

Babbitt Area
Public Library
2010 – 2015 Strategic Plan

Adopted by the Library Board:
June 14, 2010

*Prepared by:
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THE PLANNING PROCESS:

The Babbitt Public Library completed a comprehensive strategic planning process between January and May 2010. This process was made possible through financial support from the Arrowhead Library System. Composition of the Planning Team included representatives from the Library Board, Friends of the Library, city officials, community members and library staff.

A community-based process was utilized, which centered on answering the questions: 1) *What are the pressing needs in our community?* and, 2) *What is the library's role in helping to address those needs?* Major steps included conducting a focus group with community leaders, reviewing community demographic data and library statistics, discussing organizational values and mission, identifying service priorities, and developing detailed action plans for the first year of implementation. In addition, preliminary indicators were established to track progress toward achieving the library's new goals.

The resulting strategic plan is intended to guide the library for the next five years, with action plans to be revised annually.

WHAT WE FOUND:

Several themes emerged through our environmental scan process. First, the City of Babbitt has experienced a decline in the number of residents and aging of its population in recent years. Coinciding with this trend, the Library has seen budget constraints and significant decreases in staffing, open hours, and overall circulation. Library programming, however, has continued to be well received and shows an indication of increasing attendance over this time period.

We also found that community leaders have their minds focused on future sustainability. Their vision includes having the strong institutions and amenities that lead families to choose a place to call home. Education being one of these core institutions, the St. Louis County School District's recent decision to retain and upgrade the school in Babbitt is a definite strength for the community and its children. With regard to amenities, the availability of entertainment, recreation, arts and cultural activities for all ages was specifically identified. A need for area residents to be better informed of what is available/what's happening locally was also noted.

Economic opportunities, including support for existing business and the nurturing of entrepreneurship, were another important part of this vision. It was recognized that even small businesses offer the dual benefits of providing jobs for residents, while making needed goods and services available within the community. Without a Chamber of Commerce, the community currently lacks a focal point for meeting the needs of small business.

Finally, another key theme was a desire to think beyond City boundaries and define "community" to include the surrounding rural areas. Focus group participants generally supported the concept of collaboration as a way to create something greater than what individual organizations can do alone, and to reach more people.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES:

Our Library strives to be the preferred source of information, barrier free physically, electronically, and intellectually.

Our Library constantly challenges itself to identify and meet community needs through collaborative efforts with other area organizations.

Our Library promotes literacy and lifelong learning in a friendly environment.

Our Library provides multi-generational resources, programs, and services for all abilities and ages.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Babbitt Area Public Library enriches community life by providing emerging technologies, creative programming, and resources in a nurturing atmosphere that inspires early literacy and lifelong learning, stimulates imagination, and supports individuals and businesses in reaching their goals.

LIBRARY GOALS (In order of priority):

- 1. Community members will engage in stimulating reading, viewing, and listening opportunities that meet their entertainment needs, reduce stress, and fill their leisure time.**
- 2. Established and potential area businesses and organizations will have access to information and resources needed to develop and grow enterprises that serve or employ community members.**
- 3. Children ages 0-9 and their caregivers will engage in fun and creative activities that develop literacy skills and equip them for school success and lifelong learning.**

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Goal 1 (Stimulate Imagination)

- ✓ Number of participants in stimulate imagination program series/movie nights and survey regarding whether they relieved stress or had their leisure time enriched (and/or Legacy program evaluations).
- ✓ Number of patrons served and number of materials circulated through home delivery outreach.
- ✓ Total number of Summer/Winter Reading Program participants and survey at completion (e.g. *What did you read this summer/winter that you really enjoyed?*)

Goal 2 (Build Successful Enterprises)

- ✓ Number of area businesses and organizations that contribute to interest survey.
- ✓ Number of participants in business workshops and survey regarding whether they learned something that will help support or grow their existing business.
- ✓ Number of participants in entrepreneurship workshop and survey regarding whether they obtained information that will help them establish a new business.

