Eveleth Public Library
2009 – 2014 Strategic Plan

Adopted by the Library Board:
November 23, 2009

Prepared by:
Whitney Crettol Consulting

THE PLANNING PROCESS:

The Eveleth Public Library completed a comprehensive strategic planning process between April and September 2009. 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, 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 focus groups with community leaders and with staff, 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, 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 was the need to increase the community's awareness of and engagement in local activities and public issues. Focus group members described a citizenry that lacks interest or motivation to get involved, and a general lack of civic responsibility and community pride - especially among younger adults. One visible sign of this apathy is the prevalence of blighted properties in town. Some identified challenges to greater community engagement included a low level of volunteerism, insufficient communication, and (something we experienced first hand) the shortage of spaces for meetings and gatherings in Eveleth.

The community's young people were also on leaders' minds. Contrary to common belief, census data indicate that children make up a slightly greater proportion of Eveleth's population than do seniors. However, circulation of juvenile materials at the library is fairly low and has remained flat for many years. Young children in particular are less likely to come to the library as they are in child care while their parents work. The community focus group's future vision also included more constructive activities for young people as alternatives to television and video games.

The Eveleth Public Library is a busy place. The city's already high poverty rate, combined with the current national economic crisis, make the library's free resources in even greater demand. However, there was a need identified to be out in the community more – with greater outreach, programming and communication about what the Library has to offer.

Finally, focus group members defined community more broadly, and want to see the Quad Cities working together more cooperatively for the common good in the future (Please see Appendices B, C & D for complete environmental scan reports).

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES:

Accessibility –
> Everyone is provided free and open access to our resources in a non-judgmental manner.

Linked to Community Needs –
> The Library seeks community input and aligns its materials and services to local needs.

Friendly Atmosphere –
> The Library is a friendly gathering place where everyone is made to feel welcome.

Preservation –
> The community's heritage, including the historic library building itself, is important to preserve for future generations.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Eveleth Public Library inspires people of all ages to enjoy reading, expand their minds, and improve community life through dynamic programming and extending the reach of information resources in a welcoming, historic setting.

LIBRARY GOALS (In order of priority):

1. **Young children will discover the joy of reading and begin a lifetime of learning.**

2. **Area residents, both young and old, will be informed of and inspired to participate in community activities and local, state, national and world affairs.**

3. **Area residents, both young and old, will read for fun and explore topics that promote personal and professional growth, broaden their world view, and enhance their leisure time.**

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Goal 1
- ✓ Summer Reading Program total participants, total completing, and survey at completion (e.g. *What did you read this summer that you really enjoyed?*).
- ✓ Increase in annual Imagination Library recipients with Eveleth addresses (or, number of referrals made).
- ✓ Survey of parents participating in Read With Me event (e.g. *What tips did you learn about how to support young readers that you will try at home?*)

✓ Number of story times conducted with child care providers, and total number of children participating – both outreach and at the Library.

Goal 2
✓ Civics series - number of programs held, number of youth and adult participants, and participant survey (e.g. *After participating in this program, do you feel better informed about ____? Did you learn something new – if so, what? What topics would you like to see addressed in future programs?*).
✓ Number of community meetings held at the Library.

Goal 3
✓ Number of programs held, number of participants, and participant survey (e.g. *Did this program (check all that apply): Promote your personal or professional growth; Broaden your view of the world; Enhance your leisure time. Please briefly explain how you feel the program benefited you / what you enjoyed*).
✓ Circulation of Patron Picks materials.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

Implementation Steps	*Timeline*
1. Present strategic plan to Library Board for adoption. Presentation of newly adopted plan to City Council.	October 2009
2. Communicate the new plan to stakeholders and the public.	October - November 2009
3. Review strategic plan progress as a regular agenda item at staff meetings; make mid-course corrections.	**Monthly**
4. Discuss strategic plan progress as regular agenda item at Library Board meetings.	**Monthly**
5. Compile progress indicator data for annual review.	**Annually 2010 - 2014** (September)
6. Board/staff annual 'retreat' to review implementation successes and challenges (including indicator data), review goals, revise strategies, and project budget needs.	**Annually 2010 - 2013** (September)
7. Staff develop action plans for the next year.	**Annually 2010 - 2013** (October - December)
8. Full round of strategic planning.	**Fall 2014** (New plan in place by January 2015)

Appendix A:

YEAR 1 Action Plans
October 2009 – December 2010

GOAL # 1: Young children will discover the joy of reading and begin a lifetime of learning.

