

CLARK COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

Board of Trustees Annual Report

2009

Introduction

The Clark County Law Library Board of Trustees presents this 2009 Annual Report, as required by RCW 27.24. This Report is based on information supplied by Maria Sosnowski, Law Librarian. This Annual Report covers the period from January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009.

The Clark County Law Library strives to provide access to legal information to all patrons who come through the door. The Library offers personal, professional assistance without any strings attached. Our mission is to ensure that the Clark County Law Library provides a community resource for access to justice for people of any age, income, or educational level.

We invite your comments and cooperation. Please feel free to contact members of the Board, or Law Librarian Maria Sosnowski, to share your thoughts about the Library. Board members include Rachel Mitchell (Co-Chair), Meridee Pabst (Co-Chair), Commissioner Marc Boldt, Judge John Nichols, and Judge Roger Bennett.

Who the Library Serves

The general public is the largest user group in the Law Library. During 2009, 78% of the reference questions answered in the Library came from members of the public. Two paralegal programs (Clark College and Everest College) use the Library to teach their students legal research.

The Library also serves 10 Superior Court judges, 6 District Court judges, a magistrate, 4 court commissioners, 500 or more Clark County attorneys as well as attorneys from other counties and Oregon. The Library also provides reference services to inmates in the Clark County Jail and provides interlibrary loan services to other libraries on an as-needed basis. In addition, the Law Library provides collection maintenance services to the Jail Law Library pursuant to an interlocal agreement with the Sheriff's Department.

Collection

As of December 31, 2009, the Clark County Law Library had approximately 21,000 volumes and 1,000 supplements and advance sheets not attached to individual volumes. The

Library also has Washington State Supreme Court Briefs, individual local court rules, and the periodical Jury Verdicts Northwest.

The Law Library currently subscribes to two on-line legal databases, Shepard's citations and Westlaw. Westlaw has databases for cases and statutes from all states and federal circuits, numerous Washington materials, and various secondary source materials. Shepards offers the ability to check to see if a cited case is still good law.

Currently, 29 items are on the missing materials list. This does not include missing books that have been replaced, or outdated items that would have been discarded due to age. The Library has sometimes been able to replace missing items at no cost from various listserves to which the Librarian belongs.

Donations

The Library received a cash donation from Brian Leahy. David Ridenour donated services in revising our Eviction by Landlord kit.

The Law Library accepts book donations if they are materials that the Library can use or which are likely to sell. Mary Ann Royal donated two veterans benefits books, Nadia Hinedi donated court rules, and John Eldridge donated Motions in Limine.

The Law Library added *Challenging Conflict: Mediation Through Understanding* and *The New Wigmore on Evidence* to the collection in exchange for the Law Librarian writing reviews for them.

Books and Print Materials

Due to the escalating costs of maintaining the sets that we have, the Library has been reluctant to make many new acquisitions unless they are low cost or Washington-specific titles. And due to space restrictions, we cannot purchase items that need extensive shelf space. We tend to purchase smaller treatises to build up weaker topics in our collection, or replace titles that have not been updated in some time.

