

# **Villisca Public Library Strategic Plan 2019-2024**



**Approved by the Villisca Public Library Board of Trustees**

**February 25, 2019**

The Villisca Public Library was constructed in 1908 and dedicated in 1909. It was built in the classic Carnegie style. Most of the interior has remained unchanged over the years, with the original dark oak built-in bookshelves, woodwork, and trim. The Library serves as an education, recreation, and technology center for the community with the main focus being programs that support children's educational needs and the technological and social demands of the adult patrons. The Library also houses several historical collections in the basement. The Library is challenged with creating a comfortable environment for our patrons and maintaining our 110+ years-old building.

### **Background and Data**

Villisca is located in Montgomery County in Southwest Iowa. The population of Villisca has decreased slightly from 2000, which according to the 2010 Federal Census is 1,252, but the age makeup of the community remains relatively stable. The residents of Villisca are nearly all white. Latino, Native American, and African American populations are present as well. English is the predominate language spoken in the community.

There are 3 home-based daycare providers in Villisca. The children of Villisca attend school in the Southwest Valley School District (SWV), with the Enarson Elementary and Southwest Valley Middle School (SWVMS) located in Villisca, and the Southwest Valley High School (SWVHS) located in Corning. It is estimated that there are 4 home-school families in the community, which is typical for a community of this size. Excluding preschoolers, approximately 20 percent of the population is school-age.

Citizens have access to information in a variety of formats including a local newspaper, two area radio stations, a satellite TV provider, and fiber-optic, high-speed Internet and television available from the local telephone company.

The community's main employers include Villisca Good Samaritan Society, SWV Community School District, Casey's General Store, Johnston Communications, the City of Villisca, and United Farmers' Cooperative Elevator and Tire/Gas Shop. Because of the central location of Villisca and equal distances of other communities, such as Atlantic, Red Oak, Creston, and Clarinda, a number of residents choose to commute. Median income is below both state and national averages. Unemployment is an ongoing issue countywide.

The community boasts many amenities. Villisca is proud of our swimming pool, golf course/Country Club, and fitness center. A good variety of services are available: 2 medical clinics and emergency services, a pharmacy and gift shop, café, 3 body shops, post office, laundry mat, a convenience store, and a Dollar General Store in progress. Local organizations include Lions Club, Villisca Community Betterment Association, 4-H, American Legion, Boy and Girl Scouts, Villisca Alumni and Friends Association, Friends of the Villisca Public Library, Villisca Interchurch Council and Food Pantry, Villisca Historical Society, Villisca Community Gardens, Villisca Yard and Garden Committee, and Feed the Pack Program.

The citizens take pride in the many amenities provided by their community, varied community groups, and a dedicated school district among other things.

The Library staff and Trustees wish to extend a generous thank you to the community members that took time to participate in the McClure Placemaking meetings and library survey portion of this planning process. A special thanks to the Friends of the Villisca Public Library and also to the dedicated Villisca Public Library Trustees for all of their input and help with this strategic plan.

### **Strategic Plan 2019-2024 process**

Discussions for a revision of the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan began in the fall, 2018. Also that fall, the city of Villisca participated in a community meeting facilitated by the McClure Placemaking group. Data from that meeting was used for the community assessment portion of this plan.

### **Community Assessment- Community Meeting**

During the community meeting, the citizens of Villisca were asked to reflect on the current conditions of the City of Villisca, and participated in various brainstorming activities designed to assist in the identification of the community's current challenges and opportunities, and envision ways in which the City of Villisca could improve local services or inspire growth.

The Community identified the following:

#### **Challenges**

- Financial- Small tax-base & infrastructure limits attraction of large industry & small business entrepreneurs. Residents find higher paying jobs elsewhere. Example: Loss of local grocery store. Local shopping & service revenues are lost to larger neighboring communities.
- Recreational- Public outdoor recreation areas are underutilized: walking trail, Frisbee golf course, swimming pool, and fitness center. Limited cultural recreational activities.
- Community Engagement- Small size, limited funding, lack of "new" volunteers, and available resources impact community perception of equity in public services.
- Organizational/Infrastructure- Limited or lack of public transportation, limited or lack of available, affordable housing, limited or lack of affordable child care. Example: Sidewalk limitations near the elementary school.

#### **Opportunities- New Conditions Which Could Meet Local Need**

- Increase technology resources: Re-establish a local public access cable channel.
- Increase recreational & social activities for the community.
- Increase cultural recreation, including public art events, activities, exhibitions & displays.

