

2004 - 2008
Annual Report

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library

Synergy



37 Locations - 1 Library



A Message from Library Director Bridget Quinn-Carey



Synergy: the working together of two or more people, organizations, or things, especially when the result is greater than the sum of their individual effects or capabilities.¹

The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library system is experiencing unprecedented synergy. Projects, ideas, programs and collaborations are coming together in new, and wonderfully productive, ways.

As a public library system, B&ECPL is poised to bring people together like no other institution. Our 37 facilities are free and open to the public, whether young or old, regardless of race, creed, gender, socio-economic background, Country of origin, employment status or any other measure of class or status. Public libraries in the United States are the only institutions that welcome so many, and contribute so much to the educational, cultural, recreational and civic fabric of society.

In Buffalo and Erie County, your public libraries bring opportunities for:

- Learning through books and other materials, reference, research and genealogical services.
- Assistance with civic, health, and business-related queries.
- Early childhood growth and development through pre-school story times, programs and reading incentives.
- Recreation through books, films, programs and special events.
- Viewing special collections of local and world renowned treasures that are among the best and most unique in the world.
- Borrowing and returning materials from any public library in Erie County.

While we face challenges in ensuring access to and maintaining our facilities, meeting your needs and exceeding your expectations are our top priorities. We are planning more programs, streamlined borrowing and requesting procedures, enhanced online services, and facility upgrades in the next few years. We're working with established and new collaborative partners to enhance our services and ensuring that the Library continues to be an essential part of the fabric of this community. We're tackling literacy issues; offering additional technology training classes; bringing business, employment, healthcare and wellness presentations to your communities; welcoming teens and 'tweens to our libraries for fun, safe and rich learning experiences and asking our users how else we can meet their needs.

We want you to feel welcome and to find the assistance and resources you need. The synergy between and among our staff, users, program partners and elected officials is growing day by day – and positioning us to achieve great things, together.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bridget Quinn-Carey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the main body of text.

¹ Encarta Dictionary: English (North America); Encarta® World English Dictionary [North American Edition] © & (P) 1998-2007 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed for Microsoft by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

2004 began as a positive year for the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System. The *Frankenstein: Penetrating the Secrets of Nature* traveling exhibit generated excitement upon its arrival in Buffalo and throughout its stay at the Central Library.

The System also saw some remarkable service improvements for patrons. The introduction of *Multisearch* enabled patrons to find books, audiovisual materials, journal or newspaper articles, reference book excerpts and other documents with a single search that accesses a multitude of sources, including the B&ECPL Catalog, website and popular reference databases. The Library also introduced a web-based function that allows patrons to register online for email notifications of overdue or requested materials. In its first few weeks of availability, more than 1,800 patrons signed up for the new service. Boosted by a \$934,000 bequest from the estate of Robert J. Krieger, renovations began at the Central Library, including a long anticipated café area.

In the fall, Erie County's worsening fiscal situation produced devastating budget news for the Library System. Advocacy efforts in support of Erie County's public libraries played a significant role in convincing County legislators to re-examine the potentially catastrophic "Red Budget" cuts, leading to a budget that included more reasonable support for library services. On December 8, 2004, the Erie County Legislature adopted the modified "Green Budget." While this budget plan levied \$21.7 million through the Library property tax levy, funds to purchase materials were raised through a \$5 million bond issue, leaving the Library with ongoing debt service expenses.



This budget forced significant service cuts:

- The 2005 Library property tax levy was cut \$2.5 million from 2004 as medical and retirement costs increased.
- Library hours were cut at almost every location.
- More than 100 full and part-time positions were either eliminated or downgraded.
- Bookmobiles were removed from the road for the first time since 1947.
- Services, such as the Central Library's computer training sessions and Live Homework Help tutoring program, were suspended indefinitely.