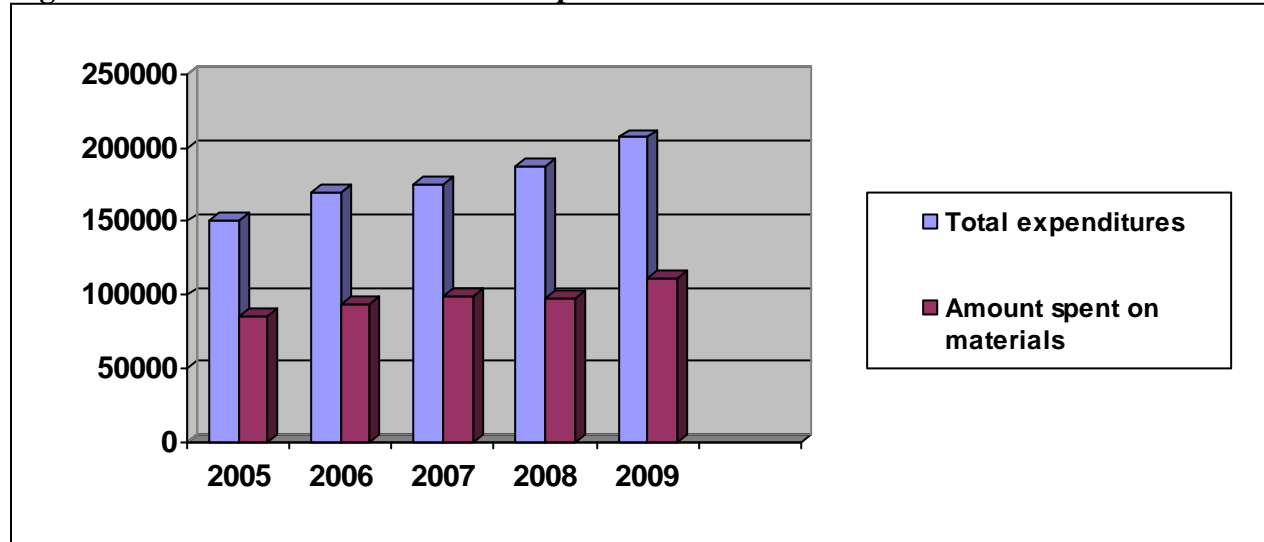
The Library also continues to purchase nearly all of the new Continuing Legal Education books from the state bar or the Washington State Association for Justice and all of the Washington State Bar Association Deskbooks. We also purchased CLE books from Lorman, NBI, and the King County Bar Association. We continue to receive free CLEs from the Clark County Bar Association, due to their generous policy of giving us a complimentary copy of each CLE.

The Library also continues to receive state Supreme Court briefs from the State Law Library, and Jury Verdicts Northwest/Northwest Arbitration from the publisher.

This year 54% of our expenditures were on materials, which includes both computer

databases and print materials. Figure 1 on the next page shows the relationship between the amount spent on materials and our total expenditures.

Figure 1: Total Revenue and Amount Spent on Materials 2005 - 2009



Database and Computer Resources

The Library offers internet-based Shepards and Westlaw. The Westlaw subscription includes cases and statutes for all states and federal circuits, an extensive Washington database, and some secondary materials. This contract was renegotiated during the year and will run through December, 2012. Under the new contract, we expanded our contract to include a new pleadings database that will allow people to see pleadings filed in cases similar to theirs. Westlaw is an attractive service to attorneys, is used regularly by pro se patrons doing legal research, and is also used by the Librarian to assist patrons.

We also continue to offer Shepards, a Lexis product, as an online subscription. This contract is the same from year to year and offers national Shepards service with a case citation.

The Library offers printing from the computers at 25 cents per page. This allows patrons to print materials they find on free websites as well as our paid subscription websites. Some of that material is not available in print in the Library.

Cost of Materials

Washington materials are all kept updated according to publisher's schedules. That is not true for many other materials. There are a number of sets in the Library which are no longer updated regularly, but instead are on a multi-year cycle. There are also some sets that the Library maintains, but due to the cost, lack a current index. While this is not as desirable as having fully updated materials, it is one way the Library is trying to stretch our revenue and

budget for the future.

The Law Library has a reserve account as a portion of each year's budget, to pay for replacement of book sets on multi-year cycles. This saves money because it is far cheaper to replace sets every few years than to update them annually. However, this also means that these sets are no longer current.

Use Statistics

A. Number of people through the door

This year we had 18,824 people through the door, including 14,655 during open hours and 4,169 during closed hours. (Attorneys with keycards can enter during closed hours so long as the building is open. This also includes classes in the paralegal program that use the library after hours.) This is a 33% increase over the door count for the previous year.

