

Snapshot taken to show library's value

David DiPino dddipino@tribune.com

3:58 p.m. EST, February 3, 2011

Note: PCC or E-Mobile Value could be easily demonstrated

The Florida Library Association took a "snapshot" of the Delray Beach Public Library last week in an effort to prove the vital role that libraries serve for citizens.

The information compiled, including photographs, door counts, computer usage and research, will be collected and forwarded to state legislators and Gov. [Rick Scott](#).

On that day alone, the Delray Beach Public Library was visited by 2,500 library patrons, issued 36 library cards, gave 330 people use of its free computers and tapped another 400 wireless users into its free wifi.

Sixty-eight people were taught computer skills via classes. Almost a dozen people were helped with applications for food stamps and social security, and 14 job seekers were helped with Empowerment Zone information.

According to the library, 125 reference questions were asked at the second-floor information desk and 13 students were helped with homework.

Also that day, 104 people ages 18 and older attended programs sponsored by the library. Children and students were included in the research: 34 teenagers and 54 children ages 12 and younger attended programs.

"We're being proactive with our information," said Brian R. Smith, a reference and interlibrary loan librarian. "Every year the state looks closely at library funding, and last year we had to lobby to reinstate that funding that was originally cut."

Smith coordinated the event at the Delray Beach Public Library, 100 W. Atlantic Ave. He serves on the Florida Library Association's Public Relations Committee, the organization responsible for planning and coordinating Florida Snapshot Day.

Christopher Leary, the library's head of reference, took a camera around the library taking photos of patrons using computers, making copies and using the information desk as a resource, and of the second floor art gallery.

"The day we picked to have the snapshot day, we had a really great turnout," Leary said. "I took some photos of people using the copy machine and was able to angle it so that same photo highlighted our second-floor art gallery."

Smith said more than 150 libraries participated in the snapshot. He also said this is the first year of the event and that if it's successful, libraries across Florida will be involved again next year.

Bruton Memorial Library Director Anne Haywood, of Plant City, said the snapshot statistics and photos will show the value of the system once they're published and shared with citizens and legislators.

"The statistics, stories and photos that we collect from the Snapshot Day will be instrumental in telling the story of just how important libraries are to the Floridians who use their libraries for a myriad of services," Haywood said. "Not everyone realizes that hundreds of thousands of people use libraries every day to find employment, complete school assignments, learn new skills, complete government applications and many other things."

For more information, visit http://www.flalib.org/snapshot_day.php