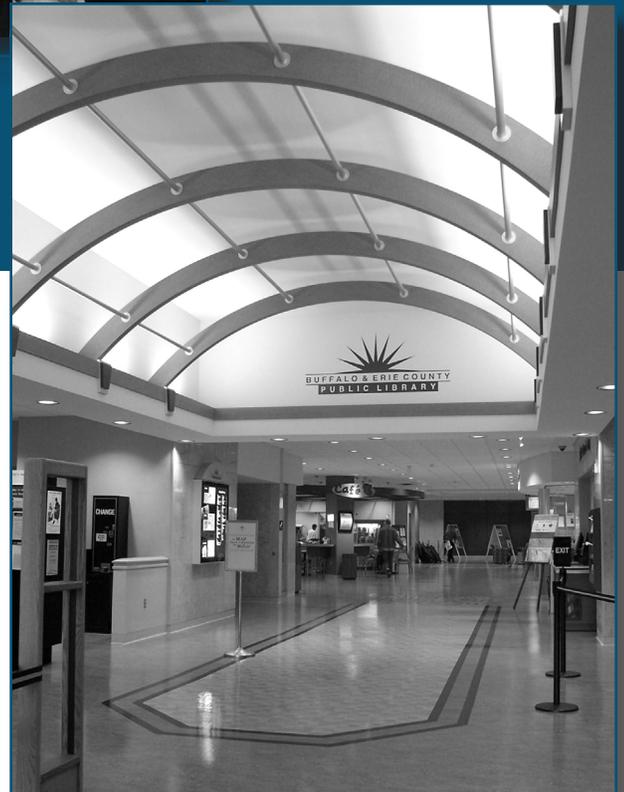
2005

began with a leaner Library System. Even so, the Library was able to generate excitement through a series of special events and activities. To celebrate National Library Week, the B&ECPL unveiled its first digital exhibition on the Library's website, allowing wider access to unique and valuable collections for a global audience. For this inaugural effort, staff selected "The New York to Paris Race, 1908," highlighting a proud, but often overlooked part of Buffalo's past focused on the history of mechanized transportation.

National Library Week also served as the backdrop for the formal unveiling of the redesigned main entrance at the Central Library. Housing a transformed Borrower Services area, the new entrance incorporated striking decorative elements, a remodeled gift shop/used bookstore and *Fables*, a new, full-service café, to enhance the Central Library visitors' experience, as well as offer an innovative revenue stream.

Planned to coincide with the centenary of the Niagara Movement, the City of Buffalo hosted the Harlem Book Fair for the first time on July 9th. The Central Library was the venue for a number of entertaining and informative events to complement the Book Fair. Author panel discussions, storytelling, readings, a children's forum, spoken-word poets, exhibits, booksellers and music were offered.

Erie County, which was placed under state fiscal oversight through legislation signed by Governor George Pataki on July 12th, failed to issue the \$5 million in bonds budgeted to support library material purchases, creating a nearly 20% gap in County support for the Library System more than halfway through the budget year. Faced with this stark reality and the County Executive's repeated indications that support for the Library in 2006 would not sustain all existing facilities, the Library Board's Planning Committee began the process of downsizing the 52-branch system. Library staff conducted an inventory of every library location in Erie County to determine which had the greatest capacity to provide the most services and resources to the largest number of people. Using the results of this comprehensive assessment, which evaluated factors such as building size and condition, population density, activity levels, economic circumstances and geographic location, the Board of Trustees approved a plan to fund 36 libraries in 2006 (with the Town of Amherst funding one additional library). During the last quarter of 2005, 15 libraries ceased operations. This proved to be the most difficult year in the Library's history.



2006 was a rebuilding year for the B&ECPL. Moving forward, the System focused on the positive impact it has on the community. On April 1st, more than 400 community members, public officials, library staff, trustees and friends celebrated the opening of the spectacular, new 20,000 square-foot library constructed by the City of Buffalo located on the City's East Side. With an African Village as inspiration for the building's design, the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Library replaced the nearly 80-year-old North Jefferson Branch.