B. Reference questions

The Library answered 12,625 reference questions during 2009, up from 9,903 during 2008. This is an 28% increase in the number of reference questions in just one year. Of the total questions, 9,851 (78%) came from pro se patrons (non-attorneys) with the rest (22%) coming from attorneys. While the large increase in questions for 2008 was due in large part to our increased open hours, we suspect the jump from 2008 to 2009 is due to the economy. The library has seen more questions about evictions, foreclosures, and debt collection suits than usual. Figure 2 shows the increase in reference questions from 2005 to 2009.

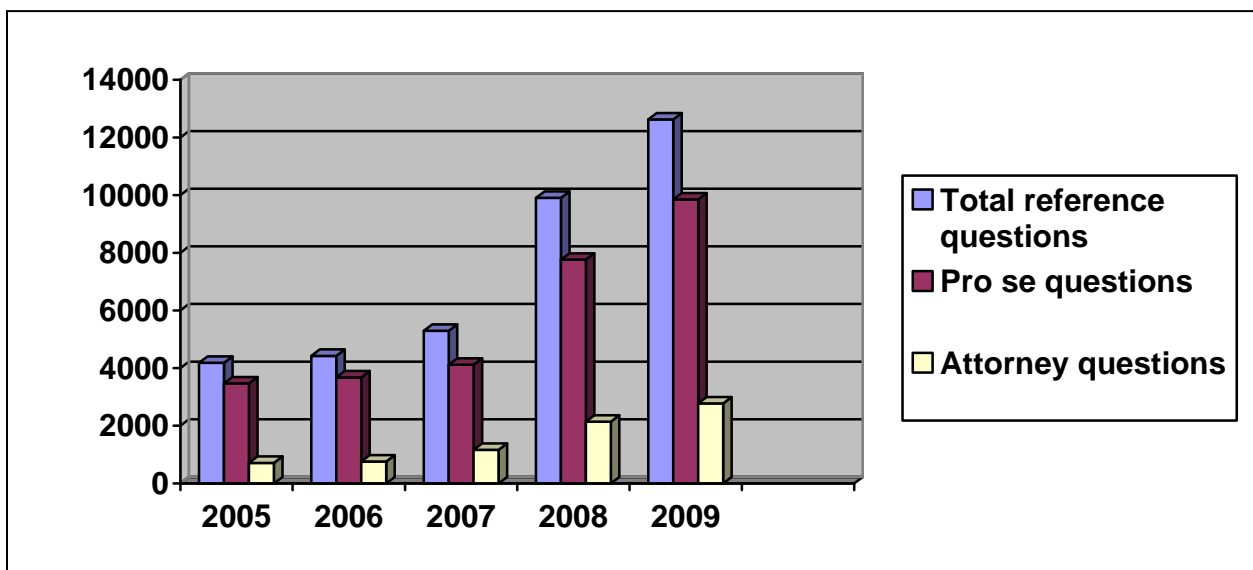


Figure 2: Reference Questions 2005 – 2009 by Attorneys and Pro Se Patrons

C. Circulation

Non-reserve books may be checked out on the honor system by judges, lawyers, and county officials. During 2009, 786 items were checked out. Two items were sent and 26 items were received through interlibrary loan during this period.

D. Inmate Requests

During the period covered by this report, the Library received five inmate requests.

Financial Report

The money in our budget comes from our statutory share of filing fees, interest on our reserve account, and any additional funds we are able to generate ourselves. The Law Library continues to look for ways to increase our self-generated revenues (see Figure 3 on the next page for a comparison of income from filing fees vs. self-generated revenues). Our revenues came from the following sources:

A. Passive revenues

1. Filing fees. In 2009, we received \$49,252 from District Court filing fees, and \$138,624 from Superior Court. This was an increase in filing fees of 6% from District Court and 5% from Superior Court over 2008.

2. Investment interest. We earned \$3,723 in interest on our account during the year, which is so low due to the economy's effect on interest rates.