Goal 3 (Early Literacy)

- ✓ Number of children and adults participating in story time.
- ✓ Summer Reading Program child participants and survey (see Goal 1, above).
- ✓ Number of elementary class tours held at the library.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

<i>Implementation Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Present strategic plan to Library Board for adoption. Presentation of newly adopted plan to City Council.	June 2010
2. Communicate the new plan to other stakeholders and the public.	June – July 2010
3. Review strategic plan progress as a regular agenda item at staff meetings; make mid-course corrections.	Quarterly
4. Discuss strategic plan progress as regular agenda item at Library Board meetings.	Monthly
5. Compile progress indicator data for annual review.	Annually 2011 - 2015 (September)
6. Board/staff annual ‘retreat’ to review implementation successes and challenges (including indicator data), review goals, revise strategies, and project budget needs.	Annually 2011 - 2014 (September)
7. Staff develop action plans for the next year.	Annually 2011 - 2014 (October - December)
8. Full round of strategic planning.	Fall 2015 (New plan in place by January 2016)

Appendix A:

YEAR 1 Action Plans July 1, 2010 – December 31, 2011

GOAL # 1: Community members will engage in stimulating reading, viewing, and listening opportunities that meet their entertainment needs, reduce stress, and fill their leisure time.

<u>Strategy A: Programming</u>		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Movie "Nights": <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Obtain TV and DVD player. ▪ Promote and hold 5 movies showings (including at least 1 each targeted toward teens, families, and in conjunction with senior center). ▪ Evaluate success/attendance to determine whether to renew movie license. 	Bonnie B. Debby	July 1, 2010 June – December 2010
	Debby	December 31, 2010
2. Develop Stimulate Imagination program series for all ages, including Legacy events and author visits.	Debby (Collaborate with School)	Quarterly (Beginning June 2010, through December 2011)
3. Reading Programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote and conduct Summer Reading Program for all ages including events/activities. ▪ Promote and conduct Winter Reading Program for adults and teens. 	Debby	July 30, 2010 & 2011
	Debby	March 1, 2010 & 2011

<u>Strategy B: Book Clubs</u>		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Teen Book Club: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact existing or new English teacher to explore potential. 	Debby	October 15, 2010
2. Men's Book Club: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify possible leaders. ▪ Hand out flyers to generate interest and offer library space. 	Lisa (Polly) Lisa	January 1, 2011 January 1, 2011

<u>Strategy C: Cozy Space</u>		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Gather youth input and contribution to designing teen space (e.g. ordering books, wall mural, furniture arrangement, movie night).	Debby	TBD
2. Add something visually pleasing over the fireplace.	Lisa	August 1, 2010

Strategy D: Public Relations		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Work with administration to establish a Library section on the City's website to promote events, resources, etc.	Debby (Board Member)	July 30, 2010
2. Submit regular newspaper column with pictures of library events.	Debby	Weekly (June 2010 – December 2011)
3. Submit PSA event announcements to all local media (Babbitt Weekly, Timberjay, Ely Echo, WELY)	Debby	Monthly (June 2010 – December 2011)

Strategy E: Displays		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Rotate power shelf display in conjunction with current programming.	Lisa	Monthly (June 2010 – December 2011)

Strategy F: Outreach		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Home delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruit volunteers to deliver library materials. ▪ Promote new service in newspaper column. 	Bonnie B. (Friends) Debby	June 30, 2010 June 30, 2010

GOAL # 2: Established and potential area businesses and organizations will have access to information and resources needed to develop and grow enterprises that serve or employ community members.

Strategy G: Business Program Series		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Meeting Space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek board approval to sell equipment in city rummage sale. ▪ Contribute discarded books to Friends book sale. ▪ Organize back room as meeting space. ▪ Promote availability of space for local groups. 	Debby Bonnie B. (Friends) Debby (Staff) Debby	June 2010 Summer 2010 September 30, 2010 October 2010
2. Support for existing entities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey existing area businesses/nonprofits regarding needs and interests. ▪ Recruit presenters, promote and hold 2 workshops relevant to expressed needs. 	Debby (Don)	December 31, 2010 January – December 2011

3. Support for new entrepreneurs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consult with area experts (Firefly, Northeastern MN Entrepreneur Fund, etc), regarding workshop possibilities. ▪ Promote and hold initial workshop on entrepreneurship. 	Debby (Don & Pete)	December 31, 2010 January – December 2011
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Strategy H: Business/Organizational Resources

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Link area businesses and nonprofits on City website.	Debby (Pete)	TBD
2. Create list of area businesses and organizations to hand out at City Hall and Library.	Bonnie B. & Bonnie K.	July 1, 2010
3. Gather list of resources to set up Business Section within the library’s collection.	Debby (Business experts)	December 31, 2011

GOAL # 3: Children ages 0-9 and their caregivers will engage in fun and creative activities that develop literacy skills and equip them for school success and lifelong learning.