Strategy A: Children's Programming		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**
1. Promote and hold themed preschool story time on a monthly basis.	Cindy	Beginning December 2009 (Monthly)
2. Promote and hold "Dog Days of August" outdoors event with the reading dogs.	Mary Beth	August 2010
3. Summer Reading Program: ▪ Develop tentative events plan and calendar. ▪ Finalize plan and calendar. ▪ Hold 6 special events during the program with at least 1 focusing on each of the following age groups (include kids' yard sale?): − 0 to 5 − 6 to 9 − 10 to 14	Cindy (with all staff)	April 30, 2010 May 31, 2010 June – July 2010

Strategy B: Engaging Parents		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**
1. Actively promote Imagination Library to all families with children 0-5, with a goal of at least 2 new children signed up per month	All Staff	November 2009 – December 2010 (Monthly)
2. Sponsor a "Read With Me" Event: ▪ Purchase side-by-side readers collection. ▪ Secure presenter (Title I Teacher?) on how to support beginning readers. ▪ Promote and hold event focusing on parents with their K-2nd grade children. Include hands-on practice segment.	 Mary Beth Cindy Cindy	 December 31, 2009 December 31, 2009 February 2010

Strategy C: Collaboration with Early Childhood & Elementary Educators		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**
1. Develop relationship with early childhood providers: ▪ Invite child care centers (Chicagami & First Class) to new story time, and offer outreach option in bad weather. ▪ Obtain list of local family child care providers and encourage participation in story time program.	 Cindy Cindy	 November 30, 2009 November 30, 2009
2. Story Kits: ▪ Dedicate $500 from current donation fund to develop 10 story kits for loan to child care providers & parents.	Mary Beth	May 31, 2010

Strategy D: Collection Development		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**
1. Strengthen juvenile collection: ▪ Analyze juvenile collection and identify gaps/specific areas in need of enhancement. ▪ Order new juvenile print materials focusing on areas identified above, dedicating no less than one-quarter of the library's 2010 collection budget.	 Mary Beth Mary Beth	 February 28, 2010 December 31, 2010

GOAL # 2: Area residents, both young and old, will be informed of and inspired to participate in community activities and local, state, national and world affairs.

Strategy E: Civics Activities		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**
1. Civics Series: ▪ Plan a series of 3 events to include youth and adults (including a youth Mock Council Meeting partnering with City and local civics teacher). ▪ Secure partners. ▪ Promote and conduct events as per plan.	 Mary Beth (Jackie Junek & Liz Kuoppola)	 April, July & September TBD TBD

Strategy F: Community Resource Central		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**
1. Establish Community Bulletin Board: ▪ Add large bulletin boards in elevator area. ▪ Clean out front foyer area & add easel directing patrons to the community bulletin board. ▪ Recruit a volunteer to maintain the bulletin board (e.g. remove outdated material) on a regular basis. ▪ Solicit postings by contacting local organizations and getting media coverage of this new resource (see promotions plan, Strategy G). ▪ Promote community bulletin board to patrons.	 Cindy Deb Deb Deb & Cindy All Staff	 October 31, 2009 November 30, 2009 November 30, 2009 December 31, 2009 Beginning November 2009 (Ongoing)

Strategy G: Public Meeting Space		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**

1. Make the Library available to the community for morning meetings during closed hours:
   ▪ Begin offering meeting space to the public.
   ▪ Promote availability of Library space (and other Library happenings) monthly via:
      − Utility bill insert.
      − Eveleth Scene.
      − City webpage.
      − Public access television announcements.
	Mary Beth
	Mary Beth
		November 1, 2009
		Monthly
		(November 2009 – December 2010)

GOAL # 3: Area residents, both young and old, will read for fun and explore topics that promote personal and professional growth, broaden their world view, and enhance their leisure time.