B. Self-generated revenues

1. Form kits. We sold two types of form kits during the year, which raised \$14,451 in net revenues during the year.

2. After-hours access keycards. We continue to charge attorneys for after-hours keycards, which raised \$4,083 in 2009.

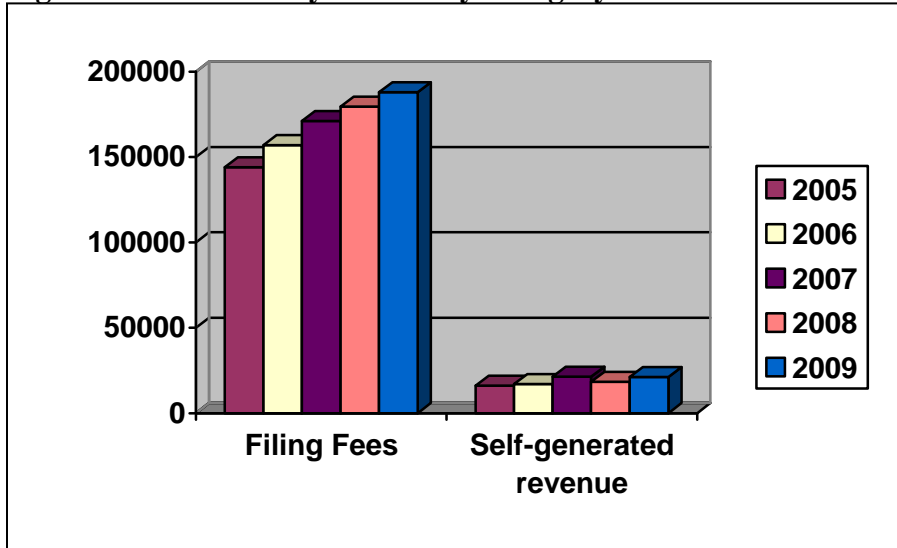
3. Copier. We raised \$1,226 from our share of copier revenues.

4. Sale of outdated materials. Certain materials, which in the opinion of the Librarian are likely to sell, are listed for bid. This allows the Library to raise a nominal amount of money from items that would otherwise be discarded. During the year, we raised an additional \$595 this way.

5. Jail contract. The Board of Trustees has an interlocal agreement with the Clark County Sheriff to provide services to the county jail facility to maintain their law library. In return, the Jail compensates the Library for the time of the law librarian. We received \$813 from the Jail during the year.

Total self-generated revenues: Our total self-generated revenues were \$21,168 for the year, a 16% increase over 2008 and 10% of our total revenue.