Strategy I: Children’s Programming

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Story Times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preschool (ages 0-5) & After school (ages 5 – 9). ▪ Come Read with Me (ages 5 – 9). ▪ READ dogs (ages 5 – 9). 	Debby (Volunteers) Debby (Volunteers) Debby (Volunteers)	Weekly (Summer) & Monthly (September – May) Weekly (Summer & October – April) Six Weeks (January – February)
2. Summer Reading Program with weekly events (See Goal 1).	Debby	July 30, 2010 & 2011
3. Explore feasibility of volunteer math tutoring project.	Richard Niss	October 31, 2010

Strategy J: Class Visits

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Contact teachers to reinstate weekly class visits to the public library for 1 st & 2 nd grades.	Debby	October 31, 2010

Appendix B:

Community Focus Group – Summary

February 2010

Community Focus Group – Summary of Responses

Babbitt Public Library

2-18-10

A total of 17 community members participated in the focus group. Representation included educators, local businesses, financial services, elected officials, early childhood, former library board members, youth, and the faith community. In addition, participants indicated active volunteerism in a wide range of community causes and events.

ELEMENTS OF A COMMUNITY VISION

Participants first imagined a time in the future when the community has achieved its full potential and everyone is proud to call it home. They then answered the question: *What does that success look like, and for whom?*

Who	Result
School / Businesses / Everyone	Have the draws that make younger families choose to live in our town (strong school, safe community, etc.).
Children / Everyone	Cultural activities available here (concerts, community dances, bringing in performers).
Children / Elders	All children have a grandparent figure / intergenerational connections in the community (Big Brother/Big Sister concept).
Youth	Have entertainment and recreation options in the local community (e.g. movie nights, dances).
Young People	Have job opportunities that make it possible for them to stay.
Elders	Housing options that allow seniors to stay in the community.
Everyone / Across Generations	Greater civic engagement and participation of community members in solving local problems for the common good.
Everyone	Greater volunteerism.
Everyone	People are better informed of what is available/happening locally and are utilizing those opportunities.
Everyone	Working together across organizations to create more opportunities and awareness.
Everyone	Have lifetime athletic facilities (pool, gym) and instruction that are well utilized by the community.
Everyone	Have access to a broader range of full-time clinic/medical services.
Everyone	Have a variety of retail services so people can shop locally.

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY TODAY

Considering the community's current situation, participants were asked to identify: 1) conditions that could help the community move toward the vision outlined above (strengths & opportunities), and 2) conditions that might impede progress toward that vision (weaknesses & threats).

Strengths/Opportunities

- + Most people know each other.
- + Safe place.
- + Good school.
- + Clean community with a lot of green space/trees.
- + Ample recreation opportunities (golf course, beach, arena, shooting range, trails of all kinds).
- + Entire town is wheelchair accessible.
- + Friendly.
- + Public resources with Internet access (school & library).
- + School pool open for public use.
- + Good emergency services (fire, ambulance, police).
- + Senior center and youth center.
- + Historical Society.
- + Have an Economic Development Authority.

Weaknesses/Threats

- Distance to services, especially medical.
- Small town mentality (e.g. no desire for growth, prevent things from changing, intimidate people into dropping new initiatives).
- Need better method of communicating what's happening and what is available; weekly paper comes from Ely and lacks a local reporter, therefore coverage is not consistent.
- Not enough child care, early childhood education, or after school care.
- Lack a Chamber of Commerce.
- Marketing and public relations budgets are declining.
- Declining student population.
- Difficulty finding housing if moving here; no apartments available.
- Adult attitudes are negative regarding youth; perception is that young people don't care to get involved in things – reality is they have a lot going on.
- Limited job opportunities.

