

# HARRISON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM



**STRATEGIC PLAN: 2009-2012**

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## I. HARRISON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The management and control of the Harrison County Library System are vested in a board of five (5) trustees, who shall be appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. One member serves from each of the four municipalities participating in the system and one member is appointed from the County-at-Large.

Mr. Donald Moore  
Mrs. Gerry Morgan  
Mrs. Ramona Peresich  
Mr. Brian Quave  
Mrs. Nancy Sneed

### MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN

In these uncertain times, it is critical that the library chart a path to provide the essential services that our community needs and deserves. This strategic plan lays out such a path to a place where young children are ready to start kindergarten and young people have ready access to materials they want to read and watch. It points to a future where adults can get the materials they want in a timely fashion, can explore personal interests, are able to quickly access the resources of the Internet, and where visitors and residents alike can connect the past to the present here on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The strategic plan presented here is the culmination of six months of hard work on the part of community representatives and the Harrison County Library Board and staff. Under the direction of Consultants Sandra Nelson and June Garcia, we sought to define the library services that our Community Committee determined were most important. We believe our efforts and the resulting plan will result in a new level of service to the citizens of Harrison County.

Brian Quave, Chair  
Harrison County Board of Trustees

## II. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Library Board of Trustees and the library management team wish to express their sincere appreciation to the following groups and individuals who supported the strategic planning process:

### **The Bill & Melinda Gates Library Foundation**

#### **Lyrasis**

MaryEllin Santiago    Manager, Gulf Coast Libraries Recovery Project, Lyrasis

Cheri Smithson       Grant Coordinator, Gulf Coast Libraries Recovery Project, Lyrasis

### **The Members of the County Planning Committee**

Kristie Aylett

Brian Quave

Lisa Bradley

Bill Raymond

Cono Caranna

Susan Storrs

Ricky Cooper

George Thatcher

Virgil Harris

Paul Tisdale

Joshua Joffrion

Lien Tran

Clark Lizana

Sheran Watkins

Lewie Merrill

Dave Vincent

Diane Peranich

Nicole Young

## III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June, 2008, the Harrison County Library System received a grant from the *Gulf Coast Recovery Project* to develop a strategic plan to identify the services needed to meet the changing needs of the Harrison County residents. The *Gulf Coast Recovery Project* was funded by a grant that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation awarded a grant to Lyrasis to assist public libraries in Louisiana and Mississippi damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The Library Board of Trustees hired two consultants, Sandra Nelson and June Garcia, to manage the strategic planning process. The process was a collaborative effort and began by asking a group of county stakeholders to identify the types of services their constituents would need from the library during the next three to five years. All levels of library staff, the members of the library's management team, and members of the Library Board of Trustees were given an opportunity to consider the committee's initial suggestions and their reactions were shared with the committee.

After two meetings of the committee of county stakeholders, several open staff meetings, two board meetings, and countless administrative staff meetings, seven goals were presented to the board for review and approval. The board unanimously approved these goals for 2009-2012.

- Goal 1: Young children (age five and under) will have materials and programs designed to help them enter school ready to read, write, listen, and learn.
- Goal 2: Children (ages 6 – 11) will have materials and programs that stimulate their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences.
- Goal 3: Teens (age 12 and older) will have materials and programs that respond to their current interests and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences.
- Goal 4: Adults will have convenient and timely access to a variety of new and popular materials.
- Goal 5: Adults will have skills and resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and to continue learning throughout their lives.
- Goal 6: Residents will have high-speed access to the ever-growing resources and services available through the Internet.
- Goal 7: Residents and visitors will have the resources they need to connect the past with the present through their family histories and to understand the history and traditions of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

These goals describe the benefits the residents of Harrison County will receive from the library. To be sure that the services the library offers in support of these goals are meeting the needs of the residents of Harrison County, the Library Board has adopted an aggressive set of services measures. The library will measure progress in three distinct ways:

- The number of users who participate in or use various services
- The percent of users who indicate on a survey that met the library met their needs. This opinion could be about the quality of the service, the value of the service, the user's satisfaction with the service, or the impact of the service
- The number of units of service (items circulated, reference questions answered, etc.)

The library management staff and members of the Library Board of Trustees will review the progress being made toward each measure for each goal regularly and will make any adjustments needed to be sure that the targets in the measures are achieved.