Strategy H: Programming		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**

1. Programming for General Audiences:
   ▪ Develop a plan to sponsor 3 programs that address this goal (including a Christmas Cookie Exchange).
   ▪ Secure partners.
   ▪ Promote & conduct events as per plan.
	Mary Beth
	(Cindy & Deb)
		November 2009, February & August 2010
		
		TBD
		December 2009 (others TBD)

Strategy I: Reader's Advisory		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**
1. Promote Patron Pick opportunity and make it anonymous; change colors annually.	Mary Beth	December 31, 2009
2. Displays: ▪ Develop displays that highlight personal/professional growth topics and support current Library programming; rotate displays at least 4 times per year.	Deb	Beginning November 2009 (At least quarterly)

3. Post new fiction and non-fiction book lists and update monthly.
   ▪ Publisher's Weekly best sellers list.
   ▪ "New At the Library" list (staff picks while processing new books).
	Mary Beth
	Deb & Cindy
		Beginning October 2009
		(Monthly)

Appendix B:

Community Focus Group – Summary

May 2009

Community Focus Group – Summary of Responses
Eveleth Public Library
5-7-09

A total of 9 community members participated in the focus group. Representation included local business owners, education, civic clubs, and the faith community.

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
Youth	Have constructive activities and a place to hang out to avoid boredom; alternatives to TV and video games.
Business Community	Business "hub" area that meets needs of the community.
Whole Community	Variety of arts and theater opportunities that are attended by all ages.
Whole Community	Residents and businesses have pride in their property and keep it looking nice and clean.
Whole Community	Good infrastructure (internet, streets, utilities).
Whole Community	Realistic goals – a sense of community based on an understanding of our strengths and limitations; have a focus rather than trying to be everything.
Whole Community	Cooperation with other Quad Cities that taps each town's respective strengths; become all one community where Eveleth is considered a neighborhood.

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
   +   History of the town (hockey +).
   +   Eveleth has a personality (can poke fun at ourselves, value-based).
   +   Town pulls together when there is an identified need (e.g. hanging baskets project, benefits for families in crisis).
   +   City government has provided support and allowed local groups to implement projects themselves (beautification, food drive, etc).
   +   High quality older population – seniors are talented and active in the community.
   +   Varied ethnic backgrounds.
   +   Churches are involved.
   +   Strong school system.

+ New Community Foundation.
+ Good businesses.
+ Police department is community-oriented, develops relationships with youth.
+ Library.
+ Parks and recreational facilities.
+ Curling facility.
+ Wonderful water (and utilities in general).
+ July 4th celebration.
+ Pretty community in summer, and new maples planted by the City add fall color.
+ Cityscape is enchanting ("city on the hill").

Weaknesses/Threats
- Blight.
- Eveleth has chased businesses away.
- Business district has gaps.
- Streets, alleys, other physical infrastructure in great need – town is not bicycle/wheelchair/stroller friendly.
- Private service clubs struggle to get active members.
- Reluctance of citizens to be involved on committees; lack of people running for elected office.
- Young people are a small part of the population – tend to leave.
- Some old-timers don't want to let go of things and pass on to someone new.
- Media portrays relationship between mayor and council as being dysfunctional/unwilling to compromise.
- Historical political boundaries are not applicable anymore (Fayal, West Eveleth, Leonidas, Eveleth).
- Not thinking outside the box.

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?*

- Get more young families involved / spread the volunteer ethic; take projects on in steps that are manageable so that people are not overwhelmed.
- Clean up the town (could be a volunteer initiative).
- More continuous education for residents, newcomers, and businesses about expectations for maintaining property; more teeth in and enforcement of the blight ordinance; and resources for property owners to resolve blight issues.
- Motivate people / community pride.
- A leadership group with courage to move past nay-sayers and get things done!
- Diversify funding sources.
- Create a more welcoming atmosphere for businesses – need a hands-on, user-friendly EDA that makes the process easy, especially to help small businesses that don't know the ropes.
- Hold more fun events that bring people in to Eveleth (e.g. Ethnic Days).