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Given where we are today, and where we want to go, participants responded to the question: *What needs to be done to make progress toward the vision?*

- Need to think bigger about what our community is – not just the City proper.
- Central point of contact to keep track of what's happening in the community.
- Community calendar.
- Build community pride by supporting new ideas and energy through forums for sharing.
- Work together to create more promotion of community assets that draw visitors and potential residents in; variety of methods including Internet/websites, color brochures, word of mouth network.
- More events that attract people to our area (e.g. summer volleyball tournament).
- Recruit a new group of volunteers; make individual requests/personal contact to get people to be involved in just one thing.
- Involve youth more in community discussions / make space for youth to voice their point of view and develop youth leadership.

- Raise awareness of ALS services.
- Training for seniors to learn computer skills.

LIBRARY PRIORITIES

Finally, participants were asked to vote on recommended library priorities by answering: *What roles can the Library focus on to make the greatest contribution toward addressing community needs?*

Library "Service Responses"	Number of Votes
Know Your Community: Community Resources & Services	12
Make Career Choices: Job & Career Development	10
Succeed in School: Homework Help	8
Create Young Readers: Early Literacy	7
Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access	7
Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National, and World Affairs	7
Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical & Virtual Spaces	5
Learn to Read & Write: Adult, Teen, and Family Literacy	5
Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing & Listening for Pleasure	4
Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning	4
Express Creativity: Create and Share Content	4
Understand How to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Fluency	4
Build Successful Enterprises: Business & Nonprofit Support	3
Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth, and Other Life Choices	3
Get Facts Fast: Ready Reference	3
Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness	2
Discover Your Roots: Genealogy & Local History	2
Welcome to the United States: Services for New Immigrants	0

Appendix C:

Library SWOT Analysis

February 2010

STAFF FOCUS GROUP
SUMMARY OF RESULTS
Babbitt Public Library
2-18-10

A total of five (5) staff participated in a traditional SWOT analysis, with the following results.

STRENGTHS: *What does the library do best?*

- Stable staff.
- Helpful staff who provide personal service and make people feel comfortable.
- Staff represents all age groups.
- Volunteers who do story hour, tutoring, train patrons on computer use and so on.
- Good collection.
- ILL system participation.
- Free wireless.
- Public access computers are used a lot.
- Children's programs.
- Adult programming.
- Attractive, clean facility has a cozy/friendly atmosphere and different areas for specific purposes.

WEAKNESSES: *What do you think the library could improve?*

- Limited space.
- Too hot / too cold – problems with A/C temperature regulation in summer.
- Limited budget.
- Limited hours and days open (no weekend hours, limited evenings).
- Staff pay is low.
- Limited collection especially in audio books and new books.
- Equipment replacement – reliance on Friends to pay for computers and other items (bookshelves, comfortable chairs, etc.). Computers are not all consistently loaded with the latest software.

OPPORTUNITIES: *What needs do you see in the community that could be opportunities for the library to make a difference?*

- People need the library and its free resources even more in a bad economy.
- Expanded hours to serve working people.
- Opportunities to draw people in with special programs (movie nights, social gatherings, etc).
- Could get out into the community more.

THREATS: *What outside forces do you feel could negatively affect the library?*

- Local government aid (LGA) cuts.
- Bad economy in general.
- Young people who don't like books and spend their time on video games.
- Council and Mayor do not use the library. It is felt that they have not adequately experienced the value of the library. Therefore, the library is not considered a priority and would be one of the first in budget cuts.
- Limited response to fundraising efforts from the community (e.g. Adopt A Book); local contributions getting "tapped out".

