

Ely  
Public Library  
2010 – 2015 Strategic Plan

Adopted by the Ely Public Library Board:  
June 23, 2010

*Prepared by:  
Whitney Crettol Consulting*

## THE PLANNING PROCESS:

The Ely 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, city officials, library staff, and Friends board.

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 Ely has experienced a decline in population over the past two decades. The community is also a mix of extremes: having a large proportion of highly educated professionals (including many retirees), yet a higher than average poverty rate.

The library is located in a community center which was constructed during the 1930's. Both library stakeholders and community focus group participants identified the need for an upgraded facility. Among the building's limitations that specifically impact the library are an antiquated electrical system, space fragmentation, overall shortage of square footage, and non-compliance with ADA requirements. Community members called for a modern community center that is integrated with a full range of amenities.

Despite these facility challenges, the Ely Public Library is a highly utilized resource. The library has experienced increasing traffic and circulation, and has been recognized with national awards for the past two years. Technology is a central part of what the library offers. The computer lab and wireless service are heavily utilized, and audio/visual materials are checked out at a high level. Community members echoed the importance of investment in current technology, including the need for high speed access to the online world.

Support for children and families were also among the top concerns on the minds of community leaders. Their vision for the future included preparing children for school success, providing opportunities for exposure to the arts, and offering a variety of other community-based activities.

Finally, community members placed value on collaboration. They encouraged thinking and acting as a larger community, including increased communication and collaboration between neighboring jurisdictions. Interestingly, analysis of the library's circulation data show that the majority of patrons are not residents of the City proper, but of surrounding townships.

## ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES:

The Ely Public Library promotes the following values:

- Library representatives welcome and treat all patrons with respect and equality.
- Patrons will have free and open access to our resources in a non-judgmental manner that maintains their privacy.
- The library will be a safe, comfortable place for people to visit. The library will be a strong presence in the greater Ely community and looks for opportunities to provide relevant services to the area.
- The library promotes the love of reading, learning and pursuit of personal goals. Helping children develop skills for their future is a special priority.

## MISSION STATEMENT:

*The Ely Public Library enriches the lives of its patrons by providing the resources and environment to explore imagination and achieve life-long learning goals.*

## LIBRARY GOALS (In order of priority):

- 1. All patrons will explore topics of personal interest that enhance the quality of their lives.**
- 2. All patrons will have access to the online world as well as the help to become more savvy users of the library's resources.**
- 3. Young patrons will gain a lifelong enjoyment of reading and the literacy skills they need to succeed.**

## PROGRESS INDICATORS:

### Goal 1 (Stimulate Imagination & Satisfy Curiosity)

- ✓ Number of events and number of participants in program series and Summer Reading.
- ✓ Survey of participants in program series regarding whether they learned something new and/or stimulated their imaginations.
- ✓ Legacy program surveys

### Goal 2 (Connect to the Online World & Information Literacy)

- ✓ Number of people utilizing computer lab.
- ✓ Number of participants in library catalog workshops and survey about whether participation improved their ability to use library resources.
- ✓ Number of website hits.
- ✓ Number of hours of staff training on technology topics.

### Goal 3 (Create Young Readers 0-16)

- ✓ Number of story times and number of participants.
- ✓ Number of library tours provided to children's groups.

## 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.	<b>Quarterly</b>
4. Discuss strategic plan progress as regular agenda item at Library Board meetings.	<b>Monthly</b>
5. Compile progress indicator data for annual review.	<b>Annually 2011 - 2015</b> (September)
6. Board/staff annual 'retreat' to review implementation successes and challenges (including indicator data), review goals, revise strategies, and project budget needs.	<b>Annually 2011 - 2014</b> (September)
7. Staff develop action plans for the next year.	<b>Annually 2011 - 2014</b> (October - December)
8. Full round of strategic planning.	<b>Fall 2015</b> (New plan in place by January 2016)

# Appendix A:

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

GOAL # 1: All patrons will explore topics of personal interest that enhance the quality of their lives.

