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For Immediate Release

PUBLIC LIBRARY USE ACROSS COUNTY IS UP, WAY UP

The Umatilla County Special Library District reports that public library use in Umatilla County for the 2008-09 fiscal year ending June 30, 2009 was up, with some use at record levels.

Ken Reading, District Coordinator says reasons for the increased use may include more awareness of improved web access to books and materials in the county and region coupled with an increased awareness of the value of public library services during recessionary times.

City libraries reported their interlibrary loans of books and materials totaled 16,040, up a record 29.5% over the previous year. Over the same period 310,925 books and materials were checked out, an increase of 18,054 or 6.2% more than the previous year. Library program attendance for children and adults including annual summer reading programs totaled 19,025 persons, an increase of 22.4% over the previous year.

A relatively new area of growth in public libraries is the increased use of public internet access computers. In Umatilla County there are a total of 85 public internet computers in the twelve public libraries with average annual use of over 69,000 over the past five years. These computers are especially important for those who cannot afford a computer or internet access. They are also very popular with many travelers.

Reading says that city libraries in the county report a combined average of over 6,000 visits each week. The purposes of these visits are as varied as the people who come in. A partial list may include public internet use, book checkouts, reference questions, reading magazines and newspapers, homework help and research, business research, children's story times or teen and adult programs.