Programming initiatives were expanded to welcome a new project and continue with a previous success. B&ECPL, in conjunction with lead agency Just Buffalo Literary, participated in *The Big Read*, a month-long community reading program for all ages featuring Ray Bradbury's classic speculative novel, *Fahrenheit 451*. Buffalo was only one of ten communities nationwide selected by the National Endowment for the Arts to receive funding to provide its citizens an opportunity to read and discuss a single book. For the second consecutive year, the Harlem Book Fair drew large crowds to the Central Library. Event headliners included Paul Robeson, Jr., Jerry Pinckney, Sharon Draper and Lauren Belfer.

The importance of Library services was never as evident as on September 8th when nine members of the Erie County Legislature visited the Central Library for a tour of the Library and its holdings and a demonstration of the Library's online databases. B&ECPL staff used this opportunity to articulate the impact of budget reductions during the previous two years, emphasize the need for funding restorations and illustrate

the Library's high rate of return on investment. Advocacy efforts led by the Library and many friends encouraged the Legislature to find additional revenue. On December 1st, the Erie County Legislature adopted a 2007 County budget that provided \$500,000 in support beyond that called for in the County Executive's proposed budget. On December 14th, at its final session of the year, the Erie County Legislature voted unanimously to make the Library Protection Act (LPA) a permanent local law. The LPA designates a portion of

Erie County's Real Property Tax exclusively for Library purposes and prohibits mid-year reductions of that revenue stream.



2007's

start was symbolic of the Library's efforts to position itself once again as part of the fabric of the community. B&ECPL patrons welcomed new downloadable audio books, listened to a State of the Library address touting recovery and renewal, and participated in programs like *El Dia de los Ninos/El Dia de los Libros* (Children's Day/Book Day) and *The Big Read*.

At its May 3rd session, the Erie County Legislature adopted the necessary resolutions to advance reconstruction of closed tier storage areas in the Central Library to house the Library's significant rare books and special collections in a climate controlled and secure environment. The project was also funded through NYS Library Construction Grant Funds.

Elbert Hubbard's handwritten manuscript, *A Message to Garcia*, from the B&ECPL Rare Book Room, was loaned to the Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon, and was on display in the Library's Collins Gallery during February and March. It was the centerpiece of an exhibition entitled: *A Message to Garcia: Elbert Hubbard and the Power of Print*. Local corporate friend of the B&ECPL Wm. S. Hein and Co. generously digitized the manuscript, its accompanying letter from Elbert Hubbard and its beautiful Roycroft binding before it left the Library's possession on its cross-continental journey.

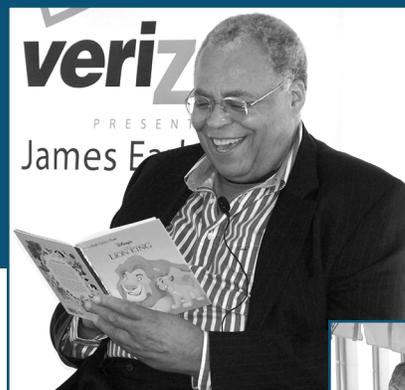
On Saturday, July 7th, the Central Library hosted the 2007 Buffalo Book Fair (formerly the Harlem Book Fair). The morning commenced with a special guest appearance by Emmy and Tony award-winning actor James Earl Jones, who delivered an inspirational address to a sold-out audience in the Mason O. Damon Auditorium. The Central Library hosted 16 unique events during the fair including author presentations, book signings, panel discussions, workshops and seminars. The two-day event attracted more than 2,000 people to the Lafayette Square facility.

The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library was one of ten libraries in New York State to be awarded a Family Literacy Library Services grant from the State Library's Division of Library Development.

The two-year grant entitled *Get Graphic:*

Building Literacy & Community with Graphic Novels used graphic novels with different themes and issues to stimulate teen reading and library use and encourage adult support of those activities.

Due in large part to the support of the Erie County Legislature, the adopted 2008 County budget provided \$1.6 million in additional support for the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System, increasing the annual appropriation from \$22.2 million to \$23.8 million. Additional funds directly benefitted 26 libraries, allowing them to increase hours of access. Every library in Erie County received some benefit from the enhanced System support.



