PERRY COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY

LONG-RANGE STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2027

Perry County Public Library Mission Statement

Perry County Public Library provides all residents of Perry County with access to materials, resources, and services for education, information, and recreation through our three branch locations and outreach services. (Adopted 5/7/24)

System History & Overview

Tell City's first library was organized in 1893 by a group of 30 residents, under the name of the Tell City Library Association. Each of the 30 residents donated $3 to buy library books. The books were kept at Schreiber's Drug Store and circulated to readers.

In the early 20th century, Superintendent of Tell City Schools Chris Newman was instrumental in starting a city library. With the School Board in charge, the public library system was launched in 1905. The City Council approved a tax that could save up to $900 for the library. The newly established public library would operate out of a room in City Hall. The lending library in Schreiber's Drug Store was discontinued.

As City Hall became used for other purposes, the atmosphere became less conducive to quiet reading and study, and the need for a separate building became apparent. In 1916, the School Board secured a $10,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation for a library building, with the city agreeing to furnish the site. The Tell City Public Library, at the corner of 9th and Franklin Streets, opened in 1917.

In 1967, the library doubled its size, opening a major addition facing Franklin Street, financed through a Library and Services Construction Act grant and a sale of bonds. A gift from the L.R. Chapman estate in 1982 made the remodeling of the 1917 Carnegie building and the addition of a public meeting room possible.
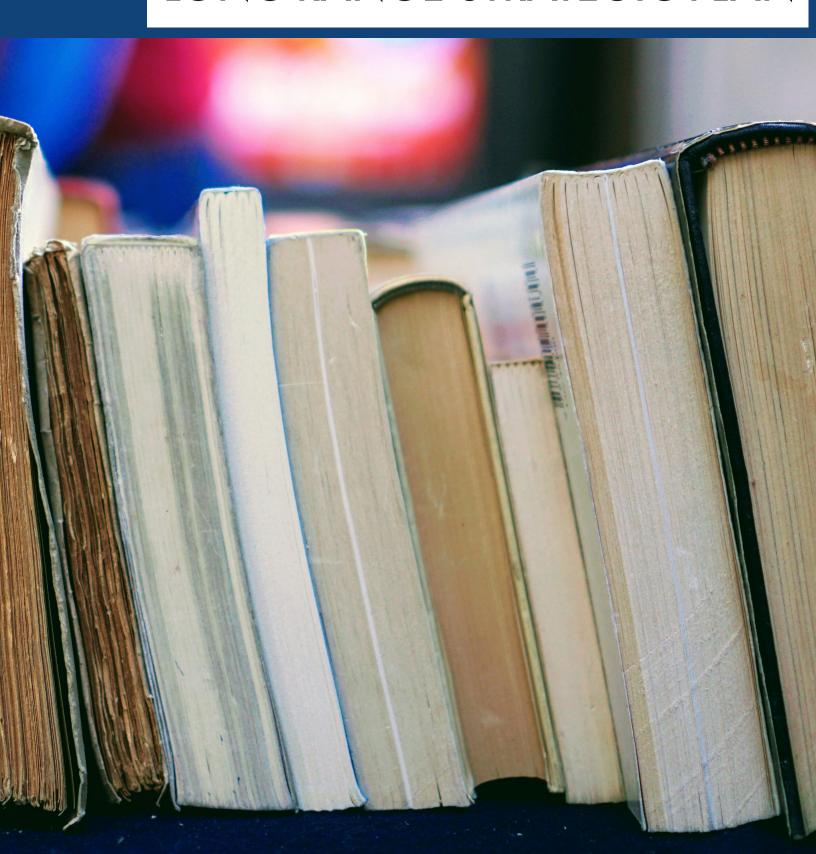
In 2002, the library, woefully short on room to maintain its enlarging collection and with the advent of public Internet access computers, relocated to 2328 Tell Street. With a donation of property from Mr. and Mrs. Guy Neil Ramsey, many corporate and private donations, Build Indiana Funds, and the sale of bonds, a new and modernized building was achieved. The new building boasts a technology lab for 15 computers, a genealogy department, meeting room, two study rooms, children's department, story time room, garage and storage for Perry County Bookmobile and many numerous facilities for the public.

Since the early 1960s, the Perry County Bookmobile has made its headquarters at Tell City Public Library, serving schools and rural residents of Perry County and, through contract, northern Spencer County. When this contract expired in December 1996, the Perry County Contractual Library merged into the Tell City Public Library, forming the Tell City-Perry County Public Library.

In January 2012, the Tell City-Perry County Public Library merged with the Cannelton Library District. Both libraries are now able to offer multiple services to the whole community of Perry County, including computer labs, wifi, children's story times and meeting rooms. The newly merged library system also became a part of the Indiana State Library consortium of Evergreen Indiana, giving patrons access to books and materials from more than 100 Indiana libraries. With the new merger, we were renamed the Perry County Public Library.