LIBRARY PRIORITIES

Finally, participants were asked to vote on 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	11
Create Young Readers: Early Literacy	7
Build Successful Enterprises: Business & Nonprofit Support	7
Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National, and World Affairs	7
Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access	6
Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness	6
Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning	6
Succeed in School: Homework Help	5
Understand How to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Fluency	5
Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical & Virtual Spaces	5
Get Facts Fast: Ready Reference	4
Express Creativity: Create and Share Content	3
Discover Your Roots: Genealogy & Local History	2
Learn to Read & Write: Adult, Teen, and Family Literacy	1
Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth, and Other Life Choices	1
Make Career Choices: Job & Career Development	1
Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing & Listening for Pleasure	0
Welcome to the United States: Services for New Immigrants	0

Appendix C:

Library SWOT Analysis

April 2009

SUMMARY OF RESULTS
Eveleth Public Library
4-14-09

A total of three (3) staff participated in a traditional SWOT analysis, with the following results.

STRENGTHS: *What does the library do best?*
- Staff are friendly, have roots/connection to the community.
- City Council is supportive of the library.
- All staff know how to do all the jobs in small library ("cross-trained").
- Good selection of books and other materials.
- Very comfortable, pretty Carnegie building.
- Offer tax forms which are otherwise hard to find.
- Good cooperative relationships with other local libraries, especially within Quad-Cities.
- Busy place – people are using the library.
- Inter Library Loan is very active and expands what patrons can access.

WEAKNESSES: *What do you think the library could improve?*
- Limited shelving space.
- Not enough staff for number of hours library is open.
- Could have more children's programming/activity in juvenile area.
- A lot of community members who still don't know where the library is.
- Library is dusty and messy – could be better organized.
- Lack of meeting space with basement rented out; had to pass on movie rights opportunity as no place to show them.

OPPORTUNITIES: *What needs do you see in the community that could be opportunities for the library to make a difference?*
- Demand for job search, resume development, test preparation resources.
- Seniors interested in basic computer classes.
- Still many people without computers or online access at home.
- Re-claim downstairs space for use as meeting rooms, public and private gathering space.
- Better connection to public and charter schools, and family child care providers.

THREATS: *What outside forces do you feel could negatively affect the library?*
- The economy.
- Decisions of the Governor resulting in state and local funding cuts.
- Cutbacks in City services would impact the library even if indirect (e.g. City provides all of our maintenance services).
- Pressure to combine libraries and potential loss of local facility (not all bad news?).
- Technology – movement away from actual books to downloadable formats; young people are not learning how to research and evaluate information found online.

Appendix D:

Library & Community Profile

May 2009

Library & Community Profile:
## Eveleth Public Library

I. LIBRARY STATISTICS

Library Traffic

The Eveleth Library has consistently been open 42 hours per week during the past five years. The temporary closure of the Virginia Library increased traffic in adjacent communities during 2005. Aside from that event however, average weekly visits have gradually declined to a level 9 % lower than five years ago.
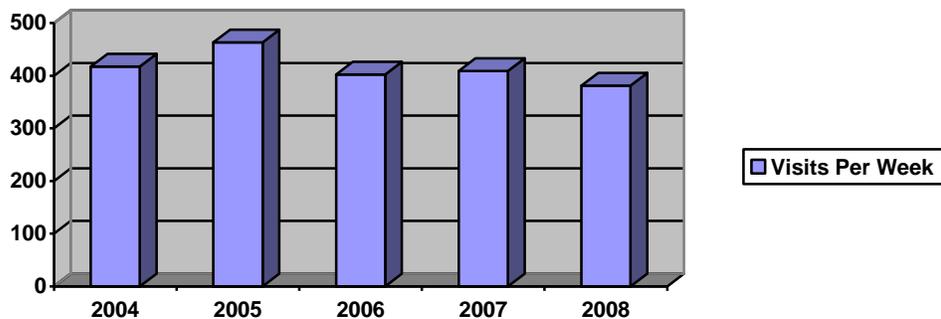
Number of Resident Borrowers