<b>Strategy A: Programming</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Promote and conduct Summer Reading Program for all ages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adult program with end-of-summer party.</li> <li>▪ Teen program with prizes.</li> <li>▪ Children’s program with prizes &amp; weekly events.</li> </ul>	Rachel Rachel Rachel (Mary – 2 events; Dave – 1 event)	September 30, 2010 & 2011 August 31, 2010 & 2011 August 31, 2010 & 2011
2. Promote and conduct Stimulate Imagination/Satisfy Curiosity program series (8 events): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Musical performances.</li> <li>▪ Teen-oriented program.</li> <li>▪ Lifelong learning programs (including family programs, Legacy events, etc.).</li> </ul>	Rachel Rachel Mary (Rachel)	July 2010 – December 31, 2011
3. Provide museum passes.	All Staff	Ongoing
4. Coordinate Book Club.	Friends (Pam Webster)	Monthly (June 2010 – December 2011)

<b>Strategy B: Displays</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Create displays that support Goal #1 and rotate display case contents quarterly.	Mary	Quarterly (Beginning September 1, 2010)
2. Add and maintain a bulletin board to feature new books, bestseller lists, and book club.	Rachel	Monthly (Beginning July 31, 2010)
3. Create displays that support and promote current programming on hall bulletin board.	Staff responsible for each program	Per Program Schedule (Beginning July 2010)

<b>Strategy C: Collection Development</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Approach Friends regarding 2011 fundraising efforts/proceeds channeled to building the library’s collection in areas that support Goal #1.	Rachel	October 31, 2010

<b>Strategy D: Facility</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Develop long-term facility plan that resolves current facility issues.	Library Board	December 31, 2011

**GOAL # 2:** All patrons will have access to the online world as well as the help to become more savvy users of the library's resources.

<b>Strategy E: Laptop Accommodations</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Add 1 more privacy carrel.	Rachel (Friends)	June 1, 2011
2. Maintain wireless contract.	Rachel	Contract Renewal Date

<b>Strategy F: Hardware &amp; Software</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Set up 5 new computers (Friends & Gates) in lab.	Rachel	July 1, 2010
2. Set up 1 new Gates Foundation computer.	Rachel	May 2011
3. Maintain software updates on all computers (lab and staff).	Rachel	Monthly (July 2010 – December 2011)

<b>Strategy G: Training for Patrons</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Promote and conduct "Catalog 101" workshops with handouts (5 sessions).	Rachel (Mary)	September – May 2010 & 2011

<b>Strategy H: Website</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Post current library programming and new resources.	Rachel (Roy)	Monthly (Beginning July 2010)
2. Develop area for patron input / reader's advisory.	Rachel (Roy)	December 31, 2011

<b>Strategy I: Staff Training</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Complete 23 Things on a Stick.	Mary	December 31, 2011
2. Finish 23 Things on a Stick #2.	Rachel	December 31, 2011
3. Participate in training on ongoing maintenance (software updates, etc.).	Dave (Rachel)	December 31, 2011

**GOAL # 3:** Young patrons will gain a lifelong enjoyment of reading and the literacy skills they need to succeed.

<b>Strategy J: Children's Programming</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Promote and conduct Story Times: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preschool story times with early literacy activities.</li> <li>▪ Coordinate volunteers for late afternoon story time.</li> <li>▪ Lunch Bunch school age continuing story time.</li> <li>▪ Approach Early Childhood Coalition to fund purchase of story time resources (flannel board kits, etc.).</li> <li>▪ Pilot 4 months of PJ/Bedtime Story events and assess.</li> <li>▪ Gather and study resources on story time techniques.</li> </ul>	Mary  Mary  Rachel  Mary & Rachel  Rachel Mary	Weekly (June 2010 – December 2011)  Weekly (Beginning June 8, 2010)  Weekly (June – August 2011) October 31, 2010  September 2010 – January 2011 December 31, 2011
2. Explore fall family event in collaboration with Early Childhood Coalition.	Mary (Rachel)	December 31, 2010
3. Submit early childhood calendar including library events.	Mary	Weekly (July 2010 – December 2011)
4. Explore teen focused event.	Rachel	September 2010 – May 2011
5. Summer Reading Program (See Goal #1)		



