

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of JEFFERSON COUNTY

## Library Unit

The library unit came about because it was first suggested that the Applewood unit have a speaker from the Library as their Unit Choice program. When an opening occurred in the programming calendar it was suggested that we have a program presented by the Jefferson County Public Library (library) covering the options that the library must consider in order to continue the quality service we have come to expect from our local library.

This unit is really is an update on libraries. However, the speakers from the library will ask your opinions on the options available to provide the services we want and need and expect. The speakers will also speak in general about the traditional services of libraries and the new programs now available and how they impact the facilities and staff. There will be time for lots of questions and answers that will lead to a better understanding of the library's mission and how it will continue to be realized.

The following is taken from Jeffco LWV Program and History.

**POSITION IN BRIEF. Support of the property tax as the primary means of financing the Jefferson County Public Library. Grants and donations are also appropriate sources of funding.**

## STANDARDS

A county library system should have high levels of materials and services.

Cooperation and coordination with public schools is desirable.

Important to the system, but not to be used as substitutes for adequate funding, are user fees for specialized services only, book sales, and volunteers

## HISTORY

Study. In 1984, after many cuts in materials and services, it became evident the Jefferson County Public Library Board would ask the County Commissioners to place a proposal for an increased mill levy for libraries on the ballot. Jefferson County League members felt a study should be done so that League could take a position on any proposal. Consensus was reached in March 1986.

**ACTION:** The League supported an increase in the mill levy for Jefferson County Public Libraries in 1986 which passed.

## LOVING LIBRARIES TO DEATH

*Much of the following information has been excerpted from an article that appeared in the Aug. 18, 2005 issue of the Denver Post, written by Columnist Susan Thornton. The information has also appeared in "Exploring your Library," a publication of Jefferson County Public Library.*

Residents of Jefferson County are "loving their libraries to death." More and more of them are coming through the doors of the county's 10 libraries, checking out a record number of items and increasingly using the libraries' 200-plus computers to connect with the Internet.

In 2005 there have been more than 2.6 million visits to the libraries in Arvada, Belmar, Columbine, Conifer, Edgewater, Evergreen, Golden, Lakewood, Standley Lake and Wheat Ridge. The library system's 378,200 cardholders have checked out more than 5 million items, while patrons accessed the Online Library more than 2 million times. And there's no end in sight.

The library system is seeing double-digit percentage increases in circulation and foot traffic. Jackie Powers, the library's director of public information, relates, "The lines are long, there are waiting lists for materials and the staff is very busy. They are pretty stressed and overwhelmed."

Use is overwhelming the Jefferson County library system in part because it is operating today with the same dedicated mill levy established in 1986. Then voters approved a 3.5-mill dedicated levy. However, a 2002 request to increase the mill levy to 5 mills was rejected by voters.

That reality has led the library system to reconsider how it will operate in the future. Library representatives are speaking to community groups across the county, laying out options for how the libraries might proceed and gathering input from residents.

Powers says the speakers present several options as a starting point, but are eager to hear additional ideas from citizens.

At one end of the spectrum is the option of staying with the current long-range plan, which is designed to guide the library system until 2020.

Staying with the plan would mean expanding the small library in Golden, renovating the aging library in Lakewood (built in 1976) and constructing three more full-service libraries. One of the new libraries would be built at Fehringer Ranch at South Kipling and West Nassau, where the library system acquired land a number of years ago. Eventually, additional full-service libraries would also be built in West Arvada and Deer Creek Canyon; the library system would like to purchase sites in those areas soon, with buildings to be constructed when population growth justifies the expansion. However, with the present mill levy, these additional full-service libraries will not be built in the foreseeable future.

An alternative to building full-service libraries is to add more community libraries or new models like storefront or mall libraries. Mall libraries are usually less than 6,000 square feet and contain Internet access and some popular materials, but have limited space and very small reference and children's areas.

Adding full-service and/or small libraries would require additional revenues. If those revenues cannot be found, the library system will continue to operate within its budget – but there will probably have to be some cuts in services.