

We value.....

*Children and Families*

*Improving Lives*

*Reading and Literacy*

*Diversity*

*Equity of Access*

*Civic Exchange*

*Economic Development*

*The Freedom to Read*

*Life-long Learning*

*Free Speech and Privacy*

*Community Needs*

*Electronic Resources*

*Reflecting our Culture*

*Anchoring Communities*

*Education*

*We Value Our Community!*



# *We Value Our Community*

The 2004-2005 Annual Report of the  
Office of the County Librarian  
and the  
Cullman County Public Library System  
Cullman, Alabama

John Paul Myrick, MLS  
*County Librarian/Chief Executive Officer*

Max W. Hand, MLS  
*Assistant County Librarian*

Sharon Townson, BA.  
*Head of Public Services*



## Letter from the County Librarian

It is with sincere pleasure and pride that I submit my fourteenth annual report of the status of operations and services of the Cullman County Public Library System. The fiscal year of 2004-2005 will go down as a banner year of successes in meeting the informational needs of the people of Cullman County.

The Library System saw realization of a 14-year dream with the implementation of a county-wide web-based library automation system in conjunction with both local school systems and 40 participating library facilities. The replacement Cullman County Bookmobile was reconstructed and delivered. The Library System joined the other public libraries in making Alabama the first state nationwide to offer after-school tutoring services in an online environment. CCPLS became one of the first libraries in the state and obtained national recognition by offering downloadable digital audiobooks. And library officials from CCPLS were elected to statewide offices within professional associations and provided training and consulting to libraries and librarians across the country, marking the level of excellence offered by Cullman County's public libraries.



While these accomplishments and a host of others are among many which area residents can be proud, they were not easy to achieve. Space for public library services in Cullman County is critically, if not dangerously, insufficient. A survey of the new Alabama public library standards showed that CCPLS could not attain the status of having an accredited library due to shortfalls in several areas. And inability to retain quality staff plagued the library throughout the year. Clearly much must be done to provide public library and information services fitting for a county such as ours.

I want to thank the many people who pulled together during this exciting yet trying year to keep libraries operating, to maintain the level of service our users deserve, and to make the very, very best of often difficult situations. I offer this annual report in honor of a dedicated staff and a diligent Library Board.

County Librarian/Chief Executive Officer

## We Value Our Community

In 2004, the Public Library Board of Cullman County adopted not only a new mission statement for the Cullman County Public Library System (CCPLS), but a set of core values to drive and guide public library services and development:

### ***Our Mission:***

*Information is necessary for recreation, for life-long learning, for cultural enrichment, and for the support of the Democratic principles established by the founding fathers of our nation. The mission of the Cullman County Public Library System is to assist all residents of the county in meeting their basic human need for information.*

### ***Our Core Values:***

- We believe that reading improves lives.
- We believe that the library's chief purpose is to support the individual pursuit of knowledge and life-long learning.
- We believe that the library should be an institution for civic exchange and a community forum for ideas.
- We believe that the bedrock of library service is a collection of reliable sources, preserving the best from the past and keeping current with new discoveries.
- We believe that literacy and the ability to learn are basic tools of economic opportunity and personal success.
- We are committed to children, youth, and their families.
- We value our patrons, we respect them as individuals, and we benefit from the diversity of cultures they represent.
- We support the wide range of the public's reading and research interests as a reflection of that diversity.
- We believe that the freedom to read whatever one chooses is a right as profound as free speech, and we defend that right and protect the privacy of a person's use of the library as a sacred trust.
- We take pride in our responsiveness to community needs and individual interests.
- We strive for equity of access to library services across the entire county.
- We embrace electronic information sources as new tools for extending the library's usefulness.
- We believe that every library in our system is a community anchor, strengthening the community it serves and reflecting the culture of the surrounding residents.
- We believe that every library facility should provide space and surroundings conducive to learning as a reflection of the value our community places on education.

The accomplishments of the Cullman County Public Library System in 2004-2005 can be easily told by looking at how CCPLS fulfilled key points of these core values.....

*\*We believe that reading improves lives.*

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**Reading** does improve lives, and supporting reading a lifelong learning is the library's primary goal. An estimated 200,000 persons walked through the doors of the public libraries of Cullman County, forever having their lives impacted in a positive manner.