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 at that time, and again in 2007, is reflective of the purge process. According to current population estimates, approximately 81% of Eveleth residents have library cards.
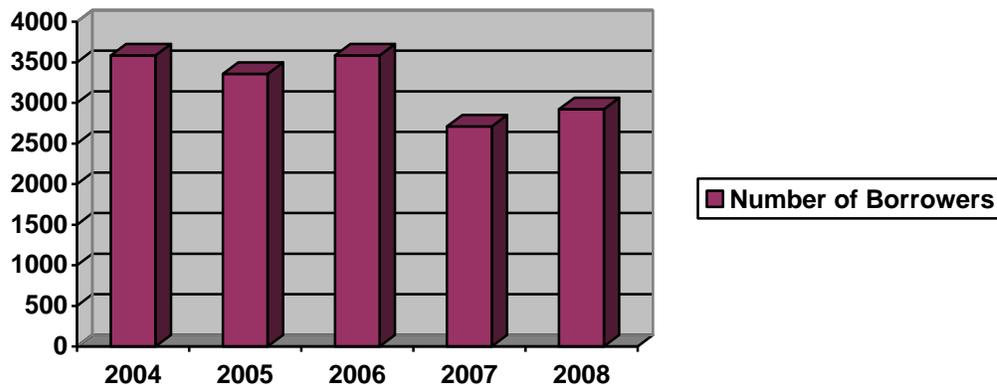

Collection Size

| Type of Material	2004	2008	Change
Print	24,538	25,091	+ 553
Audio	287	352	+ 65
Video	682	1,137	+ 455
Other	33	33	0

An April 2009 review of last check-out date identified 3,511 items in the library's collection that have not circulated during the past three years. Of these items, approximately 29 % are classified as juvenile and 71 % are adult materials.