Appendix D:

Library & Community Profile

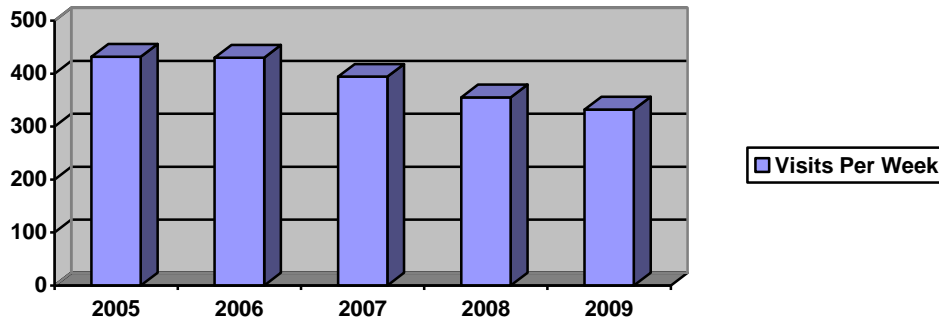
February 2010

Library & Community Profile: Babbitt Public Library

I. LIBRARY STATISTICS

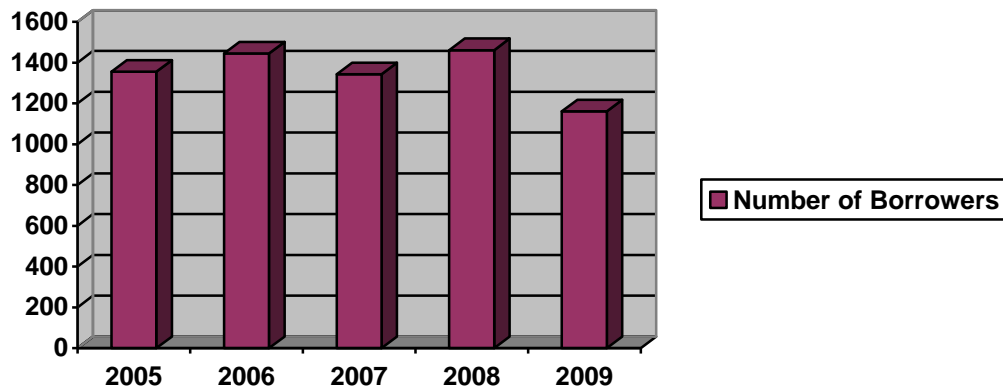
Library Traffic

Within the past five years, the Babbitt Public Library has decreased weekly hours of operation from 33 to the current 29 hours. Traffic into the library has declined, with the average number of weekly visits 23 % lower than it was five years ago.



Number of Resident Borrowers

In the past, all library card holders were maintained in the system regardless of whether they were active. In 2004/2005, ALS began purging inactive users on a periodic schedule. The dip in the number of borrowers in odd-numbered years is likely reflective of this purge process.