2008

was the dawn of a new day for the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System. Library Director Michael Mahaney ended his tenure with the System on January 4th. After an extensive national search, the Library Board of Trustees, with input from B&ECPL staff and the public, selected Bridget Quinn-Carey as its new director. Ms. Quinn-Carey, formerly the Director of the Essex Library Association in Essex, CT, joined the B&ECPL System on March 3rd.



Ms. Quinn-Carey announced an initiative to make promoting and showcasing the Library Systems' Special Collections a major focus for the coming years. To move this initiative forward, the Library plans to create a consolidated space for rare books and special collections, with state of the art ventilation and heating systems and security measures. A Central Library space use study is planned as part of this initiative.

Business was booming throughout the Library System in 2008. Computer use across the System increased 51% over 2007 with 665,000 sessions logged by year-end. Additionally, overall use of the collections of Library materials grew by 6% over 2007, with more than 7,619,000 items borrowed in 2008.



Thanks in large part to the Erie County Legislature's generous restoration of \$1.6 million to the B&ECPL's budget in 2008, all City of Buffalo Branches were restored to a minimum of 40 hours of weekly service, and

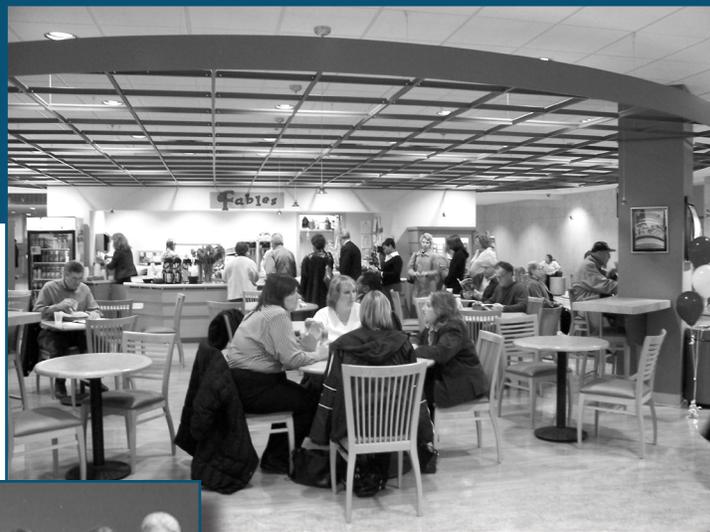


mobile computer training was re-established through the Library's "Cyber Train".

In an effort to bring the teen population into the library, a Teen Room was opened on the second floor of the Central Library. The response from area high school students was overwhelming. The room has drawn hundreds of teens each week to do daily homework, work on computers, try out gaming applications or get help with projects.

Three System-wide initiatives aimed at different age groups were met with enthusiastic response from the community. The *Summer Reading* and *Read Down Your Fines* programs drew thousands of participants and enabled hundreds of children to use their library cards once again. By spending time reading in the library to earn "Reading Bucks", young people were then able to use the "currency" to pay down any outstanding fines. *The Big Read* project was the first System-wide programming effort aimed at reaching all age groups and residents. Through a \$20,000 grant secured from the National Endowment for the Arts, the 2008 Big Read focused on Dashiell Hammett's classic novel *The Maltese Falcon*. *Get Graphic* garnered national attention for its innovative programming. Locally, presentations were made by acclaimed graphic novelists Art Spiegelman, Gene Yang and Scott McCloud.

Partnerships with other organizations enabled the B&ECPL to diversify its program offerings throughout the County. A collaboration with WBFO-FM 88.7, the University at Buffalo's National Public Radio Station, resulted in four sessions of a



new Library Lunchtime *Meet the Author* series. Funding was provided by the Library Foundation of Buffalo and Erie County. In addition, B&ECPL also partnered with WBFO to host the mobile NPR StoryCorps sound studio in front of the Central Library for a six-week period during the summer. Collaborations with the Buffalo Museum of Science and explore and more children's museum provided unique programming opportunities for young people in City Branches, as well as several other county libraries. The East Delavan Branch Library was the beneficiary of a three-year grant from the Josephine Goodyear Foundation to *Read to Succeed Buffalo*, enabling enhanced furnishings and programs to improve family literacy in one of Buffalo's most economically challenged areas. The Uncrowned Queens/Uncrowned Community Builders announced its first affiliate partner site at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library. The project seeks to collect personal histories of participants. The B&ECPL also worked with the Parachute Group to host networking and informational sessions for displaced, laid-off and underemployed community residents at libraries throughout the System.