The Harrison County Library System strategic planning process was predicated on the assumption that the library would not have significant new funds to support the newly identified priorities. Instead, the library management staff and board members have committed to reallocating existing resources to provide the staffing, collections, spaces, and technology support needed to meet the targets in the measures for each goal.

Over the next several years the Harrison County Library System will be replacing the buildings lost during Hurricane Katrina. This strategic plan will provide guidance to the architects, library staff, board members, and local stakeholders as they make plans for these new facilities to meet the needs of Harrison County residents.

The Library Board of Trustees and the library staff are looking forward to working collaboratively with the members of the Board of Supervisors, community agencies and organizations, and residents throughout the county to achieve the goals in this plan. They are confident that working together they can continue to meet the changing needs of the residents of Harrison County.

## IV. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIVITIES



### GOAL 1

**Young children (age five and under) will have materials and programs designed to help them enter school ready to read, write, listen, and learn.**

#### Objectives

- 1.1: By FY11/12, the circulation of easy books will increase from 38,992 (FY07/08) to 44,850.
- 1.2: By FY11/12, the number of young children (age five and under) attending a program in the library will increase from 7,554 (FY07/08) to 8,700.
- 1.3: By FY11/12, the number of young children (age five and under) attending a program offered by library at a non-library location will increase from 2,518 (FY07/08) to 3,025.
- 1.4: By FY11/12, the number of young children (age five and under) participating in the Summer Reading Program will increase from 200 (FY07/08) to 230.
- 1.5: By FY11/12, a minimum of 90% of parents and caregivers surveyed will indicate that the library's services for young children are very good or excellent.

#### Selected Activities

- Develop, expand, and maintain a collection of age appropriate materials, using budget monies to reflect individual location priorities.
- Assist parents and caregivers to locate age appropriate materials they can share with young children at home, at day care, etc.
- Create appealing areas for serving this age group.
- Offer a dynamic summer reading program that encourages parents, caregivers, and siblings to read to young children.
- Offer programs in the library and at non-library locations to introduce young children to the joy of words and stories.
- Provide training programs for all public service staff which will assist them in providing services for this age group.
- Facilitate coordination of Children's Services at all locations.
- Provide computers and age appropriate software designed to foster readiness for school.

## GOAL 2

**Children (ages 6 – 11) will have materials and programs that stimulate their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences.**



### **Objectives**

- 2.1: By FY11/12, the circulation of juvenile fiction will increase from 26,127 (FY07/08) to 28,740.
- 2.2: By FY11/12, the circulation of juvenile media (CDs, videos, DVDs, etc) will increase from 15,136(FY07/08) to 17,500.
- 2.3: Annually, the circulation of nonfiction will be at least 17,500. (FY07/08 - 16,677)
- 2.4: Annually, a minimum of 10,000 children will attend a library sponsored or co-sponsored program.
- 2.5: By FY11/12, the number of children registered in the Summer Reading Program will increase from 510 (FY07/08) to 1,000.

### **Selected Activities**

- Develop, expand, and maintain a collection of age appropriate materials, including computer software, using budget monies to reflect individual location priorities.
- Provide additional copies of high-demand titles in all media.
- Offer programs for children in the library and at non-library locations.
- Create attractive displays of juvenile fiction titles on popular themes to introduce children to authors and titles that they might enjoy.
- Promote use of the collection by suggesting books and other materials that children might enjoy.
- Offer a dynamic summer reading program that encourages children to continue to read throughout the summer.
- Provide training programs for all public service staff which will assist them in providing services for this age group.
- Facilitate coordination of Children's Services at all locations.



## GOAL 3

**Teens (age 12 and older) will have materials and programs that respond to their current interests and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences.**

### Objectives

- 3.1: By FY11/12, the circulation of young adult materials (fiction and non-fiction) will increase from 4,329 (FY07/08) to 6,500.
- 3.2: By FY11/12, a minimum of 70% of teens surveyed will indicate that they found something good to read, listen to, or view at the library.
- 3.3: By FY11/12, the number of teens who attend a library sponsored or co-sponsored program will increase from 140 (FY07/08) to 750.
- 3.4: Annually, a minimum of 85% of teens attending a library sponsored or co-sponsored program will evaluate the program as very good or excellent.