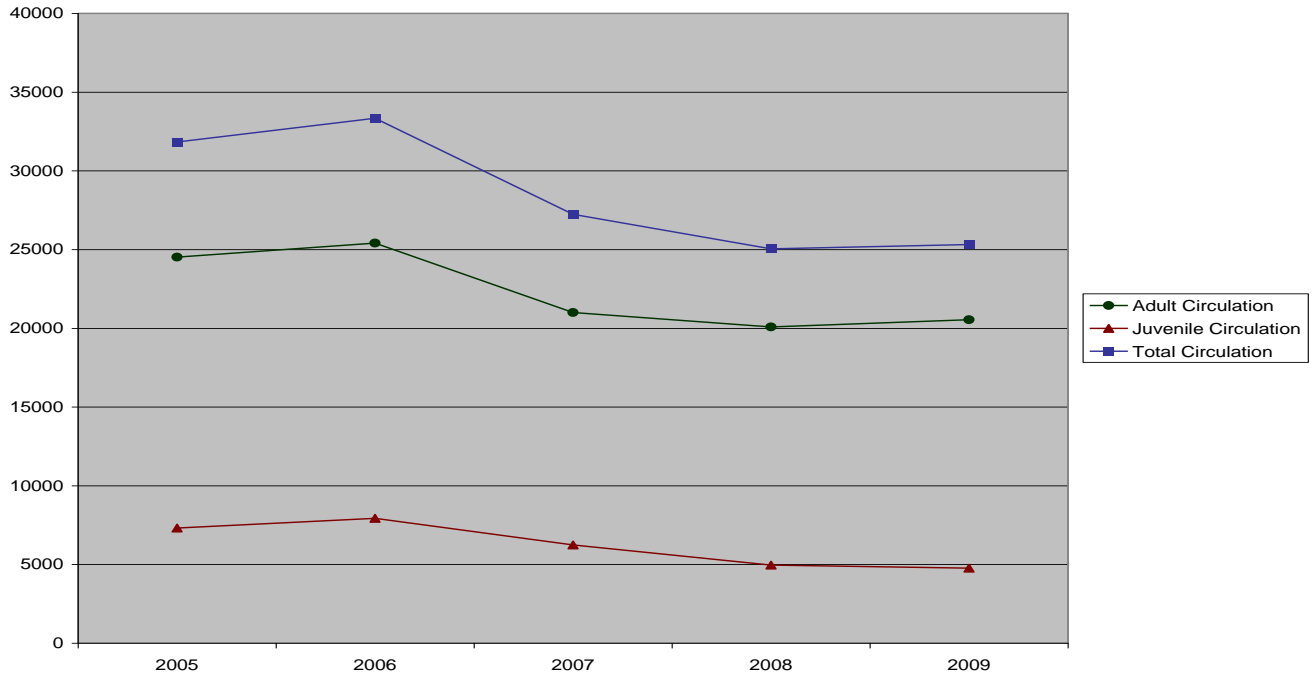
Collection Size

Type of Material	2005	2009	Change
Print	22,956	23,161	+ 205
Audio books	518	758	+ 240
Video	962	1,744	+ 782
Total Collection:	24,436	25,663	1,227

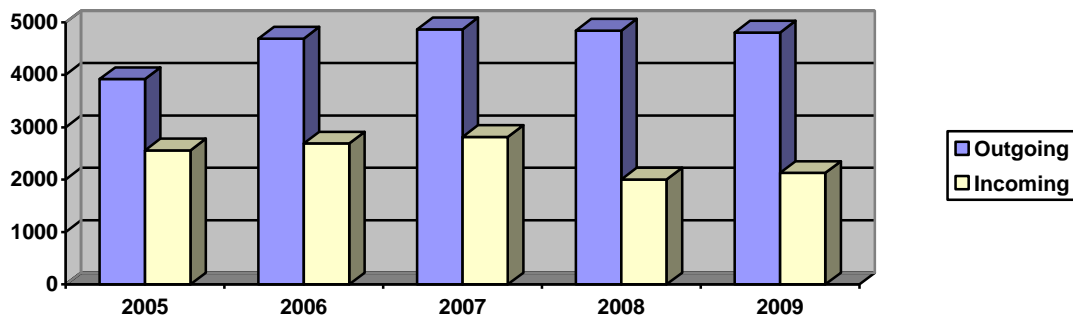
A January 2010 review of last check-out date identified 4,196 items, approximately 16 % of the library's total collection, that have not circulated during the past three years.

Circulation

The general circulation trend in Babbitt is declining, but there was a plateau last year. Still, circulation was 14 % lower than 2005 levels. Juvenile materials consistently make up one-fifth of total circulation. Within juvenile - despite a declining children's circulation, the Young Adult subset *increased* by 12% between 2008 and 2009.



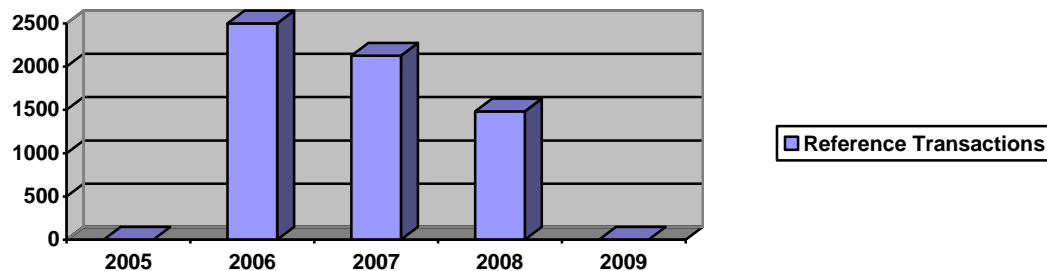
Inter-Library Loans



The high level of outgoing loans has remained fairly consistent, while incoming requests have declined. Overall, Babbitt is a net provider to the inter-library loan system.