After a particularly strong start, 2008 ended on a more somber note for the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System. The financial struggles of Erie County had a direct effect on various

organizations throughout the county as the 2009 budget was established. The B&ECPL was not immune to the budget cutbacks. Despite having one of its busiest years in recent history, the Library sustained a \$1.6 million reduction in county funding for 2009. Streamlining efforts and internal reorganization would be key to maintaining levels of service to the community.



Statistics

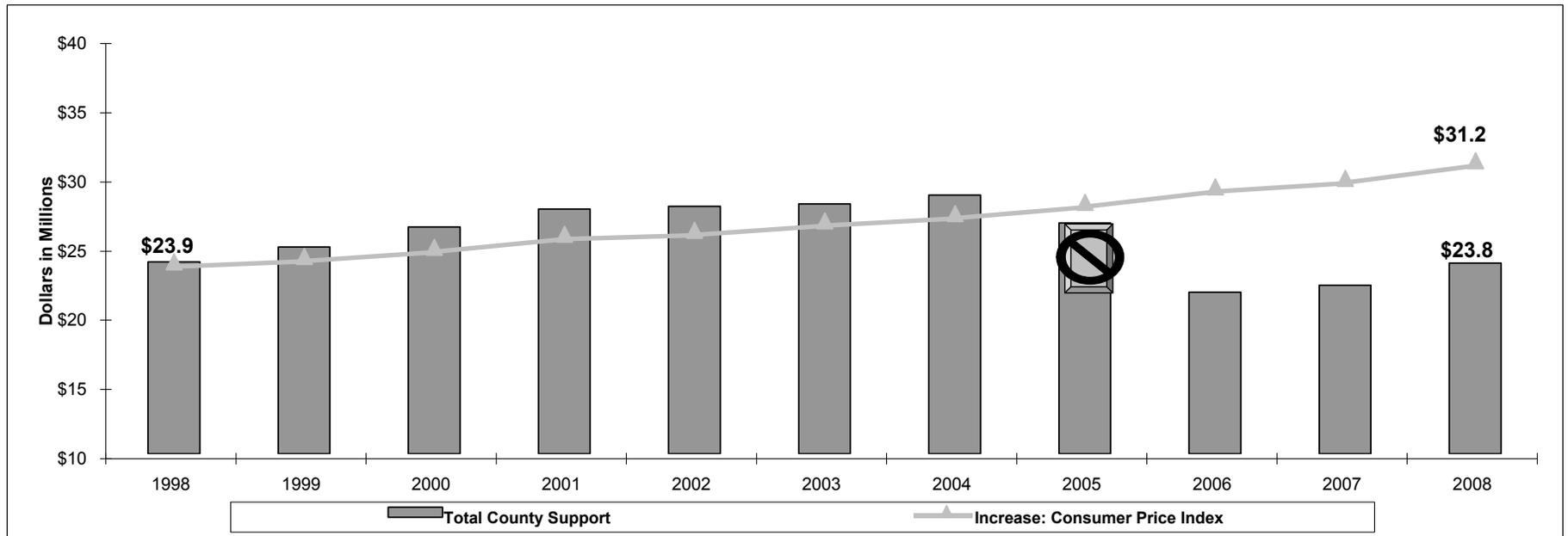
Public Access Computer Statistics

Registered Sessions	2004 (52 libraries)	2005 (52 libraries)	2006 (37 libraries)	2007 (37 libraries)	2008 (37 libraries)
Contract Libraries	214,432	192,728	202,348	224,031	312,113
City Branches	101,352	78,030	63,476	103,263	170,473
Central Library	70,568	74,115	80,801	111,058	192,726
System Total	386,352	344,873 (- 10.7%)	346,625 (+ .5%)	438,352 (+ 26.5%)	675,312 (+54.1%)