### Selected Activities

- Develop, expand, and maintain special collections for young adults, using budget monies to reflect individual location priorities.
- Provide additional copies of high-demand young adult fiction titles.
- Promote availability of digital media and assist library users in learning how to download and use the electronic books.
- Create a teen center space in the libraries where materials, displays, and furnishings encourage and support library use by this age group.
- Review and revise policies that impact teen use of library services.
- Train all public service staff to interact with teens effectively.
- Develop methods to encourage teen input into services and programs specific to young adults.
- Ensure that teen programs are targeted to interests and availability.
- Merchandize young adult titles.
- Promote use of the collection by suggesting books, music, and movies that teens might enjoy.

## GOAL 4

**Adults will have convenient and timely access to a variety of new and popular materials.**

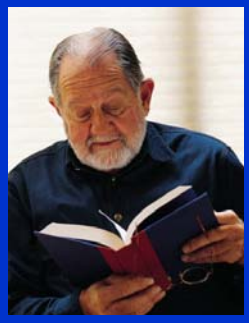


### Objectives

- 4.1: By FY11/12, the circulation of adult fiction will increase from 126,319 (FY07/08) to 151,600.
- 4.2: By FY11/12, the circulation of adult media (CDs, videos, DVDs etc) will increase from 68,432 (FY07/08) to 88,975.
- 4.3: By FY11/12, a minimum of 90% of adults surveyed will indicate that they found something good to read, listen to, or view at the library.
- 4.4: By FY11/12, a minimum of 80% of adults surveyed will indicate that they received the material they reserved in a timely manner.

### Selected Activities

- Enhance, expand, and maintain adult popular interest materials collection and realign materials budget to reflect this priority.
- Provide additional copies of anticipated high-demand titles in print and audio-visual.
- Merchandize popular reading titles with displays, signage, and reader's advisory services.
- Provide comfortable, inviting area for adult reading.
- Revise and update system web page with easy access to on-line catalog and internet links to support this goal.
- Provide user friendly on-line catalog.
- Provide training to enhance all public service staff's reader's advisory skills.
- Review and revise policies and procedures that impact adult usage of library services.



## GOAL 5

**Adults will have skills and resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and to continue learning throughout their lives.**

### Objectives

- 5.1: Annually, the circulation of adult non-fiction will be at least 44,180. (FY07/08 - 41,290)
- 5.2: By FY11/12, a minimum of 90% of adults surveyed will indicate staff were helpful in finding information or materials to explore a topic of personal interest.
- 5.3: By FY11/12, a minimum of 80% of adults surveyed who were looking for information or materials to explore a topic of personal interest will indicate the library's collection was very good or excellent.
- 5.4: By FY11/12, 90% of people surveyed who received computer assistance will indicate that the assistance they received from staff was very good or excellent.

### Selected Activities

- Enhance and maintain adult non-fiction materials collection and realign the materials budget to reflect this priority.
- Merchandize collection with displays, subject interest signage, and staff reader's advisory services.
- Provide quiet areas for adult reading and study.
- Revise and update system web page with easy access to on-line catalog and links to subject interest.
- Provide user friendly on-line catalog.
- Provide training to enhance all staff's public service skills.
- Review and revise policies and procedures that impact adult usage of library services.

## GOAL 6

**Residents will have high-speed access to the ever-growing resources and services available through the Internet.**

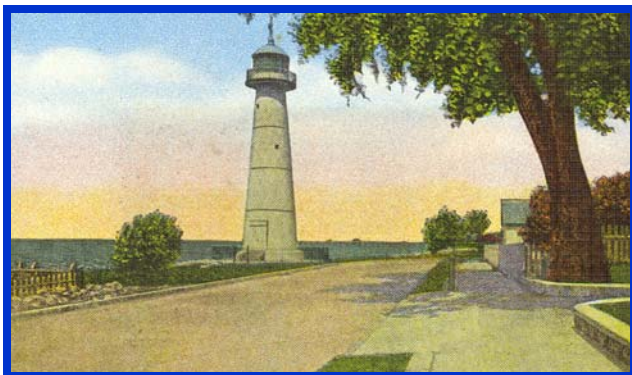


### Objectives

- 6.1: By FY11/12, the number of people who use a library computer will increase from 75,777 (FY07/08) to 98,510.
- 6.2: By FY11/12, a minimum of 95% residents surveyed will indicate the library's Internet services are very good or excellent.
- 6.3: By FY11/12, 90% of web site users surveyed will rate the Library's web site as informative and easy to use.

