

Municipality of  
Anchorage



P.O. Box 196650  
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-  
6650

Telephone: (907) 343-7100

Fax: (907) 343-7180

Email : [www.muni.org](http://www.muni.org)

*Mark Begich, Mayor*

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Contact: Karen Keller, 343-2892

Jenny Evans, 343-7103

**Libraries: Important Economic Resource for Community**  
***New Report Identifies Economic Benefits of Anchorage Public Library***

A new study of the economic value of public libraries says Anchorage's public library generates a community benefit of between \$10 million and \$18 million annually. For every \$1 in municipal support for libraries, they return up to \$2.46 in benefits to the community, says the new report by the University of Alaska Anchorage's Institute of Social and Economic Research and the Anchorage Public Library (APL).

Mayor Mark Begich, Public Library Director Karen Keller and Assemblyman Patrick Flynn today held a news conference to release the results of the report, "Growing Minds and Strengthening Communities: An economic valuation study of the Anchorage Public Library."

"The Anchorage Public Library is a valuable resource for our community," said Mayor Begich. "Our libraries strengthen our neighborhoods, enrich our lives, preserve our history, and nurture the minds and creativity of our youth."

The report also identifies benefits that can't be calculated, such as the public library's role in strengthening communities, transforming lives, fostering economic growth, and improving the opportunities of our young people.

"As one of the oldest educational and research institutions in the city, Anchorage Public Library has transformed the lives of Anchorage residents for generations. The report substantiates APL's value to the community by identifying the dollar figures of the many benefits offered by the library," stated Anchorage Public Library Director Karen Keller.

Anchorage Public Library serves more than 850,000 visitors a year through the main Z.J. Loussac Public Library and five branches, spanning from Chugiak-Eagle River to Girdwood. More than 33,000 children and adults participated in library programs and over 1.5 million items circulated in 2007.

*(more)*

In 2006, Mayor Begich and library supporters launched the Anchorage Library Renewal Initiative to improve library operations, increase outreach to the community and fund a \$21 million-plus capital campaign to upgrade library facilities. In 2007, the Muldoon Branch moved into a newly renovated space and the Samson-Diamond Branch upgraded technology and furnishings. In May 2008, the Scott and Wesley Gerrish Branch in Girdwood relocated into a brand new building.

This fall, construction will begin on a new location for the Chugiak-Eagle River Branch and a restoration of the original Mountain View Branch. Plans are also in the works to renovate the Loussac Library and open a new branch downtown.

"It's fitting to release a report explaining the importance of libraries in our community in the neighborhood that will soon benefit from the newest addition to Anchorage's library network," said Assemblyman Patrick Flynn. "Mountain View is excited by this impending addition to our community, and we thank the staff of Anchorage Public Library, the mayor and the many others who made this possible."

More information can be found at: <http://www.anchoragelibraryfoundation.org/>

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