Circulation Statistics

Circulation	2004 (52 libraries)	2005 (52 libraries)	2006 (37 libraries)	2007 (37 libraries)	2008 (37 libraries)
Central Library	674,780	642,458	653,282	638,628	666,721
City Branches	1,029,541	759,739	530,712	564,426	600,385
Contract Libraries	6,528,447	5,406,900	5,008,215	4,863,348	5,011,689
Mobile & Urban Services	85,250	7,533	NA	NA	NA
Institutions	233,759	209,805	206,169	210,167	225,152
e-Branch	623,858	602,029	639,789	902,782	1,115,955
Total Circulation	9,175,635	7,628,464 (- 16.9%)	7,038,167 (- 7.7%)	7,179,351 (+ 2.0%)	7,619,902 (+6.1%)

ERIE COUNTY SUPPORT FOR B&ECPL OPERATING AND LIBRARY MATERIAL BUDGETS 1998 - 2008



	1998 Adopted	1999 Adopted	2000 Adopted	2001 Adopted	2002 Adopted	2003 Adopted	2004 Adopted	2005 Adopted	2006 Adopted	2007 Adopted	2008 Adopted
Erie County Capital For Library Material	-	-	-	4,717,516	4,906,217	5,000,000	4,500,000	5,000,000	-	-	-
Interfund Revenue Subsidy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,600,000
Library Property Tax	23,866,460	24,953,953	26,393,455	22,969,980	22,969,980	23,067,481	24,197,118	21,671,833	21,671,833	22,171,833	22,171,833
Total County Support	23,866,460	24,953,953	26,393,455	27,687,496	27,876,197	28,067,481	28,697,118	26,671,833	21,671,833	22,171,833	23,771,833



County funding for Library Material included in Erie County's 2005 Adopted Budget was not provided to the Library. As this allocation was within the COUNTY Capital Budget, NOT the Library Fund, the allocation was not covered by the Library Protection Act. This resulted in an additional \$5 million gap in 2005 on top of the \$2.5 million reduction in the Library Tax that was part of the County's Adopted 2005 Budget.

Change in County Support From 2007 to 2008:	1,600,000 7.2%
Change in County Support From 2004 to 2008:	(4,925,285) -17.2%

Budget

Erie County's 2008 budget represented encouraging progress in the Library's recovery from the unprecedented austerities experienced in 2005-2006. The restorations enabled the Library to bring back hours of service at 26 libraries and System services to all libraries, with many restoring open hours on evenings and weekends most in demand from our public.

Despite the 2008 restoration, the County support provided by the combined Library Tax Levy and the \$1.6 million restoration provided via County interfund subsidy revenue remains well under pre-crisis levels (\$4.9 million and 17% below 2004's support). The \$1.6 million was cut from the 2009 budget.