Figure 3: Law Library Income by Category 2005 - 2009

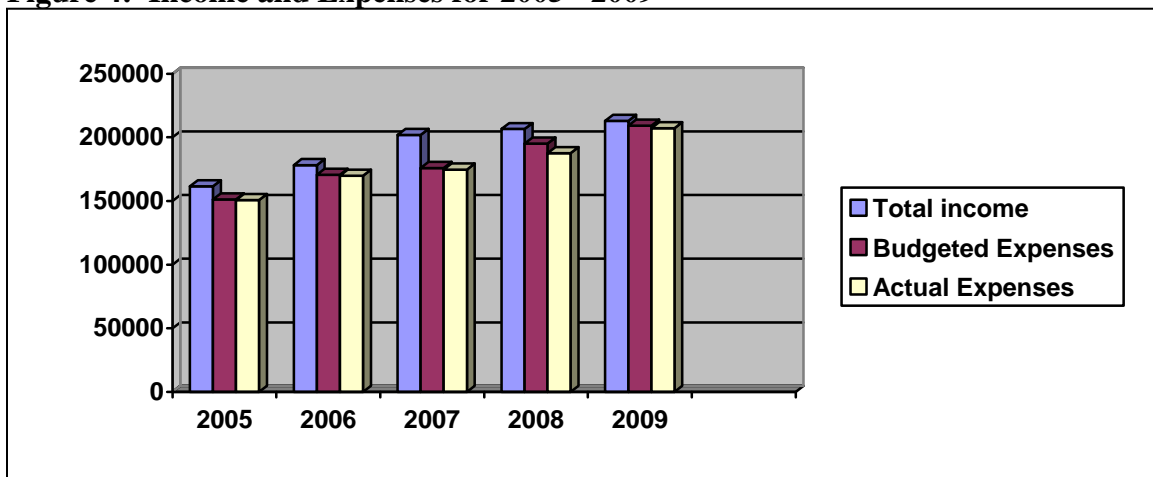


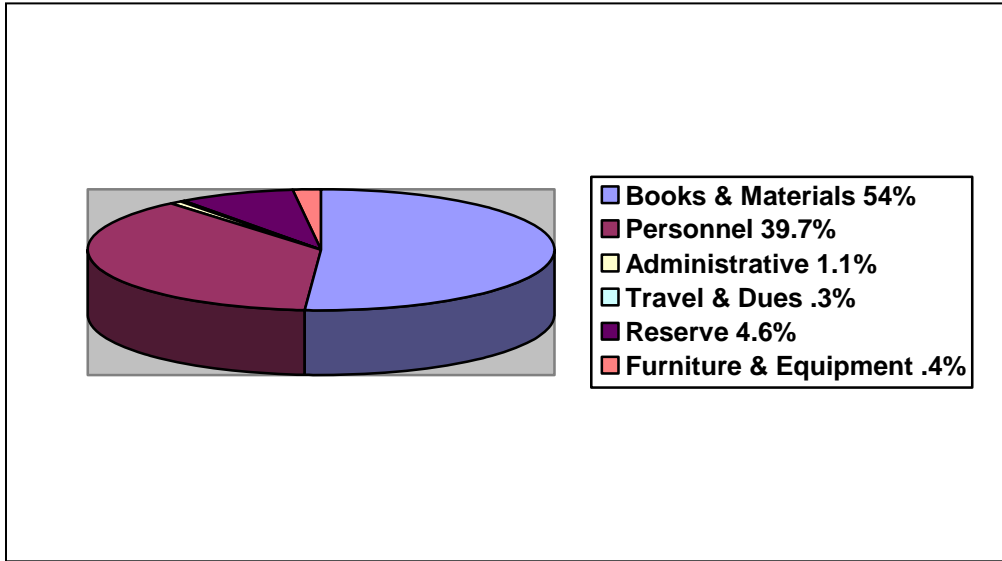
*Self-generated revenue includes revenue from after hours access keycard sales, our portion of copy card revenue, revenues from the sale of form packets, and money from bids on discarded items. Beginning in 2007, it also includes money from servicing the jail law library.

We have been setting aside a portion of our revenues each year to pay for updates of titles that are only updated every 3-5 years, to pay for the cost of additional shelving or moving the library in the future, and to absorb the cost of future increases in the cost of books and online resources. The Library also needs a reserve account to cover months when the Law Library is not credited for its share of filing fees on time, or to cover unexpected expenses such as equipment repair and replacement. And we project that in the future expenses will again exceed revenues.

Figure 4 shows our total income compared with both budgeted and actual expenses for the last 5 years. Our revenues exceeded projections by \$3,796. However, because of an error by the auditor's office which assigned \$7,975 in 2008 expenses to 2009, our reports are off by that amount. Regardless, we are using the figures that are in our financial report for simplicity.

