



**CULTURAL ECONOMY SUMMIT**  
**Fact Sheet on Louisiana Libraries**  
**February 1-2, 2007**

***HOW DO PUBLIC LIBRARIES FIT INTO THE CULTURAL ECONOMY?***

Public libraries by their very nature are cultural institutions. Libraries improve the quality of life, both in urban and rural areas. Not only do libraries provide books – including fiction and non-fiction written by Louisiana authors – but libraries also provide resources for the cultural industries of our state. They have become important venues in their communities, sponsoring readings and other literary events, as well as music and other cultural programs.

*Public libraries as cultural institutions:*

- Feature art and museum exhibits – painting, sculpture, photography, crafts.
- Arrange and host juried art shows to spotlight local artist's work.
- Present cultural programs, including instrumental and vocal music performers, dancers, and actors performing for both children and adults.
- Hold spoken word programs, featuring authors and poets reading from and discussing their own works.
- Host food and culinary arts programs, with local chefs.
- Provide venue for storytellers and other non-written folk art traditions.

*Public libraries as information and education centers:*

- Provide information to help artisans who were displaced after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.
- Serve as a resource for writers, artists, and musicians. Libraries provide assistance for them to find grant programs and other sources of support, because many people do not know what resources are available or how to access them.
- Provide information about small businesses and entrepreneurship.
- Preserve Louisiana's tradition of words and music, both published and oral tradition.
- Serve as a resource for Louisiana's growing film industry, with help for filmmakers on diverse topics, from information on tax credits to historical background for their script.
- Support tourism – travelers to the state use our public libraries to find information about the state, its parks and other cultural attractions, to check e-mail, and to read newspapers and magazines.

*Public libraries as gathering places:*

- Provide meeting rooms for programs and meetings.
- Conduct family programming, such as PRIME TIME FAMILY READING TIME®. This is a six- or eight-week reading, discussion, and storytelling program held at public libraries across the U.S. A university scholar (who functions as a discussion leader) and storyteller conduct weekly book discussion and storytelling sessions based on award-winning children's books.
- Provide space for resume-writing and job-interviewing classes taught by local experts

***HOW DOES THE STATE LIBRARY OF LOUISIANA FEED INTO THE CULTURAL ECONOMY?***

The State Library is the home of the Louisiana Center for the Book, established in 1994 for the purpose of stimulating public interest in reading, books, and libraries. The Center for the Book is affiliated with the Library of Congress and “works to accomplish its mission in three ways: by developing, sponsoring, and coordinating statewide reading and writing enrichment programs for children; by identifying and nurturing the objectives of Louisiana’s writers, publishers, and others involved in the creation and promotion of books; and by encouraging Louisianans to read by presenting or sponsoring public presentations by accomplished authors, thus enabling the public to interact with living authors.”

*The Louisiana Center for the Book:*

- Sponsors and organizes the Louisiana Book Festival
- Sponsors the annual Louisiana Writer Award and the Louisiana Young Readers’ Choice Award
- Compiles and publishes an online Louisiana Writers Directory.

*The Louisiana Book Festival:*

- Promotes reading by showcasing the publishing accomplishments of poets, writers, and others involved in the creation and promotion of books and literacy
- Offers workshops and how-to classes on writing and publishing as part of its annual celebration of readers and writers.

*The State Library of Louisiana:*

- Provides a broad collection of materials and is open to the public for browsing and research.
- Collects, preserves, and makes accessible literary materials from and about Louisiana.
- Collect art works, pamphlets, posters, music by Louisiana musicians, newspapers, scrap books, and so on.
- Is using a Federal grant to digitize over 10,000 historical photographs which will be available as part of the Louisiana Digital Library for the entire world to see.
- Creates audio-recordings of books by Louisiana authors for use by the blind and physically handicapped citizens of our State. Once recorded these books become available via interlibrary loan for any blind person in the US to borrow.
- Works with the Louisiana State Museum and other museums to provide traveling exhibits for Louisiana’s public libraries.
- Operates the Louisiana Bound Booksellers store, which features books about Louisiana or by Louisiana authors.