

## Records show increase in library patrons, usage

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MASON CITY — Nearly 182,000 books were checked out of the Mason City Public Library last year, according to records provided by the library.

The total of 181,995 is a 3.4 percent increase over 2005.

Library use was questioned last week during a City Council meeting concerning a proposed \$7.6 million bond issue for library improvements. The council approved putting the issue on the Nov. 6 ballot for voters to decide.

But during the public discussion, former library Director Andrew Alexander asked a series of questions including whether library usage was up.

And Councilman Max Weaver said, “When’s the last time anyone went to the library and checked a book out?”

Nearly 50,000 children’s books were circulated as well as 72,000 adult books and just over 60,000 audio books, DVDs and periodicals.

A total of 1,117 youngsters participated in the 2006 summer reading program.

The library had 17,274 active registered borrowers in 2006, an increase of 1.2 percent over the previous year.

Its outreach program provided 760 items each month to area nursing homes and preschool programs.

Full details of the library’s renovation and expansion plans, including why planners think they are needed, are available on the library’s Web site at [www.mcpl.org](http://www.mcpl.org).