Figure 4: Income and Expenses for 2005 - 2009





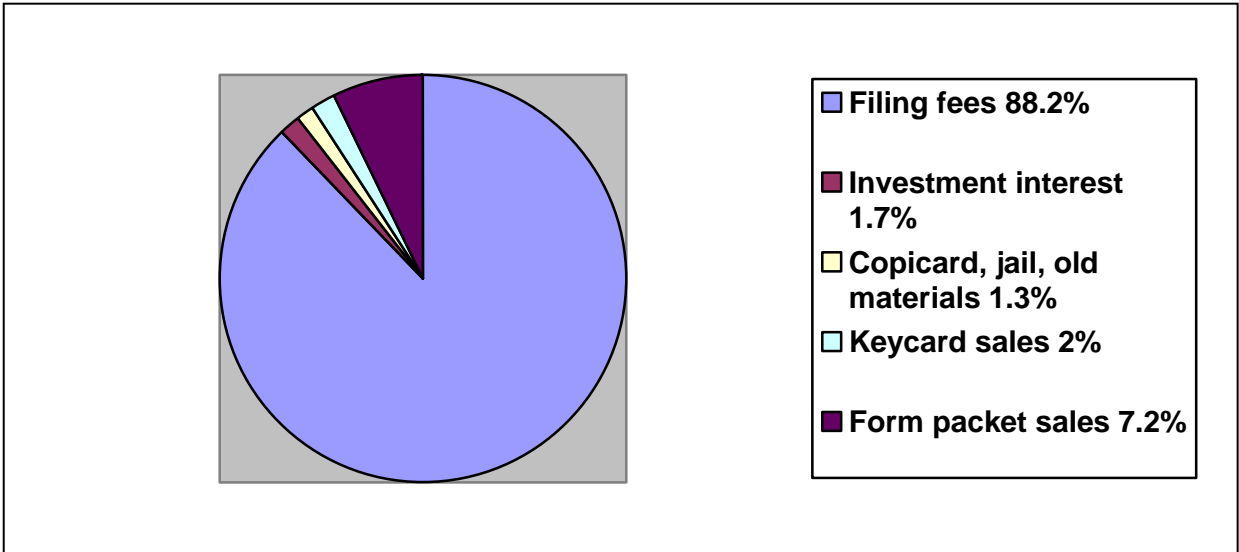
**Figure 5:
Expenses for
2009**

Figure 5 shows a chart of expenses by category. The greatest expense is books and materials. The reserve account is also partially for future purchases of books that are updated only

periodically.

Figure 6 shows revenues from each source.

Figure 6: Revenues for 2009 Broken Down by Source



And finally, Figure 7 on the next page lists expenditures and revenues by category and provides totals for each category.

Figure 7: January – December 2009 Expense and Revenue Numbers

<u>Income</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Percent of budgeted amount</u>
District Court filing fees	49,000.00	49,252.00	101%
Superior Court filing fees	134,000.00	138,624.00	103%
Interest	8,000.00	3,723.00	47%
Copicards	900.00	1,226.00	136%
After hours access keycards	4,000.00	4,083.00	102%
Form packets (gross)	12,000.00	15,275.00	127%
Jail Law Library services	1,300.00	813.00	63%
Income Subtotal	209,200.00	212,996.00	102%
 <u>Expenses</u>			
Salaries	64,225.00	60,570.00	94%
Employee benefits	21,680.00	21,665.00	100%
Books, materials, and databases	108,000.00	111,928.00	104%
Office supplies and printing	2,500.00	1,902.00	76%
Temporary employment	1,000.00	452.00	45%
Telephone	275.00	275.00	100%
Long distance travel	300.00	173.00	58%
Equipment maintenance/repair	500.00	428.00	86%
Computer maintenance	300.00	0.00	0%
Dues and conferences	1,000.00	408.00	41%
Furniture	0.00	303.00	n/a
Reserve account	9,420.00	9,420.00	100%
Expenses Subtotal	209,200.00	207,221.00	99%

Doing More With Less

While the amount of revenue each year does increase, the number of people we have

been serving has risen sharply in the past few years. The number of questions we receive and the number of people who come into the law library have both jumped with the economic downturn. Our revenue increases do not keep pace with the increased use the library has. Figure 8 shows the increase in the number of questions we receive, and Figure 9 shows the corresponding decrease in revenue per question we assist with. Each question that we help with is assisting a person dealing with divorce, eviction, debt collection, criminal charges, probating a will, or other legal matters with serious repercussions.