- Encourage community enrichment and engagement through an atmosphere of volunteerism & decrease in partisanship which will serve to advance the general well-being of all residents.
- Reinforce the local economy through the identification & pursuit of outside funding sources, as well as the efficient coordination of local services & resources by those in positions of community “leadership”.

### **Aspirations- Potential for Growth**

- Foster the intellectual & social development of the local youth population, while providing appropriate meeting places & activities for teens, increase awareness of current recreational areas, encouraging the development of community engagement & ownership.
- Continue community’s growth through the expansion of industry & tourism while balancing the needs of the residents/businesses, maintaining excellent public services, and retaining a strong sense of local history.
- Provide residents & visitors with access to technology & information resources; attractive retail & artisanal businesses; advancements of tourism-based initiatives.

### **The Review Process**

The Library’s review process began with a final review of the current Strategic Plan. The review consisted of naming all the goals and objectives that were accomplished and a discussion of the goals and objectives that were not accomplished to see if those goals were still relevant and achievable within a revised plan. The 2015-2019 plan included information from the Villisca Placemaking community meeting and discussions with the Board of Trustees. The current plan is a review and re-shape of the 2015-2019 plan, and was formulated by the staff, Board of Trustees, and Friends members at the Villisca Public Library, with additional input from patron surveys collected in the fall of 2018.

The team members were Martha Herzberg, Director; Bonnie Berggren, Assistant Director; Trustees Patsy Gibler, John McKean, Becky Sunderman, Robert Marsh, Jake Burgess; SWV MS Reading Teacher Marla McAlpin; and Gloria Jones, Friends member.

### **Mission Statement Revision**

The first objective decided by the group was to update our Mission Statement. This had not been updated since before 2012: *To provide quality and up-to-date reference and popular materials for patrons of all ages and education and economic levels, through written, visual, and technological materials. To increase community use and pride in the Library and its unique qualities of museum displays, antique collections, and meeting space.* This mission statement didn’t inspire patrons or staff, and was too lengthy.

After much reflection and review of wording samples of mission statements from several other libraries, we chose the following:

*The mission of the Villisca Public Library is to inform, enrich, and empower our community.*

The main target areas of the Strategic Plan 2019-2024 relates to our patron's experiences with the Library. This culminated in five major goals that include:

**GOAL A: OFFER PROGRAMS THAT MEET A RANGE OF AGES AND INTERESTS.**

Objective 1. Continuously evaluate and, as appropriate, implement programs which spark creativity and support learning and literacy for patrons of all ages.

- Offer at least 10 programs per year on a variety of topics including but not limited to hands-on activities, crafting, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math), Maker Space, etc.

Objective 2. Evaluate opportunities and, as appropriate, collaborate with the City, community agencies and/or community businesses to provide one community sponsored programming event held at or sponsored by the library by FY2020.

- Library will participate in community events as appropriate.
- Library will maintain its meeting space for use by the community and Library Board.

**CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS**

- Meet each August with classroom teachers to coordinate reading schedule for classrooms at Enarson Elementary, preschool, and daycare programs.
- Initiate a pajama story hour in the evening twice a month by Sept. 2019.
- Implement reading and STEAM activities with the elementary school's After School Program twice monthly by FY2020.

**TEEN PROGRAMS**

- Increase attendance for Teen Summer Reading Program by 3% by FY2020, and maintain that level of attendance by FY2024.
- Promote Inter Library Loan (ILL) and utilize ILL to borrow popular and in-demand Young Adult books for SWVMS student monthly visits to Library.
- Annually promote the free summer audiobook program for teens sponsored by SYNC and the use of BRIDGES for borrowing digital titles available from our library.

**ADULT PROGRAMS**

- Utilize ILL to choose books and audiobooks for monthly book discussion.
- Weekly display new books and *New York Times* Best Sellers Lists books prominently in the entrance of the library.

- Quarterly participate in the SW Iowa Large Print (LP) Rotation program to bring new LP books into the Library.
- Submit articles to local newspaper and social media to inform patrons and public about events and services offered by the Library twice monthly.
- Rotate selection of LP books and audiobooks monthly to the local nursing home for residents' use.
- Create a Library policy on Homebound Services by FY2020.

**GOAL B: MEET STANDARDS OF QUALITY TO MAINTAIN STATE ACCREDITATION AT TIER 3 AND DIRECTOR CERTIFICATION.**

Objective 1. Complete an evaluation of the library services to assure criteria for continued state accreditation are met. Annual evaluation by November Board of Trustee meeting.