In 2023, the Perry County Public Library took steps toward the future by adopting new branding, style guide, website, email domain, and marketing approach among other things. The Perry County Public Library now stands as a beacon of progress and inclusiveness to Perry County and the surrounding communities.

THE THREE PILLARS OF OUR LONG-RANGE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Three Pillars of our Long-Range Strategic Plan

Through outside facilitation, board and staff participation, and stakeholder feedback, the Perry County Public Library identified three main pillars in which to focus on a long-range plan.

- Facilities & Financing

- Internal Procedures for Staff & Board Members

- Community Partnerships, Collaborations, Programming & Outreach

FACILITIES AND FINANCING

<u>Facilities and Financing</u>

Tell City Location

In 2024, the Tell City location turns 22 and while we completely replaced the HVAC in 2023, the building is at an age where wear, tear, and age begins to show, and it must be addressed and planned for.

- Complete a Facilities Study and determine what our most pressing needs are in both the short-term and long-term
- It is time (or close to it) to replace the following:
    - Computers
    - Lighting
    - Repainting of certain areas
    - Repurposing space
    - Furniture throughout the library
    - Carpet and shelving
    - Signage
    - Other essential equipment
- Do we have space for additional meeting or study rooms as they are becoming one of our most popular commodities?

Bookmobile

In recent years, issues with the bookmobile are becoming more prevalent and it is time to begin planning to replace one of our more valued resources.

- It is a vital resource and needs to be out and in service in the community and not in a repair shop
- How do we finance this massive project?
- What size and scope of a new bookmobile do we need?
- This capital project might be the most pressing issue we face next, and we need to approach it from multiple aspects to achieve the funding needed

Cannelton Branch

Our Cannelton Branch location is leased to the Perry County Public Library by the city of Cannelton. Our contract with the city runs until 2026 and per the lease, automatically renews for one year at a time after that. Items we need to address are the following:

- Some aspects of the lease need to be addressed because they are unclear and need to be clarified
- Are we overpaying for some services and if so, we must revise the contract
- The Perry County Public Library must support Cannelton to be successful as a system as a whole and some ways include:
    - New lighting
    - New furniture
    - New equipment
    - New signage (both on the street and on the building)
    - Re-painting of certain areas
- The question becomes, how much does the city of Cannelton use their resources to support these projects since we lease the building?
- Form a committee with local Cannelton officials to meet and revise the contract and see if agreements can be made to support these projects which would be mutually beneficial for both parties.

Greenspace at the Tell City location

Years ago, the library purchased the parcel of land in front of the Tell City location, which is substantial, yet unused. We must find a way to utilize this space. Some potential ideas include the following:

- Build a pavilion that could be used for programming, music, and other events. The space already has a natural lawn incline which would be perfect for such a project.
    - Explore ways to finance such a project, which includes use of gift money and sponsorships
- Form a committee, which would include stakeholders, town officials, and others to see what needs of the community are and how the library can be a leader in hosting community events
- The Greenspace project would be part of the Facilities Study

Internal Procedures for Staff & Board Members

It has been identified that the following areas must be assessed and addressed to maintain relevance in today's library and work environment:

Staff Compensation

Our goal is to support staff with competitive wages and benefits in these challenging and changing times. To do this we must do a complete analysis of all our positions and benefits to make sure we are providing staff with the support and fair compensation they need. Items to be addressed include:

- Staff pay - Do staff compensation study by October 1, 2024, with comparable libraries of size, funding base, population, and position.
- Should pay be based on a merit-based evaluation as part of recognition and appreciation of hard work instead of flat, across the board raises?
- Benefits - Look at all benefits for full-time and part-time staff and any changes that could be made through comparable libraries in Indiana.
- Do we convert PTO/sick days/vacation into just PTO days?
- Do we change the way benefits are earned? Example: Instead of earning an extra week after five years or receiving all earned benefits at the beginning of the year, should we make these earned benefits incremental per month?

Staff and Board Development

We want not only staff to stay up to date with the latest trends and issues in the library world, but our board as well. To do this, an intentional plan of development and communication must be put into place which includes the following:

- Monthly staff meetings
- Staff trainings and development days
- Communication and education through workshops and conferences
- Yearly evaluations and goal setting
- Bi-annual review of the employee handbook and general policies
- Development a comprehensive onboarding program for new hires
- Board Development
  - Understanding roles and responsibilities
  - Full board training in July of 2024 for newer members and for those who have served long term so they can fully understand their roles
  - Update the manual for onboarding new board members
- Committees for the following areas
  - Programming