### Selected Activities

- Provide an adequate number of public access computers that are configured for speed and graphics.
- Offer reliable, high speed Wi-Fi access in all library facilities.
- Assist library users in locating desired resources and services available on the Internet.
- Provide training to all public service staff for effective navigation of the Internet.
- Update and enhance the existing webpage to facilitate navigation.



## GOAL 7

**Residents and visitors will have the resources they need to connect the past with the present through their family histories and to understand the history and traditions of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.**

### Objectives

- 7.1: By FY11/12, the number of local history and genealogy questions answered by staff will increase from 1769 (FY07/08) to 1890.
- 7.2: By FY11/12, the number of hits on the Local History and Genealogy web page will increase from 1606 (FY07/08) to 2400.
- 7.3: By FY11/12, 90% of users surveyed will evaluate the local history collections as very good or excellent.
- 7.4: By FY11/12, the attendance at programs on local history or genealogy will increase from 1006 (FY07/08) to 1210.

### Selected Activities

- Expand and maintain this special collection in line with the materials budget as informed by service priorities.
- Maintain subscriptions to genealogy databases and seek out new internet reference resources.
- Supplement the collection by actively seeking out and acquiring local publications, flyers, brochures, images, etc.
- Update website, finding aids, and pamphlets to accurately reflect collections in an effort to educate and attract patrons.
- Actively maintain current programs and create more programs for all ages. Annually engage in Summer Reading programs, speaking to local groups, working with the County and local municipalities, participating in "History Week," and participating in conferences. Submit information about events to local media and local government to engage a broader audience.
- Create partnerships with local groups, museums, and other libraries to grow the collection and its users, and to heighten awareness of it.

## V. ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCIES

Organizational Competencies will help the library achieve its service goals. While service goals provide direct benefit to community residents, organizational competencies provide indirect benefit to community residents by improving the library's effectiveness and efficiency.

Organizational competencies have been identified in thirteen key areas:

- Collections
- External partnerships
- Facilities
- Finance
- Fund raising
- Governance
- Marketing and public relations
- Measurement and evaluation
- Operational efficiencies
- Organizational structure
- Policies
- Technology
- Training and staff development

Two or more initiatives accompany each organizational competency. These initiatives are projects that must be completed if their respective organizational competency is to be achieved. Each initiative has a date during the strategic planning period by which the initiative should be completed.

## COLLECTIONS

### *Organizational Competency 1*

**The Harrison County Public Library will develop and maintain collections that reflect established service priorities.**

Initiative 1.1: By November 30, 2009, allocate the materials budget in a manner consistent with the service priorities, goals, and objectives adopted by the Board.

Initiative 1.2: By August 31, 2010, adopt a Collection Management plan that supports the service priorities, goals, and objectives adopted by the Board.

Initiative 1.3: By September 30, 2009, complete the weeding of all branch collections to ensure that they support the service priorities, goals, and objectives adopted by the Board.

## EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

### *Organizational Competency 2*

**The Harrison County Public Library will actively seek partnerships with organizations and institutions to enable the library to better serve its customers and achieve its service goals.**

Initiative 2.1: By August 31, 2009, identify current partnerships and the obligations that the Library has as part of those partnerships.

Initiative 2.2: By October 30, 2009, develop criteria that will be used to assess future partnership opportunities.

Initiative 2.3: By November 30, 2009, adopt a Board approved policy on the establishment of new partnerships.

Initiative 2.4: By January 29, 2010, distribute the board approved policy to staff and post on Moodle.

## FACILITIES

### *Organizational Competency 3*

**The Harrison County Public Library will operate attractive and welcoming facilities in places community residents frequently and willingly go.**

Initiative 3.1: By October 30, 2009, adopt facility-related policies that address issues such as site selection, recommended distance between branches, ideal branch size, etc.

Initiative 3.2: By September 30, 2009, propose a plan for each branch library to reallocate space in support of the service priorities, goals, and objectives adopted by the Board.

## FINANCE

### *Organizational Competency 4*

**The Harrison County Public Library will allocate its financial resources in support of its approved service goals and strategic initiatives.**

Initiative 4.1: By September 30, 2009, develop an easy-to-understand monthly financial reporting form that summarizes expenditures, encumbrances, and other key data for the Library Board.

Initiative 4.2: By November 30, 2009, develop an easy-to-understand monthly financial reporting form to help staff members with purchasing responsibilities to track their expenditures.

## FUND RAISING

### *Organizational Competency 5*

**The Harrison County Public Library will partner with the Board of Trustees and the Friends of the Library to solicit private funds to support and enhance library services.**

Initiative 5.1: By October 31, 2010, determine the parameters within which any library fund raising would need to be conducted.

