time tracking, and simple but intuitive design further helped to aid in gamifying the program for

participants and encourage them to pursue a summer of reading.

The 2021 Summer Reading program was dressed in a mix of both new and old accoutrements, so that it might attract returning as well as new participants. The weekly take home crafts first introduced in early 2020 remained by popular demand. Kaylen also created a very popular character hide & seek game. Every week a single stuffed animal would be selected and hidden in the children's room. Once the character had been located the seeker could retrieve a small prize from a pirate chest, and then they would be responsible for hiding the stuffed animal for the next seeker. Summer reading also saw the return of in-person storytime.

Our reference librarian, Jason Neel, has several key programs that fall under his purview. Jason is responsible for heading several of our programs including our book-a-librarian service, proctor service, Minecraft, Makerspace, and technology lectures.

All of these services have continued to perform well, no doubt due to Jason's friendly demeanor and hard work ethic. It is, however, worth noting the significant growth of our book-a-librarian program. The program has experienced a 105% increase in utilization since 2019 with a total of 242 patrons assisted in this service year. This program has a wide variety of applications for its users, but ultimately it provides one-on-one assistance to patrons with whatever is desired (technology, reference, general support). The service is offered in-person to those needing personalized support, and the patron needs simply to book an appointment. The book-a-librarian program has experienced year-over-year growth over the last three

years, and has demonstrated to us the value that the community places on the program. There is an evident need and desire in our community for obtaining personalized assistance from professional researchers, and those with significant experience with technology. We anticipate further growth for this service in the future.

Under normal circumstances the winter months are among our busiest throughout the year. However, during the 2021 winter season COVID was still a very prevalent concern so our Adult Services Librarian, Angie Wolf, came up with some passive programming ideas that would still provide entertainment in a manner that would make people feel most comfortable. One was Birdie Bags, a weekly craft bag that patrons could grab and complete on their own time. Some examples of this include needle point necklaces, macrame, vision boards, diamond paintings, scratch painting and so much more.

Also during the 2021 Winter Season, OBPL ran a Winter Reading Raffle where patrons

could submit book reviews for a raffle ticket submission for one of two prizes; a crockpot gift basket or a fire pit gift basket. We received a decent amount of participation considering our door count for the winter months was down considerably from what a “normal” snowbird season is. For example, 2019 January and February door count was 33,367 compared to 2021’s 17,961.

We continue to experience a time of unique opportunity to explore new delivery models and to adapt to our new environment. We will continue to prioritize quality and value while also bringing innovation to Orange Beach. We are listening to our valued patrons and staff and are excelling at problem solving and expanding capacity. The many successes, along with wonderful community engagement, reflects the Library’s vision and forward focus as we continue to deliver exceptional resources and services to our community