**BUFFALO AND ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL REPORT
For the Fiscal Years 2004 - 2008**

<u>REVENUE</u>	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Library Property Tax	\$24,197,118	\$21,671,833	\$21,671,833	\$22,171,833	\$22,171,833
Erie County Interfund Subsidy	20,775	0	0	0	1,600,000
Erie County Bond Proceeds for Library Materials	4,500,000	0	0	0	0
Erie County Bond Proceeds for Capital Equipment	165,000	0	0	0	0
New York State Library Aid	2,126,230	2,167,072	2,286,676	2,405,985	2,381,405
New York State Grants	886,514	743,347	758,267	784,859	928,271
Municipal Support	59,730	53,623	280,494	193,562	118,384
Contributions/Fundraising	238,377	283,070	702,304	267,096	309,297
Library Charges - Fines	1,351,561	1,238,151	1,168,794	1,078,594	1,059,650
Other Revenues	1,564,409	1,837,356	2,275,803	2,001,239	1,884,068
	<u>\$35,109,714</u>	<u>\$27,994,452</u>	<u>\$29,144,171</u>	<u>\$28,903,168</u>	<u>\$30,452,907</u>
<u>EXPENSE</u>					
Salaries & Wages	\$20,052,946	\$16,718,329	\$13,326,854	\$13,536,659	\$14,492,638
Fringe Benefits	5,037,559	6,501,744	5,484,003	4,928,816	5,200,010
Library Materials	4,728,749	2,119,091	2,835,877	3,476,661	3,943,954
Utilities	1,470,971	1,493,510	1,317,993	1,347,775	1,418,636
Service/Maintenance Contracts	979,836	719,060	832,279	778,143	821,006
Other Costs	2,559,823	2,763,988	2,648,836	2,966,525	3,434,114
	<u>\$34,829,883</u>	<u>\$30,315,723</u>	<u>\$26,445,842</u>	<u>\$27,034,579</u>	<u>\$29,310,358</u>
 YEAR END SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) - difference between Revenue and Expense	 \$279,831	 (\$2,321,272)	 \$2,698,328	 \$1,868,589	 \$1,142,549

Notes: Includes operating and grant revenue & expense for entire Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System including all suburban contracting libraries. Does not include revenue & expenses for Capital Construction projects.

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Library Locations

CENTRAL LIBRARY • 1 Lafayette Square	858-8900
Alden Ewell Free Library • 13280 Bway Alden	937-7082
Amherst Public Library	
Main Library at Audubon • 350 Audubon Pkwy	689-4922
Clearfield Branch Library • 770 Hopkins Rd. Wmsv.	688-4955
Egbertsville-Snyder Branch • 4622 Main Snyder	839-0700
Williamsville Branch • 5571 Main Wmsv.....	632-6176
Angola Public Library • 34 N Main Angola	549-1271
Aurora Town Public Library • 550 Main E. Aurora	652-4440
Boston Free Library • State Rd Boston NY	941-3516
Cheektowaga Public Library	
Julia B. Reinstein • 1030 Losson Rd Chktg	668-4991
Reinstein Mem. Library • 2580 Harlem Rd Chktg.....	892-8089
Clarence Public Library • 3 Towne Pl Clarence	741-2650
Collins Public Library • 2341 Main St Collins	532-5129
Concord Public Library • 18 Chapel St Springville	592-7742
Crane Branch • 633 Elmwood Av	883-6651
Dudley Branch • 2010 South Park Av	823-1854
East Clinton Branch • 1929 Clinton	823-5626
East Delavan Branch • 1187 E. Delavan Av	896-4433
Eden Library • 2901 E Church Eden	992-4028
Elma Public Library • Bowen & Rice Rds Elma.....	652-2719
Grand Island Memorial Library • 1715 Bedell Rd Grand Island	773-7124
Hamburg Public Library	
Hamburg Branch • 102 Buffalo Av Hamburg.....	649-4415
Lake Shore Branch • S-4857 Lake Shore Rd Hamburg.....	627-3017
Lackawanna Public Library • 560 Ridge Rd Lackawanna.....	823-0630
Lancaster Public Library • 5466 Broadway Lancaster	683-1120
Marilla Free Library • 11637 Bullis Rd Marilla	652-7449
Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch • 1324 Jefferson Ave	883-4418
Newstead Public Library • 33 Main Street Akron	542-2327
Niagara Branch • 280 Porter Av	882-1537
North Collins Public Library • 2095 School St N Collins.....	337-3211
North Park Branch • 975 Hertel	875-3748
Orchard Park Public Library • S-4570 S Buffalo St Orchard Park ...	662-9851
Riverside Branch • 820 Tonawanda	875-0562
Tonawanda City Public Library • 333 Main Tonawanda	693-5043
Town of Tonawanda Public Library	
Kenilworth Branch • 318 Montrose Av Tn of Ton.....	834-7657
Kenmore Branch • 160 Delaware Rd Knmr	873-2842
West Seneca Public Library • 1300 Union Rd West Seneca	674-2928