Circulation

Despite a decline in visits, Eveleth has seen an overall increase in circulation during the past five years. Both adult and juvenile circulation increased suddenly during the Virginia library closure. They have since leveled off, but at higher than pre-2005 volumes. Circulation of adult materials has experienced the greatest increase (20 %), with juvenile circulation increasing only slightly (5 %). Total circulation for 2008 was 16 % above the 2004 level.
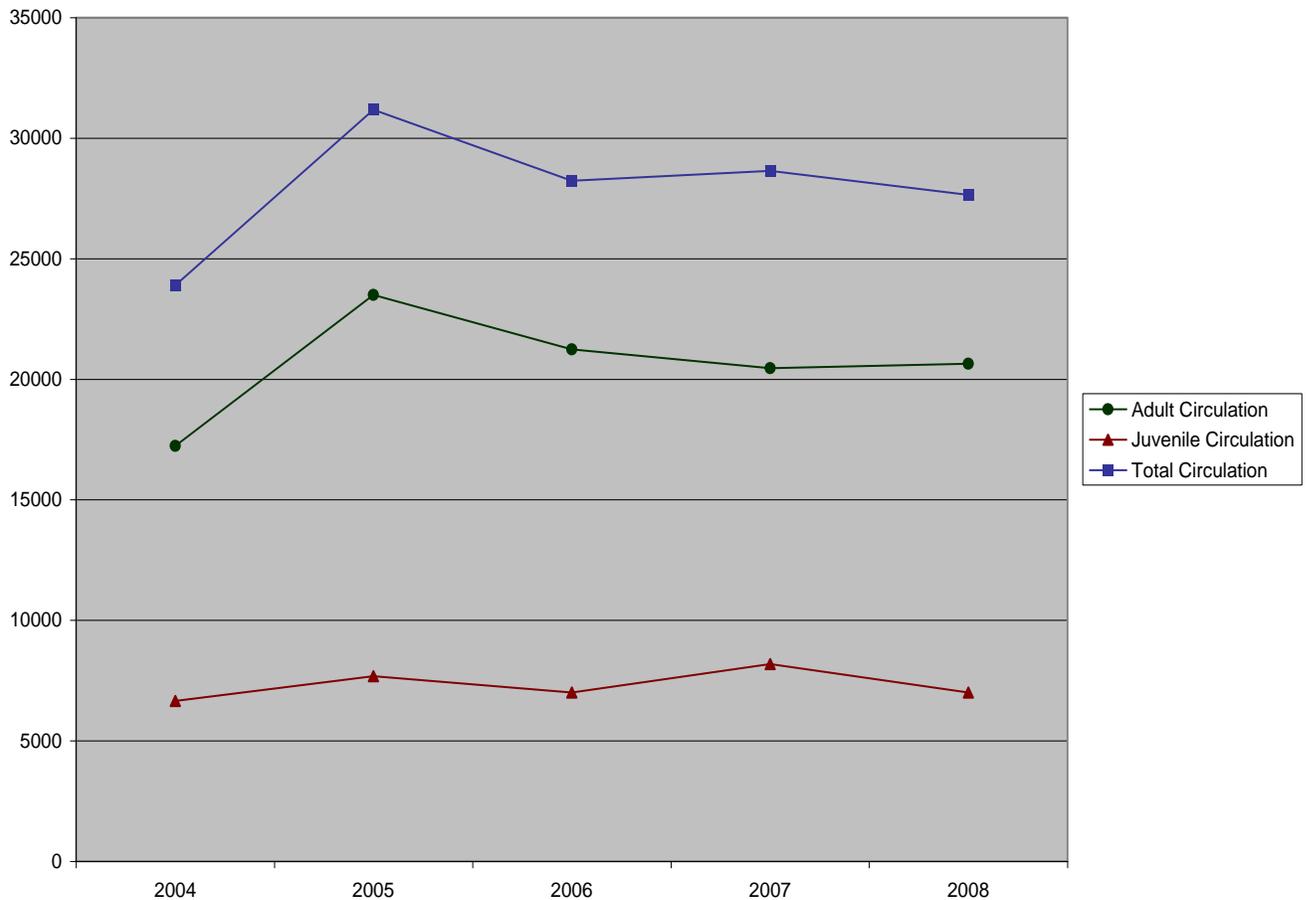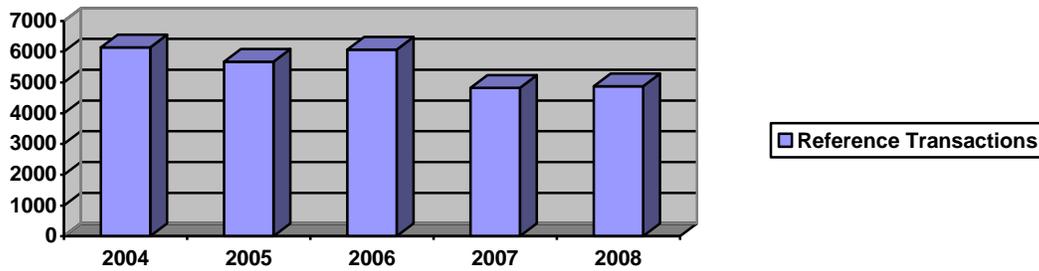

Inter-Library Loans
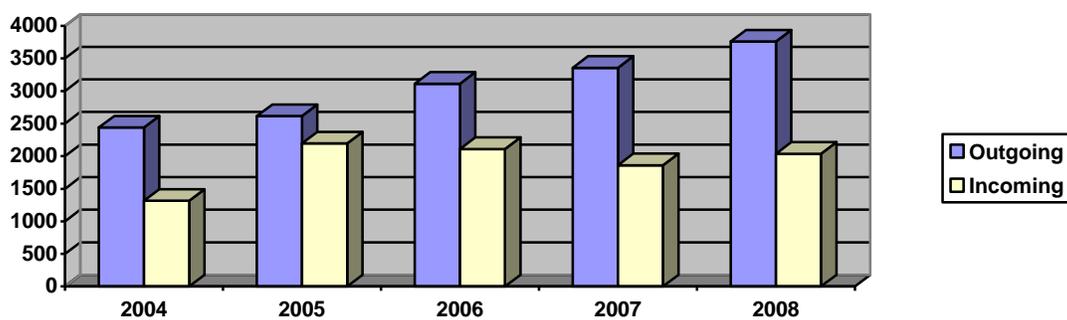
Reference Requests

The number of reference transactions has decreased since 2004, following the national trend.