<b>Strategy K: Children's Collection</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Weed children's section (E's and J's).	Rachel	May 31, 2011

<b>Strategy L: Caregivers</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Research free resources for children's reader's advisory (e.g. bookmarks).	Rachel	December 31, 2011
2. Order books for Books for Babies project, as needed.	Rachel (AAUW / Friends)	TBD
3. Maintain Little Red Bookshelf.	Mary	Monthly

<b>Strategy M: Library Tours</b>		
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>	<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>
1. Provide tours for 1 <sup>st</sup> grade classes.	Rachel	May 31, 2010 & 2011
2. Provide tours for early childhood groups (e.g. Head Start).	Rachel	September – May 2010 & 2011
3. Provide tours to other groups upon request.	Rachel	TBD

## Appendix B:

# Community Focus Group – Summary

February 2010

# Community Focus Group – Summary of Responses

## Ely Public Library

2-19-10

A total of 12 community members participated in the focus group. Representation included city and township officials, construction, wolf center, Forest Service, Family Resource Center early childhood education, school board, local business, the arts, youth, faith community, and local media.

### 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
Children	An environment that supports children and gives them a sense of continuity and community.
Children	Keep them from slipping through the cracks, making sure they are successful in school and productive citizens.
Children	Have fine arts experiences.
Children	Greater number of community-based children's activities, like the current youth ski project.
High School Students	Are excited about learning.
Parents	Have support and training on parenting skills.
Parents	Really involved with their children's education and activities; support and encourage children.
Families	Stable, living wage jobs to provide for themselves.
Youth / Everyone	Young people stay in the community and raise the next generation.
School / Everyone	School and its decision-making are kept local, and have full enrollment.
Businesses / Everyone	Investment in technological infrastructure (e.g. Internet speed and availability).
Employers / Everyone	Activities and facilities (library, school) that draw and keep employees, and attract new businesses.
City Officials	Achieve more economic development.
City Officials	Working harmoniously and effectively together, and cooperatively with other communities.
Elected Officials	Demonstrate strong leadership skills.
All Citizens	Greater participation in leadership, civic engagement and volunteerism.
Everyone	Retain our excellent services and resources in tough financial times.
Everyone	People have health care services locally and are healthy.
Elders	Have advocates to ensure they get adequate health care.

## 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

- + Wolf and Bear Centers.
- + Many job opportunities for young people, especially during the summer.
- + Many government jobs.
- + Availability of medical care locally and the number of doctors here.
- + Fantastic library and library system.
- + Tremendous volunteer effort (e.g. skating rink, ski chalet).
- + Do come together in a crisis.
- + Community College.
- + Strong performing arts, fine arts, sports, clubs – lots of choices.
- + Retirees add so much through their backgrounds/skills, ideas, and support.
- + A lot of very creative people hiding in the woods.
- + School is excellent and turns out great students (“Harvard-bound”).
- + Tolerant community (new/old residents, environmentalists/power sports enthusiasts, locals/tourists).
- + Has been growth in availability of services (e.g. organic foods, local Internet).
- + Two weekly newspapers that print both sides of the story.

### Weaknesses/Threats

- Lingering bitterness about BWCA being established.
- Losing tax base as local businesses are closing.
- Clinic/hospital -- perception of lesser quality than larger facilities, limited availability of specialists, administrative problems.
- Job loss and talented young people are leaving as opportunities dry up.
- Decreased school funding has led to cutting the arts, activities, and teachers.
- Perception of Ely not being a friendly place to tourists and newcomers (parking restrictions, “Packsacker” label, etc.).
- City reductions in staff, plowing, support of festivals, and increasing fees due to budget limitations.
- Lost the Blues Festival.
- Loss of next generation which diminishes the ongoing sense of community.
- Attitudes of “Everything is just fine”, “No need to change” reflects complacency and impedes growth.

