

RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

2000 ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL

Monday, November 26, 2001

Statistical Highlights for 2000

- 139,136 active library card users
- 1,436,444 visits to Richmond library branches
- 224,860 research questions answered

Areas of Significant Increase

- 2,994,733 books, magazines, videos and CDs borrowed
(6.3 % **system-wide increase** over 1999)
- 52,188 children and adults attended 1,697 library programs
(21.45 % **increase** over 1999)
- 177,528 hours of Internet time used by library customers
(22.67 % **increase** over 1999)
- 4,462,111 requests to the Library's award-winning interactive Web site
(71.15 % **increase** over 1999)

***During the Last Decade
Richmond Citizens Have Made
Their Library
the Most Heavily Used
Public Facility***

***Dramatic Growth in
Richmond Library Use***

	1990	2000	Increase
Active Card Holders	78,240	139,136	77%
Reference Questions	117,294	224,860	91%
Program Attendance	17,044	52,188	206%
Gate Count	870,254	1,436,444	65%
Items Loaned	1,451,564	2,994,733	106%

***The Library Provides Excellent
Levels of Service in an Extremely
Cost Efficient Manner***

- Richmond Library is recognized as a world leader in providing *high levels of service at low cost*
- Cities from across North America and Australia continue come to Richmond to tour the library, attend workshops by library staff and learn from Richmond's example

***The Library is Now a Victim of
Its Own Success***

- Very heavy use of the Brighthouse Branch has resulted in a deterioration of its physical appearance
- Brighthouse can no longer meet the heavy demand placed upon it by current users, let alone accommodate the continued increase in use, which has been 10% in recent years

Renovations to Brighthouse are Required to:

- Return the Library to an Appealing and Attractive Facility
- Meet Rapid Growth in Library Use
- Meet High Demand for Library Services
- Further Improve Staff Productivity in order to Control Costs

Return Brighthouse Branch to an Appealing & Attractive Facility

- Library is the most heavily used public facility in Richmond; one million people use BH Branch each year
- Brighthouse is open 76.5 hours per week all year
- When it opened 10 years ago BH was a flagship facility; its physical appearance is becoming an embarrassment
- Extremely heavy use has resulted in the library looking shabby:
 - Carpeting is threadbare and needs replacing
 - Chairs are torn and stuffing coming out
 - Walls are battered

Meet Rapid Growth in Library Use

- Over 80% of Richmond citizens are active library users
- Library use is growing faster than growth in population
- Items borrowed is increasing upwards of 10% annually
- Brighthouse branch draws users from all over Richmond
- There is inadequate seating and study space at BH
- Peak times find customers sitting on the floor
- There are long lineups
- The renovation is critical to addressing these needs

Further Improve Staff Productivity In Order To Control Costs

- Renovations are essential if the library is to continue to meet dramatic increases in use with limited staff resources
- The Library currently has five fewer positions than it did in 2000
- Renovations will enable the library to further re-engineer work and improve productivity
- Additional self checkout machines and extensive display shelves will improve access for the public and keep staff costs down



ISSUE 598: News

Library's efficiency draws praise

Richmond branch emulates private sector, sells consulting services

Peter Mitham



Bookish: Chief librarian Cate McNeely studies Chapters for inspiration

The Richmond Public Library (www.yourlibrary.ca) branch in **Ironwood Plaza** at the corner of No. 5 Road and the Steveston Highway is proving to be more than just a treasure trove for readers.

Workshops showing other municipal libraries how the branch has increased its efficiency based on private-sector service models and technological improvements garnered the Richmond library \$35,000 last year.

While only a fraction of the three-branch library system's \$6.3-million annual budget, those few thousand dollars represent an impact being felt throughout North America as libraries in San Jose, California, and elsewhere adopt "the Ironwood model" of library management.

The Ironwood branch, like most other libraries, is under pressure to do more with relatively fewer resources. On opening in December 1998, it knew it would have 13 full-time equivalent staff positions. This presented the librarians responsible for Richmond's libraries with a dilemma to solve, says deputy chief librarian **Cate McNeely**.

"How do you do the things that we always talk about doing, but always say we don't have enough money or enough time or enough staff to do? We knew that if we did things in the traditional way, the majority of our resources would just be going to checking in and checking out books. And it would mean not being open 74 hours a week, not doing daily story time, not having the librarians available on the floor to help people choose that best book, and so on."

By comparison, the **West Vancouver Memorial Library** (www.westvanlib.org) is open an average of just over 54 hours a week, while **Vancouver Public Library** (www.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca) branches are open an average of 50 to 55 hours a week. Per capita spending at each library in 1999 was \$68.03 and \$56.98, respectively, much more than Richmond's library budget of \$33.50 per capita.

Self-service check-out stations for borrowers and what McNeely terms "merchandising" of the collection -- arranging it as in a bookstore, rather than simply warehousing it -- allowed the branch to deliver more programming despite relatively small funds.

McNeely said Ironwood's layout was "designed to be intuitive," with an emphasis on a **Chapters-** or **Indigo-**style environment that is both inviting and accessible to the more than 50 per cent of patrons that don't use the library catalogue. Books in much of the library face the aisles front-first rather than spine first.

"What we want to do is display as attractively as possible books in all kinds of different genres and subject areas," said McNeely.

Richmond's approach has proven so successful that other libraries are taking note. McNeely said the library charges \$1,200 to \$1,500 a day for workshops, and took in \$35,000 last year from presentations to 18 public library systems across North America, including the **San Jose Public Library** (www.sjpl.lib.ca.us) in California.

Joy Macari, supervising librarian of the 18-branch San Jose system, said Ironwood provided a springboard for her own libraries to reinvent themselves.

"Our customers are saying, 'Why can't you be more like **Barnes and Noble**?' or 'What about having food and drink in the library?' or 'What about longer hours?'" she said. "We saw Ironwood, that model, as a way to provide higher-level service."

"They haven't decreased the number of staff they have, which is a common fear of unions as they see technology being increasingly used in institutions," said **Ann Curry**, associate professor in **UBC's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies** (www.slais.ubc.ca), of the situation at Ironwood.

"Those staff members can be deployed doing other things and more rewarding jobs."

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September 20, 2001

File: 0155-04-01

Mr. Greg Buss, Chief Librarian
Richmond Public Library
#100 – 7700 Minoru Gate
Richmond, BC V6Y 1R9

Dear Sir:

Re: Presentation of 2000 Annual Report

In response to your correspondence dated September 18th, 2001, this is to confirm that arrangements have been made for you to appear as a delegation on the above matter at the open Council Meeting scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Monday, November 26th, 2001 in the Council Chambers, Richmond City Hall. It is noted that your presentation will be placed at the beginning of the Council Agenda, and your delegation should be in attendance at that time to make the presentation. Please have 17 copies of any brochures or other coloured material you wish to have included in the Council agenda package for that meeting, in this office by 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 21st, 2001.

Yours truly,

J. Richard McKenna
City Clerk

