

## Transition from Baldwin County Library Cooperative to the Baldwin County Public Library System

In adversity, there is always opportunity. After the abrupt action by the Baldwin County Library Cooperative (BCLC) Board to let go its employees without notice, steps were taken immediately by the County Commission to continue the joint library services to minimize any disruptions. The immediate need was re-establishing the library courier service. This service plays a crucial role in ensuring that materials are efficiently transferred between different branches, an overall significant function of the library system. The day after the termination of the BCLC staff was the only day when the courier service did not run. Various library directors and Commission employees assisted with the courier service until a replacement courier was brought on through a temporary employment agency.

Other needs were more technologically based services from software used for the exchange of materials among libraries, to controlling access of mobile hotspots loaned through the joint program. Once we were able to get access to the various programs, the overall coordination for these resources was relatively straight forward.

The library directors really stepped up by fostering collaboration and improving communication, which has created an environment for a far more effective and efficient joint library system for Baldwin County.

Moving forward, we will now have two part-time county employees instead of two full-time and three part-time BCLC employees focused on joint library services. These services include technical operational assistance, applying for grants, utilizing library software, and maintaining book courier services across the county. We will also be looking for ways to assist with community outreach and for other joint opportunities to improve library services within the county.

One of the most significant achievements of this opportunity for reorganization is the financial gain for the libraries. BCLC was taking the funding for the unincorporated population off the top of the quarterly state aid. They were then charging the libraries 15% of their state aid equivalent for services. Based on the previous cooperative services, the libraries would be receiving \$156,487.97 in state aid funding compared to the \$327,524.07 they will be receiving this year.

							State Funding Remaining for Library to Use Under BCLC	Additional Funding Under New Joint Services System
				<b>State Funding Municipal &amp; County Share</b>	<b>Reduction If BCLC Still Existed</b>	<b>15% Fee Being Charged By BCLC</b>		
Bay Minette Public Library				\$22,767.14	\$11,952.04	\$1,622.27	\$9,192.84	\$13,574.30
Daphne Public Library				\$51,125.93	\$11,952.04	\$5,876.08	\$33,297.81	\$17,828.12
Elberta Public Library				\$14,676.81	\$11,952.04	\$408.72	\$2,316.05	\$12,360.75
Fairhope Public Library				\$44,217.76	\$11,952.04	\$4,839.86	\$27,425.86	\$16,791.90
Foley Public Library				\$44,087.27	\$11,952.04	\$4,820.28	\$27,314.95	\$16,772.32
Loxley Public Library				\$17,924.83	\$11,952.04	\$895.92	\$5,076.87	\$12,847.96
Marjorie Younce Snook Public Library - Summerdale				\$13,986.89	\$11,950.75	\$305.42	\$1,730.73	\$12,256.17
Orange Beach Public Library				\$22,977.73	\$11,952.04	\$1,653.85	\$9,371.84	\$13,605.89
Oscar Johnson Memorial Library - Silver Hill				\$14,435.21	\$11,950.75	\$372.67	\$2,111.79	\$12,323.42
Robertsdale Public Library				\$21,539.76	\$11,952.04	\$1,438.16	\$8,149.57	\$13,390.20
Spanish Fort Public Library				\$26,062.96	\$11,950.75	\$2,116.83	\$11,995.38	\$14,067.58
Thomas B. Norton Public Library - Gulf Shores				\$33,721.77	\$11,952.04	\$3,265.46	\$18,504.28	\$15,217.50
				<b>\$ 327,524.07</b>	<b>\$ 143,420.57</b>	<b>\$ 27,615.52</b>	<b>\$ 156,487.97</b>	<b>\$ 171,036.10</b>

The new joint services will be funded in an amount that will likely be less than the annual \$144,000 appropriation the County Commission was making to the BCLC.

Another achievement with this reorganization was reintegrating over 5,000 books, DVDs, and books on CD into circulation, broadening access to resources for residents. This effort significantly enriched several library collections, providing patrons with more reading options and access to valuable information. In addition to expanding the book collection, the County managed the allocation of essential furniture and equipment. Shelving, book carts, and other furnishings valued at approximately \$10,000 were distributed effectively from the BCLC's storage units, improving the functionality and organization of various library spaces.