## 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?*

- Decide/develop consensus on our priorities and invest in them as a community – leaders need to come together to develop a community plan, and continue to build on existing city-school connections.
- Greater communication between political entities.
- Bump up job creation, including small enterprises.
- Get fiber optic here.
- Advocacy to stabilize LGA. and other funding formulas.
- Develop mid-range, quality homes in town (3 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2000 sq ft).
- Put an end to red-lining and open up mortgage financing through the local branches of big banks.
- Identify duplication and explore more sharing and collaboration between different organizations.
- Create a modern community center integrated with a full range of amenities (pool, gym, Internet access, more).

## 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
Create Young Readers: Early Literacy	11
Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access	11
Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical & Virtual Spaces	6
Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing & Listening for Pleasure	6
Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning	6
Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National, and World Affairs	5
Learn to Read & Write: Adult, Teen, and Family Literacy	5
Know Your Community: Community Resources & Services	4
Succeed in School: Homework Help	3
Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth, and Other Life Choices	3
Understand How to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Fluency	2
Build Successful Enterprises: Business & Nonprofit Support	2
Get Facts Fast: Ready Reference	2
Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness	2

Discover Your Roots: Genealogy & Local History	2
Express Creativity: Create and Share Content	1
Make Career Choices: Job & Career Development	0
Welcome to the United States: Services for New Immigrants	0

# Appendix C:

## Library SWOT Analysis

February 2010

STAFF FOCUS GROUP  
SUMMARY OF RESULTS  
Ely Public Library  
2-19-10

Two staff participated in a traditional SWOT analysis, with the following results.

STRENGTHS: *What does the library do best?*

- Recognized with national awards the past two years.
- Current, good Young Adult collection.
- Cornerstone of the community – the library is meeting a need in this small town.
- Good at handling high volume of business with a small staff during the summer.
- Computer lab is very important to a lot of people.
- Excellent selection in the movie collection – people rely on it for their entertainment.
- Sponsor local musical performances and Legacy opportunities.
- Good homesteading resources (how to raise chickens, cheese-making, etc.).
- Audio books are well used.
- Good support to large number of homeschoolers through our own collection and ILL.
- Great story time turnout for a small town, and the children are well behaved.

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

- Staff computer in need of replacement (in process).
- Never enough money to do it all.
- Reduction in staffing means less time to do the work.
- Administrative issues such as payroll errors – time spent getting things corrected, and feel library is not heard at City Hall.
- Public computers also need upgrading (some 10 years old).
- Not enough time to do more:
  - Programming,
  - Stuff for kids (e.g. enhanced children’s area with toys and games for check-out),
  - Computer maintenance,
  - Events,
  - Special thematic displays,
  - And so on!

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

- More use of technology (Ely Technology Center underutilized?):
  - Computer training for patrons,
  - Better library website,
  - Set up a blog,
  - Teach Internet use.
- Increase children’s programs.
- Engage teens (programming, gaming events, etc. to draw them in).
- Author visits and book signings; have books from many local authors, but haven’t had the authors themselves here for such events.

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

- Elected officials want to cut the City’s ALS contribution – this would kill the library.



