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Sarasota County Library System success touted at statewide conference

In these days of dwindling budgets, reduced staff and fewer resources, libraries across the state are looking for ways to operate more efficiently while maintaining reasonable levels of service to patrons. While attending the 2009 Florida Library Association Conference in Orlando, the staff of the Sarasota County Library System presented a strategy that has proven successful.

Library Public Services Manager Andrea Ginsky and library staff presented their successful implementation of the floating library collection. The premise of a floating collection is that items checked out of a library can be returned to another library and will then remain at that library until requested by a patron at another library. Previously, an item returned to one of Sarasota County's eight libraries was shipped back to its home library, requiring additional handling and time.

Reasons for floating the collection include decreased costs (fuel, labor, time), improved patron access to collections, and reduced risk of injury to staff.

"There was a significant reduction in direct costs as well as an enhancement to service, and that adds up to a winning combination" said Sarabeth Kalajian, library general manager. Ginsky noted that "conference attendees were seeking practical, replicable strategies and this one generated keen interest."

Sarasota County, with a population 387,461 has eight libraries in its system with collection of items totaling about 1 million. One of the busiest library systems in the state, it hosts nearly 2.8 million visitors annually.

For more information contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask about the Sarasota County Library System floating collection or visit www.sclibs.net

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