To increase reading among children, CCPLS continues to operate its "Raising Readers" service, bring reading and programming materials to at-risk children in area day care facilities and Head Start programs. Over 5,000 items were loaned from the van, reaching an estimated 3,500 children, encouraging them to read and supporting their formal learning.

Library employees have worked hard to market materials and services. A trial run of "The Readers Herald" published by and distributed in the Cullman Times put library information in the hands of over 13,000 readers. The success of the newsletter has led CCPLS to increase funding within its budget for marketing. Lists of books for early readers, and in specific subject areas were developed to further highlight and market library materials.

Over 5,400 items were added to library collections countywide. These were joined by downloadable audiobooks made available through the library's website and the addition of approximately 20,000 items available to the public in electronic format. Counting electronic resources, the residents of the county have approximately 150,000 items available to them relatively quickly, nearly double the number three years ago. CCPLS used at \$12,500 to increase the number of books on compact disc available in branch libraries, must to the delight of users of those libraries.

To continue to improve lifelong learning, library staff were regularly trained in use of resources. Special training in use of the 69 research databases of the Alabama Virtual Library was scheduled and held in Cullman for both CCPLS staff, and library employees of neighboring school and public library districts.

### **Improving Lives: By the Numbers**

*119,873 books, videos, and other items were used by residents.*

*The staff answered 10,849 requests for reference or informational assistance.*

*There were 111 loans of materials between the libraries of the county or to other libraries.*

*The seven library service outlets saw an estimated 200,000 visitors during the year.*

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*\* We are committed to children, youth, and their families.*

**Adult Programming Highlights:**

*"Hank Williams, Sr.: An Alabama Sensation"* Lecture with Dr. Alan Brown of the University of West Alabama  
*Diabetes Care* program with Cullman Regional Medical Center

*"Alabama's Constitutions"* Lecture by the Alabama Humanities Foundation

*"Christmas Quilting Crafts"*

*"Religion in the Public Schools"* Lecture with Dr. Stephen Brown of Auburn University

**Children's Programming Highlights:**

*"Funtastic Reading"* Annual Summer Library Program  
Tennessee Aquarium special program

McWane Center special program

After-School Reading Clubs  
Story hours at Central, Fairview and Hanceville Libraries

**Educational programs** are but one of the many ways that CCPLS supports education and improving the quality of life, but provides a community forum, bringing residents together to discuss ideas and issues.

The annual Summer Library Program and Children's Story Times continue to not only encourage reading by area children over the summer, but gives children the opportunity to interact and grow socially. CCPLS provided 242 programs for children around the county during the year, attended by over 6,400 area children.

CCPLS continues to expand its adult programming series. Over 10 programs were planned and held for adult populations during the year with over 200 persons attending. Programs ranged from lectures on country music legend Hank Williams, Sr. to instructional programs in arts and crafts to informational programs on flatware collecting. In the coming year, community reads and book study groups are planned to further provide that forum for ideas.

The "Gallery at the Library" at the Cullman branch continued to provide the community with space to view the works of local artists. Inaugurated in 2004, the gallery has hosted the works of eight artists, as well as traveling exhibitions, serving as the only public art gallery in the county. The Central Library and the Tom Bevill Library were also selected as the only facilities in the state to host in 2004-05 selected traveling exhibitions from the Gilder-Lehrmann Institute of American History, affiliated with Columbia University in New York. These traveling exhibitions on Frederic Douglas and on the theme of "Freedom" were underwritten by the Ford Foundation, among other charitable donors.

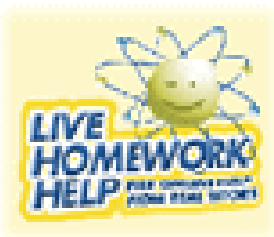
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*\*We strive for equity of access to library services across the entire county.*

*\*We embrace electronic information sources as new tools for extending the library's usefulness.*

**Recognizing and responding** to community needs is something the public libraries of Cullman County do every day. By embracing creative ways to meet those needs, we improve the quality of life and the economic vitality of Cullman County.

CCPLS worked cooperatively with other public libraries in the state and the Alabama Public Library



Service to bring *Homework Alabama* to support area students. *Homework Alabama* is an after hours tutoring service matching students with trained tutors in an online environment. In its first two months alone, *Homework Alabama*

provided tutoring assistance to over 32,000 students in Alabama, many of those in Cullman County. CCPLS staff worked closely with local school superintendents, teachers, and others to publicize and explain the service. Late in the year, word came that two Cullman County students living in Belize with their missionary parents were using their Cullman County generated access to *Homework Alabama* to get help.