# Appendix D:

## Library & Community Profile

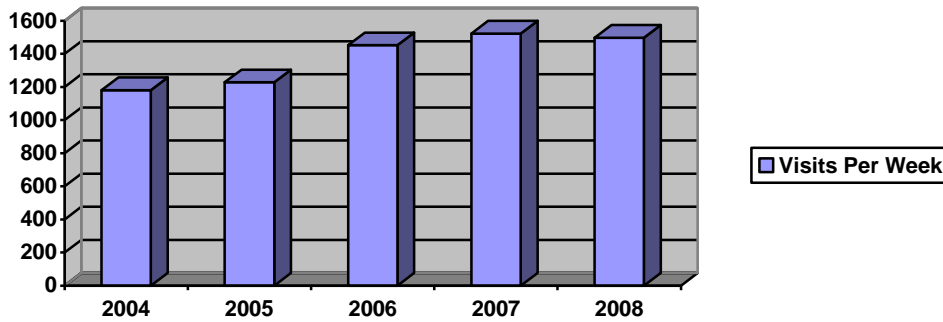
February 2010

# Library & Community Profile: Ely Public Library

## I. LIBRARY STATISTICS

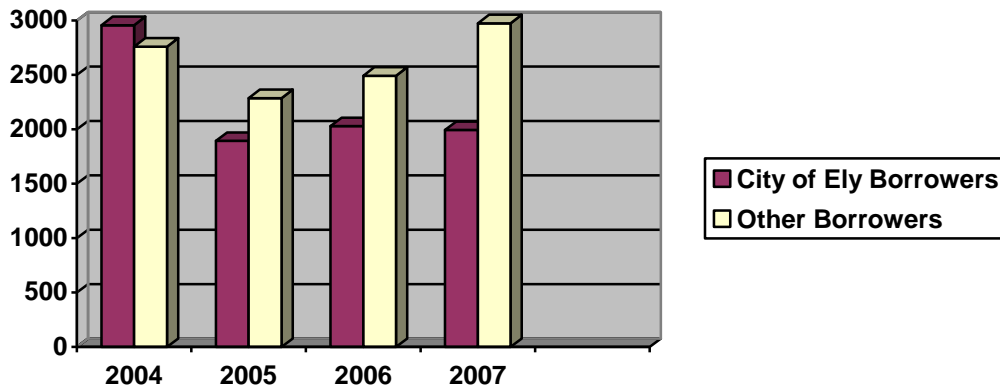
### Library Traffic

Over the past five years, the Ely Public Library has consistently been open 49 hours per week. Traffic into the library has been increasing during this time, with the average number of weekly visits 27 % higher than in 2004.



### 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. Despite the purge process, the overall number of borrowers has grown steadily since 2005. However, borrowers who live *outside* the city limits are accounting for an increasing proportion of the library's total users – 60 % in 2008, compared to 48 % in 2004.