Programs

Library programming has been on the decline in Eveleth. The only adult programming offered was a book club (2005-2006), which was discontinued due to competition with other activities in participants' busy schedules. The number of children's programs is half that of five years ago, although participation has dropped by only 25%.

Target Audience	Number of Programs	Type of Programs	2008 Attendance
Adults	0	- -	0
Children	5	Summer Reading Program events (e.g. arts & crafts, children's performers, story time)	274
		Total Attendance:	**274**

Public Computer/Internet Usage
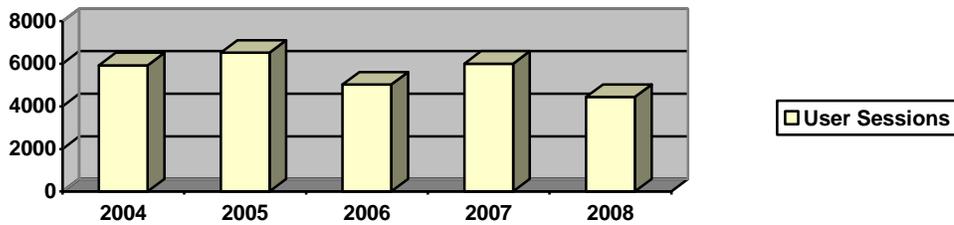
Usage of the Library's seven public access computers has been up and down, with 2008 having the lowest activity of the past five years. Wireless service is not available at this location. The Library has a page on the City's website, but does not have information about how frequently it is accessed.

Operating Expenditures

Year	Staffing	Collection	Other	Total
2004	$ 79,700	$ 20,400	$ 33,700	$ 133,800
2008	$ 101,107	$ 19,728	$ 40,474	$ 161,309

Current staffing includes 1.0 FTE Librarian and two .5 FTE support staff.

II. COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Eveleth/Fayal Township has experienced an 11% 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	6,065	
2000 Census	5,771	- 294
2007 Estimate	5,387	- 384

Race

Although the vast majority (97 %) of residents are Caucasian, the 2000 Census recorded 179 people of color. In addition, 17 individuals identified themselves as Hispanic.

Age

Age Group	Number of Residents	Percentage of Total Population
Children 0-17	1,275	22 %
Adults 18-64	3,364	58 %
Adults 65 & over	1,132	20 %

Education

Eveleth is home to two of the Eveleth-Gilbert District schools. The District's 2007 graduation rate was 90.2 % [*Source: MN Department of Education*]. There are also 29 children being home-schooled in the district, and a nearby charter high school focusing on science and technology. Only 13 % of the adult population (age 25 & over) has a bachelor's degree or higher in Eveleth, but 24 % in Fayal Township.

School	Number of Students [April 2009]
Franklin Elementary K – 6	474
Eveleth-Gilbert High School 9 - 12	323
Charter School 10 - 12	120
Total Students:	**917**

Income

In 2007, the average wage of $ 34,684 in St. Louis County was nearly $ 8,000 below the state average [*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics*].   The County also has a high unemployment rate which just reached 10.1 %, compared to 8.2 % in Minnesota overall [*March 2009, DEED*]. The 2000 Census indicated that 15.4 % of Eveleth's residents (564 individuals) and 2.3 % of Fayal residents (43 individuals), were living below the poverty line

Housing

Housing Type	Percentage of Total
Owner-occupied	67 %
Rental	18 %
Vacant housing units	15 %

In 2000, Eveleth's median assessed home value was $ 46,700, and average rent was $ 375. The median home value in Fayal Township was $ 95,500, and average rent was $ 444.