

**North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
2009 Local Government Federal Credit Union Employee Productivity Awards Application**

County: Henderson **Employee:** Simon Coultas **Email:** scoultas@henderson.lib.nc.us

County Department: Library **Employee Title:** Public Services Librarian

County Phone: 828-697-4725 **County Mailing Address:** 301 N. Washington Street, Hendersonville, NC 28739

Is this project being submitted on behalf of two or more employees? **NO** **YES**

If yes, please provide below a listing of all project employees in Number 6. Employee & title as listed above should be for lead team member.

Fair Labors Standards Act Designation: In order for your project to be eligible, you MUST indicate one of the following. If you do not know, please contact your personnel director.

EXEMPT: **NON-EXEMPT:** **BOTH (if applicable to a team):**

1.	Productivity Improvement Title:	No Waiting in the Self-Checkout Line
2.	Implementation Date (must be between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008):	August 2008 -
3.	Please describe the productivity improvement. (Please limit response to these 2 pages.)	
<p>The Main Branch of the Henderson County Public Library system purchased two Apex XpressCheck self-checkout systems from Integrated Technology Group. One of the stations is situated in the main circulation area and the other in the children's department. Almost 10% of the Main Library's circulation is from items checked out at one of these self serve stations. Patrons can check out any and all library material through the system. The stations are equipped with unlocking devices to release DVDs and CDs from security cases. The stations are reliable, easy to use, and favored by our younger patrons.</p> <p>With machines performing some of the more mundane circulation tasks staff is free to provide extra special assistance to those patrons requiring it. This is particularly helpful in our environment where many of our elderly patrons (more than 20% are over 55) both need and enjoy their interaction with staff. Other patrons in a hurry can opt to use the convenient self-checkout station, so both users' needs are satisfied.</p> <p>Initially, there was fear in some staff that machines would replace them, but now they see they have more time to provide the kind of services machines cannot provide. So in reality the addition of an automated system actually highlights the value of personal customer service and enables us to provide it.</p> <p>As self serve kiosks continue to become the norm in our service environments we anticipate the percentage of items checked out this way will increase well into the double digits.</p>		

4. Please describe why this project was initiated or what problem it addressed:

During peak operating hours the lines at the circulation counter can be long. While staff wants to provide personal service to those patrons requiring it staff does not want to cause delays for other patrons who merely need to check out their items and go.

Realizing that most checkout transactions are routine, mundane and do not require human intervention, library administration decided it was time to install machines to assist in this task. The addition of the two self-checkout stations provide a convenient option for patrons who wish to quickly checkout their items and leave. Patrons who want more personal attention can wait for a circulation assistant. Without feeling the pressure of a long line the staff person can provide better quality service.

The library is currently experiencing an increased demand for public services; our door count is up by 30% this year. At the same time we have suffered a loss in resources, both human and financial, to meet this increased demand. (In fact we lost 7 out of 50 positions.) During this present economic downturn productivity gains provided by the self-checkout system and its consequent reduced burden on remaining staff are proving all the more vital.

5. Please quantify the improvement's results in terms of cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of services provided.

(Please indicate what resources were used to achieve your results and what was done with the time savings, if any accrued).

In the first 10 months of operation 9.2% of the Main Library circulation has passed through the two self checkout machines, 41,352 items. The remaining 90.8% of items were checked out by the nine staff members. The start up costs associated with the 2 machines was relatively high at \$27,000; however the ongoing maintenance is estimated at only \$3,400 per year.

The job rate salary, not including benefits, for the library assistant positions responsible for manual checkout is about \$26,000 annually. Going into our second year at the current rate of checkout our 2 self-checkout machines will checkout the equivalent of one employee for the cost of the annual software license, \$3,400. In terms of merely checking out library items the same level of service is delivered at a much lower cost.

However, equally important to the cost savings is the time gained by staff to provide assistance to those patrons requiring more personalized attention. Staff has more time to locate items, answer reference questions, assist with computers, provide readers advisory, or interact with an elderly patron.

6. Please provide any other descriptive information you would like to be considered by the review committee.

The staff involved in this project include the following:
Lead Team Member, Public Services Librarian, Simon Coultas
Circulation Manager, Mark Burdette
Library Assistants; Kathy Kreutter, Myra Vagts, AnnMarie Rowe, Jennifer Deitz, Jennifer Brevard, Sandra Fairbanks, Candis Killam and Kate Whyte

County Manager's Name:	Steve Wyatt	Supervisor's Name:	William E. Snyder, Library Director
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Return by **June 19, 2009** via email to ncacc@ncacc.org.

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