- Facilities
- Technology
- Finance
- HR

Succession Planning

Here at the Perry County Public Library, we must be prepared for eventual changes and staff turnover. When employees leave, take on new roles, or retire, we must be ready to meet the challenges of replacing them. This can include:
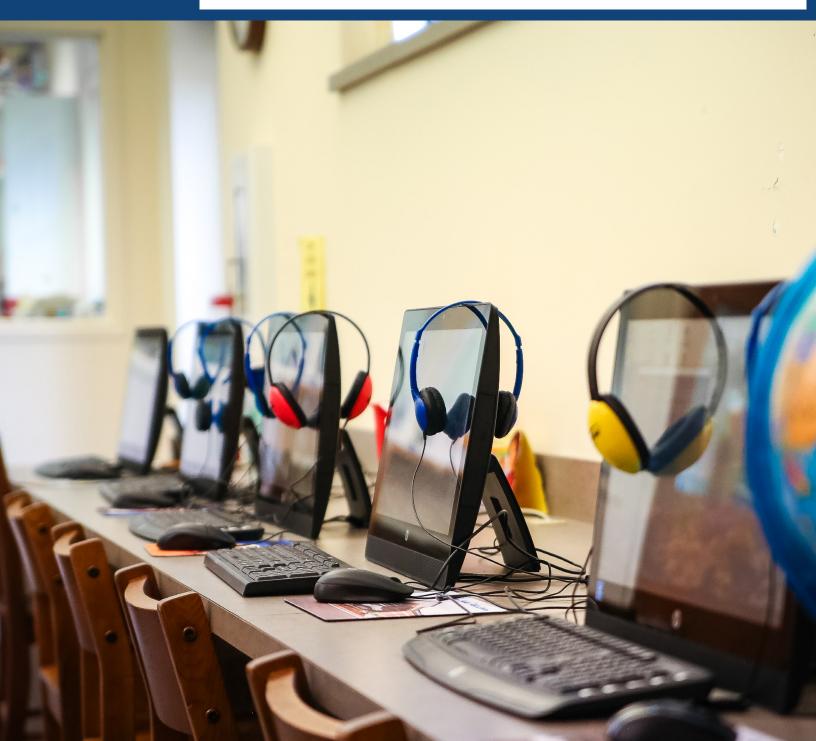
- Continuous education
- Encouragement of further exploration of an area of particular interest if an employee has a desire to move to a different role at some point
- Evaluate all positions once someone leaves or a position opens
  - Do we still need that position?
  - Can the library benefit more from a different or new opportunity within the system?
  - Can roles be combined, and adjustments be made to create new possibilities?
  - Be prepared in all ways in case senior leadership retires or moves on so there is no "starting from scratch" and the foundation is already in place for a successful changeover

Policy changes and procedures

As a part of any internal audit, outdated policies and procedures were discovered. We are currently in the process of evaluating and updating all policies and procedures. Other items that still need to be addressed include the following:

- Streamlining of payments - Set auto pay for regularly monthly bills
- Go paperless as much as possible. While there are many instances where paper is still vital, our goal should be to become as paperless as possible as part of the streamlining of finances and payments
- Go fine free and purge old bills that are 8-10 years old once we properly work out all the details internally and with Evergreen
- Update Internal Control policies
- Update procedures such as book challenges and other topics which are current and relevant in today's climate
- Continue to audit all processes and make the appropriate policy changes as needed

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS, OUTREACH, AND MORE

Community Partnerships, Outreach, and More

Community Needs Assessment

A comprehensive community needs assessment needs to be done to cover all areas, demographics, and ages to better serve the service population of Perry County. This will be done in 2024 by the following:

- Online and paper surveys
- Feedback from stakeholders
- Feedback from program attendees
- Feedback and assessment of other organizations to not duplicate work and effort such as the local Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce

Identify Potential Partners and Collaborations

A community that works together becomes stronger together and results benefit all. We must work to identify potential partners and collaborations so no one organization must carry the load and we can build a bigger tent of allies to work with, but some questions must be asked as well, such as:

- Does the potential partnership meet community needs?
- From the input of stakeholders, what does the community need or want?
- Be able to quantify the benefits. What's in it for us? It must benefit the library, not just the library doing someone else's work.

Programming and partnerships

- What are the community's needs? Example: It has been expressed through numerous channels for the need for technology training. We now have "Tech Tuesdays" every other week for two hours to answer any tech related questions and this was the direct result of a community need and feedback from our stakeholders.
- Educate the public on our online resources. We have numerous online resources from eBook and movie streaming, to now having all the Perry County newspapers and yearbooks digitized as of January of 2023. We must promote and educate the public on the use of these resources to maximize our reach and resources.
- Programming is an across-the-board process serving children, young adults, and adults. We must be intentional in our programming to meet the needs of these groups.

- Find partners to have programming with to help ease the burden of having to do it all, help with marketing, and educate the community on a variety of topics. Example (and something new to PCPL), a recent programming series with 5/3 Bank on credit scores, first time home buying, and saving money. These types of programs are a win for all involved and meet all the pillars of our mission statement.

Designated Community Liaison

- The designated community liaison focuses on conversations, partnerships with organizations and businesses for programming and collaborations
- Focuses on grants and sponsorships