Initiative 5.2: By December 31, 2010, develop a multi-year Fundraising Plan for operating and capital needs that address public funding needs as well as opportunities and strategies for private funding from sources such as grants and fund-raising.

Initiative 5.3: By May 31, 2010, develop a position paper on the pros and cons of establishing a Library Foundation.

Initiative 5.4: By May 31, 2010, adopt donor recognition policies that acknowledge levels of giving.

## GOVERNANCE

### *Organizational Competency 6*

**The Board of Trustees of the Harrison County Public Library will operate in an efficient, effective, and transparent manner.**

Initiative 6.1: By June 12, 2009, post the agendas, minutes, and support documents for all Library Board meetings on the Library's web site in a timely manner.

Initiative 6.2: By September 30, 2010, review and revise if needed the Board Bylaws.

Initiative 6.3: By September 30, 2010, review the Library Board committee structure and appoint committees, as needed, to support the accomplishment of the Library's strategic plan.

Initiative 6.4: By October 31, 2010, develop an orientation process for all new Board members.

## MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

### *Organizational Competency 7*

**The Harrison County Public Library will promote library services through a variety of print, electronic and media opportunities.**

Initiative 7.1: By December 31, 2009, create a recognizable logo, tag line and/or image that will be used on promotional materials.

Initiative 7.2: By December 31, 2010, adopt a system-wide marketing plan.

## MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

### *Organizational Competency 8*

**The Harrison County Public Library will incorporate measurement and evaluation into its operational practices.**

Initiative 8.1: By May 30, 2009, review process by which library use data is collected, compiled and distributed, and revise process as necessary to provide relevant management data and collect data related to the approved objectives.

Initiative 8.2: By November 30, 2009, develop and implement a methodology to regularly update Library Board on progress on all objectives adopted by the Board.

Initiative 8.3: By November 30, 2009, develop and implement a methodology to regularly update Library Board on progress on all initiatives adopted by the Board.

Initiative 8.4: By September 30, 2009, standardize the process and procedures for counting the number of informational and directional questions asked.

## OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

### *Organizational Competency 9*

**The Harrison County Public Library will utilize technologies and processes that improve access to information, enhance customer service, and maximize efficient service delivery.**

Initiative 9.1: By March 31, 2009, implement a plan to catalog and classify library materials that streamlines processes, supports access to the collection by library users, and provides management data on the use of all portions of the collection.

Initiative 9.2: By December 31, 2009, investigate options to acquire a PC registration system.

Initiative 9.3: By June 30, 2009, investigate the pros and cons of selling used materials to a vendor who specializes in handling library discards.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### *Organizational Competency 10*

**The Harrison County Public Library will establish and maintain an organizational structure that supports its service priorities.**

Initiative 10.1: By November, 2010, review organizational structure and revise to support the service priorities, goals, and objectives adopted by the Board.

Initiative 10.2: By November 30, 2010, revise all job descriptions so they accurately reflect the knowledge, skills, abilities, and representative job duties of each staff member.

Initiative 10.3: By November 30, 2010, review and revise all performance appraisal documents so they accurately reflect the job responsibilities of each staff member.

## POLICIES

### *Organizational Competency 11*

**The Harrison County Public Library will operate within a policy framework that reflects the organization's values and promotes effective and efficient service delivery.**

Initiative 11.1: By August 31, 2009, complete a policy audit and evaluation of the Library's public service policies to ensure that they are consistent with the service priorities, goals, and objectives adopted by the Board.

Initiative 11.2: By August 31, 2009, develop timeline and process to revise the Library's public service policies to ensure that they support the service priorities, goals, and objectives adopted by the Board.

Initiative 11.3: By September 30, 2010, complete the revision or development of public service policies to ensure that they support the service priorities, goals, and objectives adopted by the Board.

## TECHNOLOGY

### *Organizational Competency 12*

**The Harrison County Public Library will utilize technology to enhance public service and to support efficient staff operations.**

Initiative 12.1: By September 30, 2009 implement content and navigation changes to the Library's web site that support the service priorities, goals, and objectives.

Initiative 12.2: By July 31, 2009, launch a robust staff intranet and adopt procedures to keep it up to date.

Initiative 12.3: By June 30, 2009, decide on the approach to take to resolve issues relating to the integrated library system.

## TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

### *Organizational Competency 13*

**The Harrison County Public Library will recruit, train, and deploy staff that provide and support quality customer service for all library users.**

Initiative 13.1: By May 31, 2009, produce a Staff Development Plan that identifies the training that will be needed by staff to implement the approved service goals and effective activities.

Initiative 13.2: By June 30, 2009, appoint a Staff Development Committee in support of the recommendations in the Staff Development Plan.

## VI. NEXT STEPS

The Board of Trustees and the library management are committed to achieving the ambitious goals and objectives in this Strategic Plan. They will take the following steps to ensure its success:

- Distribute the Strategic Plan to elected officials in Harrison County and the communities served by the library.
- Distribute the Strategic Plan to key stakeholders, including but not limited to, members of the Community Planning Committee, Friends of the Library, local media, the Mississippi Library Commission, and library staff.
- Post the Strategic Plan on the library's web site so it is readily accessible to all community residents.
- Request an opportunity to discuss the Strategic Plan with representatives of the local media.
- Develop and distribute information to specific audiences, such as teachers, parents of young children, students, etc., that describes the services that are, or will be, available to them.
- Reallocate resources to ensure that the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan are achieved.
- Identify potential partners and collaborate with them to achieve the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan.
- Report regularly on the progress that has been made in achieving the goals and objectives and the organizational competencies and initiatives.

## LIBRARY SYSTEM HISTORY

Although libraries for the individual municipalities in Harrison County date as far back as the 1890's, contracts joining the Biloxi Library, the Gulfport/Harrison County Library, and the Pass Christian Library were not drawn up until the middle 1970's. On August 8, 1984, the Harrison County supervisors created by resolution the Harrison County Public Library System with its five member, statutory Board. Later still, on October 1, 1994, the Cities of Biloxi, D'Iberville, Gulfport, and Pass Christian, and the County of Harrison signed the contract still in force with the Harrison County Library System. This contract formally recognized the Harrison County Library System as the public library services provider for the entire county.

Starting in 1973 as the Director of the Gulfport/Harrison County Library System, Norman Graham was the first Director of what would become the HCLS. Shortly after his retirement in 1993, he was succeeded by Richard Mobley. In 1997, Robert Lipscomb became the third and current Director of the library system.

Katrina wrote a new chapter in the Library System's history as four of its libraries were destroyed or severely damaged by its storm waters. Damage was also sustained by the West Biloxi library and by the D'Iberville library. The Biloxi Library, the Pass Christian library, and the Division Street Station buildings were eventually demolished as a result of the damage and the future of the Gulfport building remains in question.

On November 5, 2005, the Pass Christian Library opened a temporary library in a trailer donated by the DuPont Corporation. In January of 2007, the D'Iberville library re-opened its doors after repairing storm damage. Three other temporary trailer libraries, Biloxi, Gulfport, and Woolmarket, were opened in June 2007 as a result of a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation through Lyrassis. On February 20, 2009, construction began on the new Pass Christian library building. Three other library buildings – one in Biloxi and two in Gulfport – await their groundbreaking.

A longer timeline that details much of the history of the individual libraries that make up the Harrison County System can be found on-line at the libraries website, [www.harrison.lib.ms.us](http://www.harrison.lib.ms.us).

## OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

### PLANNING TO PLAN

In 2006, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation awarded a grant to Lyrasis to fund the *Gulf Coast Recovery Project* to assist public libraries in Louisiana and Mississippi damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The *Gulf Library Project* provided planning grants to assist thirteen libraries, including the Harrison County Library System, to develop plans to replace and/or reorganize existing library services to meet the changing needs of the post storm population.

In 2008, the Board of the Harrison County Library System submitted a grant to Lyrasis requesting funds to hire Sandra Nelson and June Garcia to complete a strategic planning process for the library using the process described in *Strategic Planning for Results*.

The *Strategic Planning for Results* process is based on three key assumptions which the Board and library management believe to be true. Those assumptions are:

- Excellence must be defined locally. It results when library services match community needs, interests, and priorities.
- Excellence is possible for both small and large libraries. It rests more on commitment than on unlimited resources.
- Excellence is a moving target. Even when achieved, excellence must be continually maintained. If you are coasting, the only way you can go is downhill.

### COMMUNITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

The *Strategic Planning for Results* process is collaborative and includes community stakeholders as well as staff and board members. The members of the library board appointed eighteen local residents to serve on the Community Planning Committee. The committee members were carefully selected to represent the major constituencies and to reflect the diversity of the county (age, race, ethnicity, gender, occupation, area of county in which they live, etc.). The names of the individuals who gave of their time and expertise to assist the library in this important endeavor can be found in Part II. Acknowledgements.

The Community Planning Committee served in an advisory capacity to the Board of Trustees. During two all-day meetings, they identified a vision for the future of Harrison County, described the current conditions in the county, and defined what needs to happen to reach the future they described in the vision. Committee members then carefully considered a variety of services that the library could provide to help meet the needs and move the parish toward the identified vision. During their first meeting the committee members identified possible service priorities. Between the first and second meetings of the committee, the head librarians held meetings during which all interested library staff members were given the opportunity to discuss the potential implications of the committee's recommendation. The

board also reviewed the recommendations and considered how they might affect library services.

During the second meeting of the committee, the project managers presented the board and staff reactions to the preliminary recommendations. After thoughtful discussion, the members of the committee recommended that the Library Board adopt the following service priorities for the planning period 2009 – 2012:

**Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure**

Residents will have materials and programs that excite their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences.

**Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning**

Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

**Create Young Readers: Emergent Literacy**

Preschool children will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

**Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access**

Residents will have high-speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the Internet.

**Understand How to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Fluency**

Residents will know when they need information to resolve an issue or answer a question and will have the skills to search for, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information to meet their needs.

**Discover your Roots: Genealogy and Local History**

Residents and visitors will have the resources they need to connect the past with the present through their family histories and to understand the history and traditions of the community.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

After the service priorities were endorsed in concept by the Board of Trustees, the library staff developed goals and objectives for the library system. Goals state the benefit that county residents, or a target population such as children or teens, will receive because the library provides a specific service response. The head librarians worked with the consultants to develop draft goals that reflected the priorities endorsed in concept by the board. Staff members were given an opportunity to review and comment on the draft goals before they were presented to the board.

Each of the facilities in the county serves a different clientele. Therefore, the priority of the library system goals will be different for each branch. Facility managers worked with senior managers to determine the priorities for each branch. With the adoption of the Strategic Plan, the Board of Trustees adopted the seven goals that are in Section IV – Goals, Objectives, and Activities.

Goals alone are insufficient to ensure that services are meeting the needs of community residents, so the Library Board has adopted an aggressive set of objectives to measure the library's progress towards achieving these goals. Specifically, the library will measure progress in three distinct ways. They will determine:

- The number of users who participate in or use various services
- The percent of users who indicate on a survey that the library met their needs. This opinion could be about the quality of the service, the value of the service, the user's satisfaction with the service, or the impact of the service
- The number of units of service (items circulated, reference questions answered, etc.)

Two or more of these data elements were incorporated into the objectives for each of the goals. With the adoption of the Strategic Plan, the Board of Trustees adopted the objectives that are in Section IV – Goals, Objectives, and Activities. Progress on all of these measures will be reported to the Library Board on a regular basis.

## ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCIES

Once the goals and objectives had been developed, the library management analyzed what would need to be done to support the staff's ability to provide the desired services. These institutional capacities or efficiencies, known as Organizational Competencies, are necessary to enable the library to achieve the goals and objectives in the strategic plan. Organizational competencies were identified in thirteen areas:

- Collections
- External partnerships
- Facilities
- Finance
- Fund raising
- Governance
- Marketing and public relations
- Measurement and evaluation
- Operational efficiencies
- Organizational structure
- Policies
- Technology
- Training and staff development

The organizational competencies and their associated initiatives were discussed with the board and revised to reflect their observations and concerns. With the adoption of the Strategic Plan, the Board of Trustees adopted the organizational competencies and initiatives that are in Section V– Organizational Competencies and Initiatives.

## ACTIVITIES

After the service goals and objectives were developed, staff reviewed all of the services they were currently offering to determine whether or not they supported the new service priorities. If so, the activities were evaluated to determine whether or not they were effective in

reaching the target audience and would contribute to producing a result identified in one or more objectives. If not, staff were assigned the responsibility of modifying or eliminating the activity.

Staff were also encouraged to identify new or enhanced activities that supported the new priorities. These proposed activities were also evaluated, and the most effective ones have been identified. Library management will allocate resources for these activities and implementation will begin in a timely manner. A few selected activities have been included in Section IV – Goals, Objectives, and Activities.