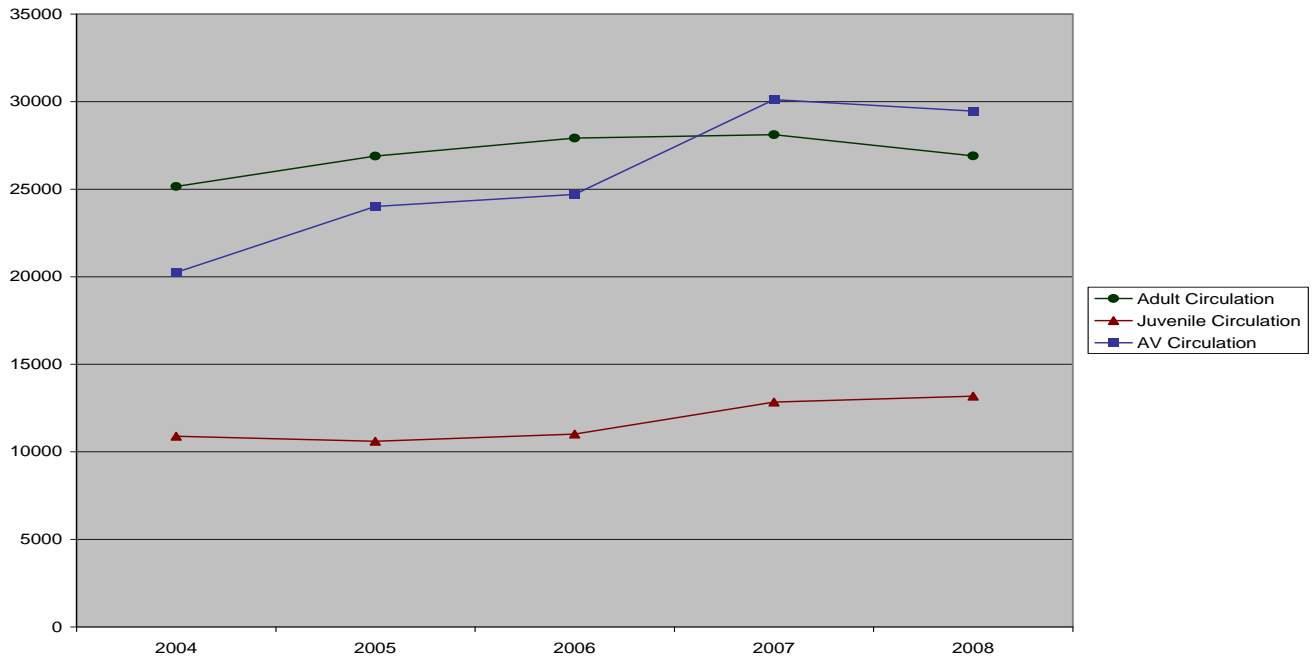
### Collection Size

Type of Material	2004	2008	Change
Print	31,945	33,480	+ 1,535
Audio/visual	2,758	3,942	+ 1,184
Other	146	105	- 41
<b>Total Collection:</b>	<b>34,849</b>	<b>37,527</b>	<b>+ 2,678</b>

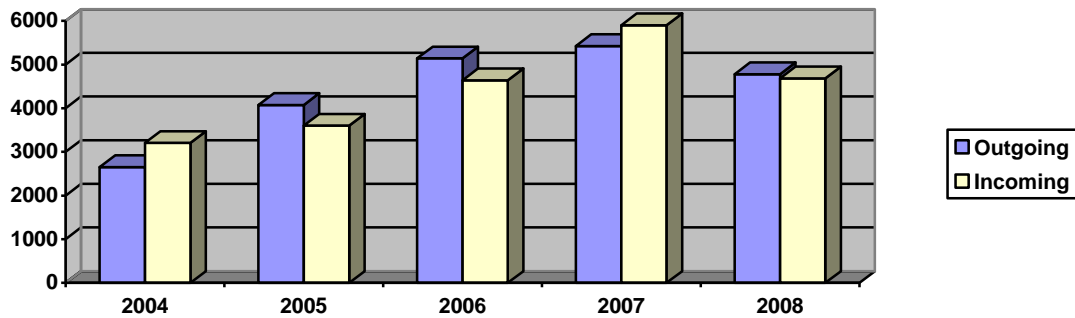
A January 2010 review of last check-out date identified 5,684 items, approximately 15 % of the library's total collection, that have not circulated during the past three years.

### Circulation

The overall circulation trend in Ely is one of growth. Circulation has increased 24 % in five years, with total 2008 circulation of 69,522. Movies and music have been the biggest gainers, now accounting for 42% of total circulation.



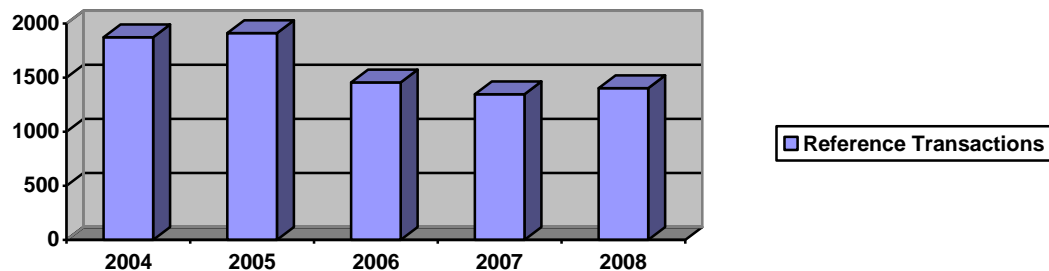
### Inter-Library Loans



Inter-library loan activity, both providing and receiving, has grown significantly.