To insure that every resident of the county could expect service equity, CCPLS used a \$32,000 federal grant project to automate branch libraries, and replace public computers countywide. Through the "Atrium" Library Automation System, provided by Book Systems, Inc. of Huntsville, users of the Cullman, Hanceville, Fairview, Bookmobile and Crane Hill libraries now get real time access to their library records, speeding the delivery of library materials and services. Residents countywide can place reserves on materials and use the library catalog from their homes, and find their materials waiting for them when they arrive at their neighborhood library. CCPLS joined with the libraries of the Cullman City Schools, the Cullman County Schools, and with the Hartselle Public Library in creating the *Mountain Lakes Library Cooperative*, sharing resources through

the Atrium system. Once fully implemented, a resident can search the collections of the entire public library system and surrounding libraries, and their local school library all in one search.

### **Camellia Net**

Recognizing that work and other time factors often impact how residents can access libraries, CCPLS continued its plans for providing services electronically to Cullman County residents anywhere in the world with Internet access. In addition to purchasing "e-books" or electronic books, CCPLS joined with the Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Public Libraries in creating "Camellia Net", a statewide portal for downloadable audio books. Residents of communities served by the participating libraries can download full length audiobooks from their home or work computers, and listen to them anywhere. Recognizing the innovation in these libraries sharing resources, the Associated Press wrote a story on Camellia Net, which was carried nationwide.

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A public library represents the community it serves, and to insure that visitors and residents understand the value that Cullman County places on learning and education, CCPLS strive to insure that the very best use of space allotted to libraries is inviting and appealing.

Many improvement projects were undertaken at the Central Library and in several branch facilities during the year. The Library met a long-term goal when redesigned space for Young Adults was created at the Central Library. Comfortable furnishings, book displays, rugs and computers invited teenagers to embrace and enjoy reading and learning.



Through the support of the Invista Corporation, badly worn carpeting at the Central Library was replaced. Sheriff Tyler Roden loaned trustees to work during the installation of this carpeting, and the Children's Room and Administrative Offices received both badly needed repainting and new carpet. Exterior lighting was replaced at the Central Library, and furnishings were added at several branch libraries.

Despite the improvements, the Library System remains desperately short on space. A study completed by a professional library planner in 1995 showed that, at that time, Cullman County needed an additional 25,000 square feet of library space. The ensuing 10 years have only compounded the shortage with new and ever-changing needs of the community. *If the library is to continue to anchor the community, something must be done to correct this growing problem.* The current space deficit in its public libraries is a significant black eye on the community. By not being able to support existing programs, or provide additional services, CCPLS is beginning to fail in improving the quality of life in the county.

# **The Public Library Board of Cullman County, Alabama**

Mr. Ronald L. Hogue, Cullman, Chairman  
Place 1

Mrs. Trina R. Walker, Baileyton  
Place 2

Dr. Dan J. Scott, Holly Pond  
Place 4

Jane D. Turkett Abt, Cullman  
Place 3

Mrs. Dean Drake Green, Cullman  
Place 5

## **Cullman County Public Library System**

*"Public Libraries...Changing Lives in Cullman County For Over 100 Years"*

### **System Headquarters and Cullman County Bookmobile**

200 Clark Street, Northeast  
Cullman, Alabama 35055  
256-734-1068

### **Cullman Branch/Central Library**

200 Clark Street, Northeast  
Cullman, Alabama 35055  
256-734-2720

### **24/7 E-Library**

[www.ccpls.com](http://www.ccpls.com)

### **Tom Bevill Public Library**

Colony Educational Complex  
151 Byars Road  
Hanceville, Alabama 35077  
256-287-1573

### **Crane Hill/West Regional Library**

14538 County Road 222  
Crane Hill, Alabama 35053  
256-747-6509

### **Fairview Public/East Regional Library**

7525 Alabama Highway 69, North  
Cullman, Alabama 35058  
256-796-5424

### **Garden City Public Library**

501 First Avenue, South  
Garden City, Alabama 35070  
256-352-4552

### **Hanceville Public Library**

108 Main Street, South  
Hanceville, Alabama 35077  
256-352-0685



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For over 100 Years*