- Director will attend County and State library meetings as scheduling allows.
- Director will maintain appropriate number of continuing education credits to hold current certification.
- Director will conduct annual professional development review (PDR) with staff members.
- Library Board of Directors will conduct annual PDR with the Director.
- Library Board of Directors will conduct annual PDR self-evaluation.
- Staff and Trustees will participate in statewide educational opportunities as appropriate.

Objective 2. By the end of FY2022, assure that three-fourths of the state accreditation standards are met.

- Director and staff will continue to implement library policies and inform patrons and public as needed.

Objective 3. By the end of FY2022, complete the ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities.

- Quarterly apply for grants to help support the mission of the Library and continue upkeep of the building.

**GOAL C: SUPPORT TECHNOLOGY NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY**

Objective 1. By May 2019, develop and implement a technology advancement plan to assure the library maintains, replaces and appropriately adds technology assets.

- Annually purchase and install virus protection on patron computers to protect current resources.
- Annually evaluate and designate one computer in Children's section for games.

Objective 2. By the end of each fiscal year, obtain/replace one computer used by library patrons.

- Apply for technology grants quarterly to purchase computer programs and hardware as needed.

Objective 3. Annually evaluate how the wireless internet needs of the community are being met by the Library and implement changes as appropriate.

- On an ongoing basis, seek and evaluate opportunities to improve the Library website and social media platforms.
- List new books and movie titles monthly on the Library website and social media platforms.

Objective 4. Twice yearly, offer a course to the public on Internet or computer use.

- Offer classes quarterly to inform patrons of online information and resources available.
- Offer classes quarterly to increase knowledge and utilization of ILL, BRIDGES, and Kindles available for checkout.

Objective 5. Continuously evaluate and at the end of each fiscal year, implement identified attainable opportunities to improve the Library's IT (Information Technology).

- Annually evaluate services available to public: black & white copies and printing, color copies and printing, fax, email, scanning, and WI-FI internet.
- Twice yearly, survey patrons and community members on ways to improve Library technology services through written and online surveys.

**GOAL D: EXPAND RELATIONSHIPS THAT BUILD COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT THE LIBRARY'S MISSION.**

Objective 1. Director will annually petition for increased funding at City, County, and State levels as appropriate.

- Director will present Library Report at monthly City Council meetings.
- Director will present an Annual Report to the City Council following the close of the fiscal year.
- Director will present an Annual Report to the Montgomery Board of Supervisors following the close of the fiscal year.
- Each January, the Director will petition the Montgomery Board of Supervisors for 3% increased funding.
- Each January, annual reports and funding request will be provided to adjoining county Boards of Supervisors.

- **GOAL E: ENSURE LIBRARY SPACES ARE FUNCTIONAL AND ATTRACTIVE.**

Objective 1. Continuously evaluate and, as appropriate, implement changes to the Library layout permitting more efficient and effective use of the physical space for best flow and accessibility.

- Staff will perform a general Space Needs Assessment of library space inside and out annually by FY2020.
- Staff will consider changing location of circulation desk and furniture by FY 2020.

Objective 2. Continuously evaluate and at the end of each fiscal year, investigate improving staff working area to include storage and efficient work spaces.

- Staff will investigate rearrangement of Director's office by November 2019.
- Staff will consider repurposing/obtaining new office storage by November 2019.

Objective 3. Continuously evaluate and, as appropriate, implement repairs and/or maintenance of the library building.

- The Friends of the Villisca Public Library and Director will quarterly apply for grants that will fund the following Library building and basement revitalization projects by 2024:
  - Replace seating for computer stations.
  - Replace Library upstairs light fixtures with energy-efficient LED lighting.
  - Repaint the Library entryway and install bulletin boards for displays.
  - Repaint the Teen Room.
  - Re-cover footstools and replace window seat cushions.
  - Repair cracks in plaster and repaint interior of the library.
  - Replace basement windows.
  - Replace basement window blinds
  - Repair and resurface cement Library steps.
  - Repair tuck pointing of exterior brick and seal Library's limestone front step.
  - Repair and repaint water-damaged basement plaster walls.
  - Partner with Friends of the Library and Villisca Historical Society to brainstorm ways to better utilize displays in the basement.
  - Update the basement meeting room for use by the community and Library:
  - Replace basement area carpet
  - Repaint basement floor
  - Repaint basement walls
  - Replace basement lighting
  - Investigate ways to augment basement heating