Figure 8: Questions asked of law library staff

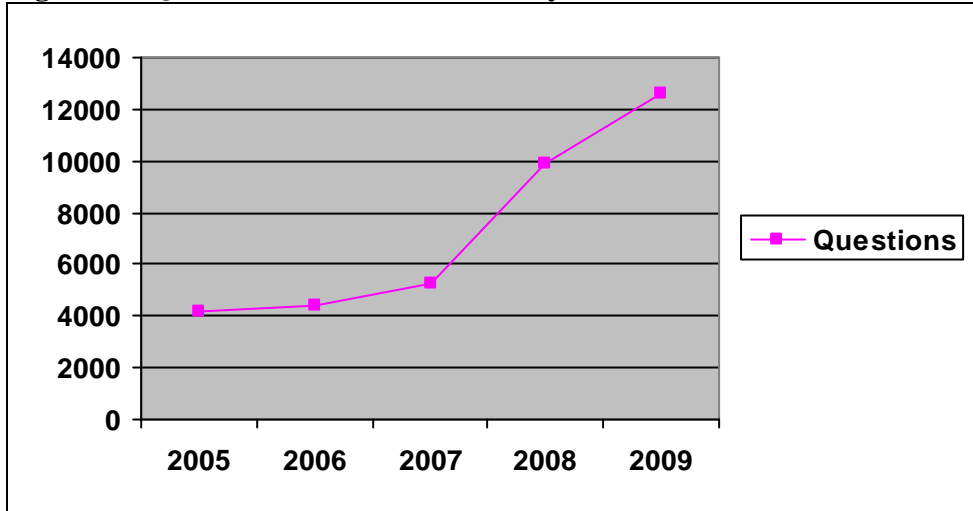
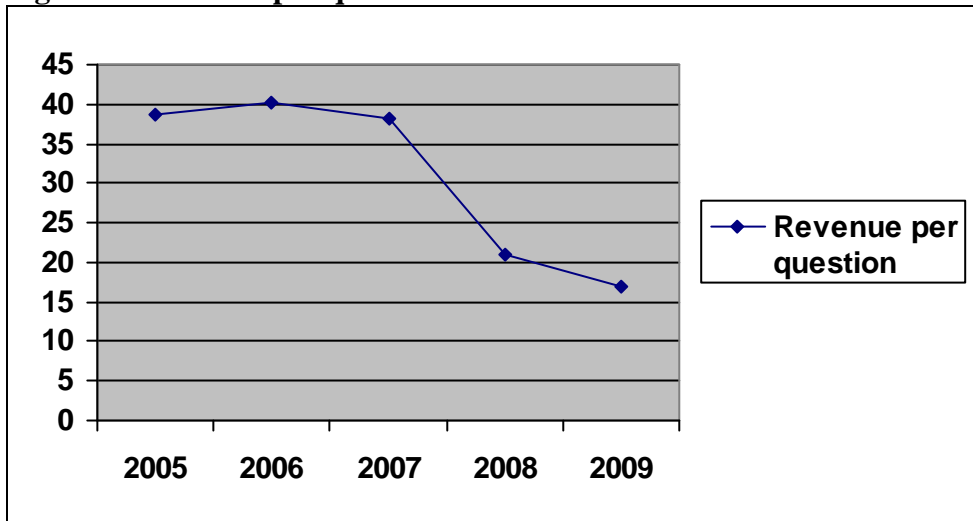


Figure 9: Revenue per question asked



Staff Development

Continuing education is important in helping the law librarians provide service to our patrons. It allows staff to learn about new products and technologies, gain ideas from peers, and establish contacts in other law libraries.

During 2009, staff attended meetings of the Washington Association of County Law Librarians (WACLL). Memberships include WACLL, AALL and both the regional chapter (Westpac) and the special interest section for county law librarians (SCCLL).

Summary

The Law Library continued its policy of conservative budgeting and ended the year with revenues in excess of expenditures. However, the Library continues to deal with a lack of space and spiraling materials costs, which have negatively impacted the currency and extent of the collection. However, our increased public hours resulted in a huge increase in both the number of people coming into the law library and the number of reference interactions.

Submitted on behalf of the Board of Trustees by:

_____/s/_____
Meridee Pabst, Co-Chair

_____/8/12/10_____
Date

_____/s/_____
Rachel Brooks, Co-Chair

_____/8/12/10_____
Date