"[allCIRC™] frees staff to focus on other responsibilities, especially assisting customers one-on-one."

Donna Osborne, Director Berkeley County Library System

About Berkeley County Library System

From the first mention of library service in Berkeley County during the summer of 1934, when a reading room for the public was opened, the library system has grown to six branches serving the entire Berkeley County in South Carolina.

Serving nearly 150,000 residents spread across over 1300 square miles, the library's holdings are over 240,000 with an annual circulation of roughly 680,000 and growing fast.

"Our library use has doubled in the last three years while our budgets and staff have shrunk," said Donna Osborne, Director Berkeley County Library System.

A literate, informed, engaged and enriched citizenry is the published vision statement of the Library.

Self Service

If before the notion of self-service was rare, now, especially in libraries, self-service is the norm. With limited resources, tightening budgets and an increasing demand for services, libraries must turn to technology to meet their needs.

"It is a matter of convenience for customers for they are not forced to stand in long lines at the circulation desks where more than check-in and out is taking place," said Donna Osborne, Berkeley County Library System Director.

"It frees staff to focus on other responsibilities, especially assisting customers one-on-one."

Media Security / Tracking

By far, the number one growing segment of any library's collection is the media collection. As libraries evolve with the times the media collection is growing even more to keep pace with migration from CDs to DVDs to BluRay, PS3, Wii and other disk-like formats.

"Our ever expanding DVD collections, kept behind the circulation desks, created a huge bottleneck for staff searching through drawers of DVD discs and forced customers to wait until the disc and case were matched. It was easy to misfile the discs, and occasionally meant a frustrated customer. The more

DVDs we added, the more cumbersome this entire system became," said Donna.

"It was a most inefficient use of customer and staff time and something had to be done to better serve customers, increase efficiency, secure the DVDs and save staff time and decrease their frustration," she added.

Why allCIRC?

"We were seeking, first of all, a machine that stored and dispensed DVDs. At first, we were not really looking at self-check units at all. Our primary concern was preventing DVD theft," said Donna.

"…we could not afford the dispensing vending machine; those were well beyond our budget."

How has allCIRC helped?

"These machines have helped the library in several ways, including:

- *Reducing the time customers must spend checking out materials*
- *Reducing staff time searching for DVDs and matching them to dummy cases*
- *Cutting the Technical Services staff processing costs and time*
- *Creating better satisfied customers and staff*
- *Freeing staff to focus on serving customers in the stacks*

This new technology has increased the library's visibil-

ity in the community. Several newspaper stories have brought us added attention, from residents inside and outside the county. We're perceived as being technologically savvy."

In addition to storing and dispensing media, allCIRC™ also contains a complete self-check system built-in as well, which allows patrons a quick, "one-stop" for all of their transaction needs.

"Each month [allCIRC™] usage is increasing. People truly appreciate the self-check function of the machines and the convenience they provide. Staff truly appreciate the efficiencies it provides them, especially the storage and retrieval aspect of the allCIRCs. We plan to add allCIRC machines in the smaller branches to help reduce the need for more circulation staff, cut down on long waiting lines at the desks and decrease the theft of DVDs," said Donna.

"Words of Wisdom" for other libraries?

"Self-check units, especially if they include, like allCIRCs, a DVD storage and retrieval function, is a financial savings in the long-term. They can reduce the need for additional staff hours, act as a theft deterrent for DVDs, add positively to the customer's experience in the library, and make circulation processes more efficient."

Based on an interview with Donna Osborne, October 5, 2010