



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028



7.2023

PREPARED BY

LIBRARY STRATEGIES

MISSION & VISION

Mission: *The DeMary Memorial Library educates, advances, and empowers our patrons and community. We work to respond to and meet the interests and needs of our residents.*

Vision: *The Library is recognized as the hub of educational, cultural and enrichment activities that make our community a great place to live!*

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2023, Library Strategies was contracted jointly by the Burley Public and DeMary Memorial libraries to facilitate a strategic planning process. The lead consultants on the project were Stu Wilson, based in Montana, and Alayne Hopkins, the director of Library Strategies, headquartered in Minnesota.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Library Strategies facilitated an extensive planning process, culminating in this plan, and a separate plan for the Burley Public Library. Some process steps were conducted jointly for both libraries, while others were independent for each library. The first phase of the project included meetings with the library directors and the strategic planning steering committee. This phase also involved gathering and reviewing community demographics, as well as data and trends from libraries' usage statistics. The second phase focused on gathering community and key stakeholder input, as well as site visits to further explore the library buildings, collections, and other service offerings. The input processes included a community survey that was distributed widely both online and in hard copies in the libraries. Two focus groups were also conducted, with approximately 20 attendees, who represented diverse aspects of both communities. Key stakeholder input included meetings with the board and staff of each library and further in-depth meetings with the directors.



MAJOR FINDINGS

Through the planning process, Library Strategies determined the strengths and weakness of each library. For the DeMary Memorial Library, the consultants discovered that the Library is very well-run, welcoming, and pleasant. The staff and board are knowledgeable, innovative, and committed to serving the community. Library services, however, are lacking in a number of key areas for the service size of the City of Rupert and surrounding area. These deficiencies are not due to the staff or board but are a result of a lack of funding and other resources.

The primary resource deficiencies start with building. The current building is not large enough to accommodate such activities as an enhanced children's area, a separate teen space, quiet reading areas, various sized meeting spaces, and a reasonably sized programming space. The current building was built in 1958, and to serve the community at the same level today, the building should be at least doubled in size.

Second, the Library does not have adequate funding. Again, based on the Library's service population, it is estimated that the annual budget should also be doubled to provide services and resources that meet today's needs. Finally, and related to funding, the staffing level of the Library is inadequate. Because of the lack of staff, some demographics in the City are seriously under-served, notably teens, seniors and the large Hispanic/Latinx population. Furthermore, because of its minimal staff resources, such services as teen and adult programming, computer assistance, and outreach to schools and the community are not currently possible.

A final point needs to be made regarding the Library's service to the public. Currently funded by the City of Rupert, residents within the City have free use of all of the Library's services and offerings. However, Minidoka County residents outside of the City must pay a fee to use the Library. This seriously hampers use of the Library by non-City residents, including groups that could benefit tremendously from adequate Library resources. Thus, the Library is currently considering moving to a county-wide library tax district rather than City funding, and the consultants concur that moving to this model would help address most, if not all of the Library's current service deficits.

CONCLUSION

The plan below is designed to realistically advance the DeMary Memorial Library in its service to the public. The Library has a strong foundation of staff, board, and in some areas, adequate services (notably, children's services). This foundation is an excellent base from which to build as resources allow. Because of the Library's resource limitations, the plan is divided into three sections: 1) increasing resources, 2) incremental service improvements that can be addressed within the current resource limitations, and 3) strategic services areas to improve only if there are increased resources.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

STRATEGIC AREA 1 – IMPROVE RESOURCES

Increase Funding and Add Space

GOAL 1: Pursue Creating a Library District

STRATEGIES:

- Examine the legal process to establish a District
- If a District is deemed possible, determine best timing, resources needed, and structures to hold a District campaign and election

GOAL 2: Raise Awareness and Use of the Library

STRATEGIES:

- Create awareness campaigns to introduce the Library to non-Library users and identified communities that lack familiarity with the Library
 - Advance and expand the use of social media
 - Reach out directly to specific groups, such as the homeschool and Hispanic communities, churches, schools, and other community groups
 - Broaden the Library's presence at community events
- Market the broad array of Library services, especially free services that do not require a Library card
- Improve external Library signage and directional signage in the community



STRATEGIC AREA 2 – WITH CURRENT FUNDING/RESOURCE LIMITS

Augment Current Library Services

GOAL 3: Improve Library Services to Better Match Community Needs

STRATEGIES:

- Continue to improve services for pre-K children
- Add a regular program series for adults, likely in partnership with another local organization and conducted off-site
- Increase activities and events for teens
- Consider adding a service to provide limited computer/technology assistance, perhaps by appointment and conducted by volunteers
- Review the collection and ensure that it meets the need for the entire community
- As space allows, expand the “library of things” collection of items such as games and puzzles.



GOAL 4: Increase Use of the Library

STRATEGIES:

- Improve marketing and promotion of the Library (see Goal 2)
- Consider launching a library card sign-up drive
- Review current Library hours, and look to shift to more convenient hours and program offerings for working families
- Work to increase signage and information provided in Spanish

GOAL 5: Improve the Current Building and Spaces

STRATEGIES:

- Replace the current shelving with more attractive, safer and, ideally, movable units to allow for flexible uses of the collections area
- Continue to enhance the look and attractiveness of the Library building, both inside and outside
- Explore options for changing the computer area to a more changeable space, that might allow for comfortable seating or teen activities



STRATEGIC AREA 3 – ONLY WITH ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & SPACE

Improve Services to Advance the Community and Improve Residents' Lives

GOAL 6: Increase the Size of the Library Footprint

STRATEGIES:

- Define the primary needs for added space, perhaps with the assistance of the State Library or library consultant. (Initially, critical needs include meeting rooms, programming space, larger children's area, more collections/shelving space, teen area, and comfortable quiet seating areas.)
- Explore possible expansion options or moving to a different facility
- Pursue grant and other funding for the expanded or new space
- Proceed with added or new space as plans and funding allow

GOAL 7: Grow 21st Century Library Services and Resources

STRATEGIES:

- Expand the Library's early literacy focus for ages 0-5, to include more programs, parent training, and outreach
- Create and foster a variety of regular, ongoing programs for adults, Spanish-speaking families, and teens.
- Expand the collections, including the depth of the print collections, digital offerings, and items of interest to the Hispanic/Latinx population
- Advance up-to-date technologies (such as coding, video production, etc.) as well as technology assistance



GOAL 8: Increase Access to Library Services Throughout the County

STRATEGIES:

- Determine the best option for expanded service county-wide, such as a bookmobile, mobile tech van, kiosk pick-up stations, or small remote collections
- Develop an extensive outreach program, to increase use of the Library, especially by the Hispanic/Latinx population
- Foster increased partnerships with schools and homeschoolers to increase services and resources for schoolchildren and teachers
- Increase promotion across the County, to ensure that all residents are aware of the depth of Library services, including online and digital resources





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