Reference Requests

Although the data is incomplete, the number of reference transactions appears to have gone down over the past five years, consistent with the national trend for this service.

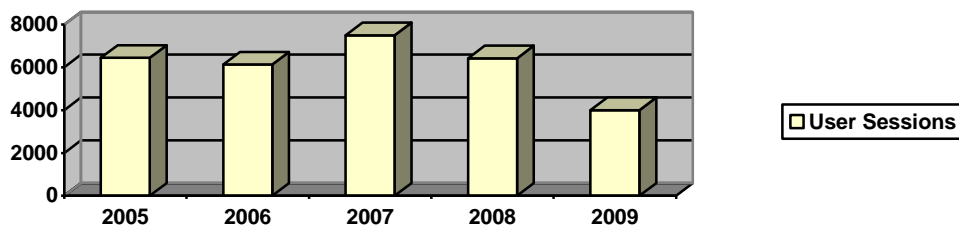


Programs & Meeting Room Usage

Programming is targeted primarily toward children, with good community participation. There are no formal meeting rooms available in the library. However, the back room is utilized twice per month for a book club, and monthly Friends meetings are held after hours.

Target Audience	Number of Programs	Type of Programs	2009 Attendance
Adults	6	Author visits, gardening presenter, community dance, adult reading program.	147
Children	33	Performers, Teen Read Week, Creation Station, Head Start/ECFE visits, story times, Legacy dance event, Summer Reading Program.	685
Total Attendance:			832

Public Computer/Internet Usage



Another computer was added in 2006, bringing the total number of public access terminals to five. Public computer usage peaked the following year, but has since decreased to a level 38 % lower than 2005. Wireless service also became available at this location in 2009. The library does not maintain a website.

Operating Expenditures

Year	Staffing	Collection	Other	Total
2005	\$ 65,745	\$ 4,411	\$ 29,474	\$ 99,630
2009	\$ 68,632	\$ 11,443	\$ 36,391	\$116,466

The library's staffing level has decreased from 4.43 FTEs in 2004 to 1.7 FTEs last year. The Library Director and 3 clerks are all part-time staff. In addition, the Babbitt Library has 2 part-time seniors and 1 summer youth worker all of whom are supported through local workforce programs.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Babbitt has experienced a slight increase, followed by a nearly commensurate decrease in population since 1990. Below are some key demographic indicators [*Figures taken from the 2000 U.S. Census unless otherwise noted*].

Time of Count	Number of Residents	Change from Previous Period
1990 Census	1,562	
2000 Census	1,670	+ 108
2008 Estimate	1,587	- 83

Race & Age

The vast majority (99 %) of Babbitt's residents are Caucasian, with the 2000 Census having recorded 19 persons of color residing here.

Age Group	Number of Residents	Percentage of Total Population
Children 0-17	350	21%
Adults 18-64	841	50 %
Adults 65 & over	479	29 %

Education

Babbitt is served by the St. Louis County School District, and is home to the Babbitt-Embarrass K-12 School. Although data is not available for this specific school, the 2008 on-time graduation rate for the entire District was 88.2 % [*Source: MN Department of Education*]. In addition, there are 16 children being home-schooled in the area. Of the population age 25 and over, 7.9 % have a bachelor's degree or higher.

School	Number of Students [January 2010]
Babbitt-Embarrass School K – 6	161
Babbitt-Embarrass School 7-12	174
Total Students:	335

Income

In 2007, the average wage of \$ 34,684 in St. Louis County was \$ 8,000 below the state average [*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics*]. The County's current unemployment rate of 8.1 % is higher than the state's overall figure of 7.3 % [*December 2009, DEED*]. The 2000 Census indicated that just 6.1 % of Babbitt's residents, or 101 individuals, were living below the poverty line.

Housing

Housing Type	Percentage of Total
Homeowner (% of all occupied housing units)	89 %
Rental (% of all occupied housing units)	11 %
Vacant housing units	8%

In the year 2000, the City's median assessed home value was \$ 44,200, and average rent was \$ 409.