### Reference Requests

The number of reference transactions has gone down over the past five years, consistent with the national trend for this service.

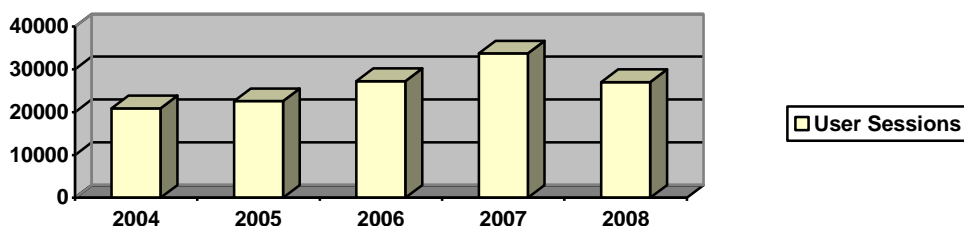


### Programs & Meeting Room Usage

The amount of programming offered has been fairly consistent in recent years, and is geared predominantly toward children. Public meeting rooms are available elsewhere in the Community Center building but usage is not tracked by the library.

Target Audience	Number of Programs	Type of Programs	2008 Attendance
Adults	3	Summer Reading Program parties, chamber music performances.	54
Children/Teens	62	Summer Reading Program with events, story times, digital recording skills teen residency.	1,527
<b>Total Attendance:</b>			<b>1,581</b>

### Public Computer/Internet Usage



Another public access computer was added in 2006, bringing the total number of terminals to eight. Computer lab usage has grown significantly, with a peak occurring in 2007. Wireless service also became available at this location in 2008. The library has a website, but the number of hits is not known.

### Operating Expenditures

Year	Staffing	Collection	Other	Total
2004	\$ 165,920	\$ 15,328	\$ 16,530	\$ 197,778
2008	\$ 200,930	\$ 29,020	\$ 16,097	\$ 246,047

The staffing level has remained virtually unchanged at 3.5 FTEs during this timeframe. Staff include a full-time Library Director, two clerks (one part-time and one full-time), and part-time janitorial and maintenance services.

## COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Ely has experienced a 12 % **decline** 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 – Ely	3,968	
2000 Census – Ely	3,724	- 244
2007 Estimate – Ely	3,473	- 251
2000 Census – Full zip code area	6,264	n.a.

### Race & Age

The vast majority (97 %) of Ely residents are Caucasian, but the 2000 Census recorded 70 persons of color residing here. In addition, 25 individuals identified themselves as Hispanic.

Age Group	Number of Residents	Percentage of Total Population
Children 0-17	663	18 %
Adults 18-64	2,258	61 %
Adults 65 & over	803	21 %

### Education

The Ely School District operates two schools. The District’s 2008 on-time graduation rate was 85.2 % [*Source: MN Department of Education*]. In addition, there are 44 children being home-schooled in the area. The City is also home to Vermilion Community College which has an enrollment of approximately 1,500 students. Of the population age 25 and over, 22 % have a bachelor’s degree or higher.

School	Number of Students [January 2010]
Washington Elementary (K – 6)	278
Ely High School (7 – 12)	260
<b>Total Students:</b>	<b>538</b>

### 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 14.5 % of Ely’s residents, or 501 individuals, were living below the poverty line.

### Housing

Housing Type	Percentage of Total
Homeowner ( % of all occupied housing units)	71 %
Rental ( % of all occupied housing units)	29 %
Vacant housing units	11 %

In the year 2000, the City’s median assessed home value was \$ 56,900, and average monthly rent was \$ 375.