

# Chemung County Library District 2008 – 2012 Strategic Plan

It is the mission of the Chemung County Library District to provide exceptional public library services and programs to our citizens – fulfilling their individual needs for educational, recreational, and cultural information – through contemporary, well-maintained library collections and facilities located throughout Chemung County.

# Strengths of the Library District

- **Strengths:**
  - The establishment of the Library District in 2005 and positive votes on the 2006, 2007, and 2008 Library District budgets indicates substantial community support for public library services.
  - The Library District board, already a strong body, has evolved an effective committee structure that meets regularly to consider issues before referral to the committee of the whole.
  - The Library District has active, involved support groups that contribute significantly to the CCLD annual operating budget.

# Strengths of the Library District

- **Strengths (concluded)**
  - The Library District staff is dedicated to providing the best public library services – traditional print collection, resources in electronic format, active programming schedule for children – despite setbacks of staff loss and even the closing of libraries.
  - The programs and services of the Library District are professionally presented and well-received, something which is especially true of children's storytelling programs and other activities presented at each of our libraries throughout the Library District.
  - Each of our libraries attracts committed volunteers who complete a remarkable array of activities, from assisting the library and public with family history research to keeping the books on the shelves in good order to assisting with children's storytelling and much more.

# Weaknesses of the Library District

## Weaknesses:

- While all Chemung County public libraries are unified within the Chemung County Library District, there remains lacking a cohesive identity among our libraries.
- While the staff of each neighborhood library demonstrates initiative in program planning, there remains lacking a coordinated approach to library program activities.
- Two decades of reductions in public library services to Chemung County residents has resulted in reduced outreach services, including reduced services to rural areas.

# Weaknesses of the Library District

## Weaknesses (concluded)

- There is no marketing plan for the Library District.
- There exists the concern that the public do not understand the value of Library District programs and services.

## Five strategic initiatives:

- Marketing public library services and programs to our community
- Addressing organizational issues
- Addressing short and long term building & grounds issues
- Improving our current services; connecting with the community
- Accountability

# **First strategic initiative: Create a marketing program**

- **Action Plan:** To assure that all Chemung County residents are aware of the range of public library services and programs available from all neighborhood libraries, create and implement a comprehensive marketing plan for the Library District.

## **Second strategic initiative: Addressing organizational issues**

- **Action Plan:** With an eye to becoming as customer friendly as possible, create a plan to annually revisit and revise all Library District policies and procedures, then effectively communicate the revision of these policies and procedures to the CCLD board, staff and public.
- **Action Plan:** To assure that the most important CCLD support groups are fully informed of CCLD organizational activities and issues, assign liaison and reporting duties to individuals on the CCLD staff, administration, and governing board. Expect this liaison to be a two-way street.

## **Second strategic initiative: Addressing organizational issues (continued)**

- Action Plan: To provide consistent and reliable supervision of public library services across all outlets of the Library District, study current organizational structure to determine its attributes and deficiencies, then seek to rectify its deficiencies as opportunities present themselves.
- Action Plan: To improve communication among all library staff and build upon the present department heads meetings, the CCLD administration will plan and conduct regular All Staff meetings in each of the neighborhood libraries of the Library District.

## **Second strategic initiative: Addressing organizational issues (concluded)**

- Action Plan: To assure the public that we have the best trained governors and employees of the Library District, create and implement a training program for the CCLD board, administration, and staff.
- Action Plan: To improve cohesiveness among Library District employees, require all storytellers to participate in the Library District-sponsored group Story Stew and all other Library District staff to participate in at least two public events or programs planned in their community or another neighborhood library.
- Action Plan: In response to anticipated retirement of both clerical and professional staff, create and implement a recruitment program to bring highly skilled and motivated staff to the Library District.

## Third strategic initiative: Addressing short and long term building & grounds issues

- Action Plan: To pay attention to the immediate needs of residents and library staff who use and work in each of our neighborhood libraries on a daily basis, annually request receipt of a list of smaller building projects from library department heads that are not included in the *Existing Conditions / Capital Assessment of the Chemung County Library District Properties* report but can be funded and completed within one calendar year.
- Action Plan: To assure the Library District provides residents with “contemporary, well-maintained library facilities located throughout Chemung County,” implement the building improvements identified in the report entitled *Existing Conditions* ... created by Fagan Engineers as funds for construction projects become available.

## **Third strategic initiative: Addressing short and long term building & grounds issues (continued)**

- Action Plan: To increase shelving capacity, create programming opportunities, and plan for library services of the future, investigate the feasibility of joining with the community of Horseheads in the creation of a new community center / library complex in Horseheads.
- Action Plan: To expand library resources and services to the communities of Big Flats and Horseheads, investigate the feasibility of merging the Big Flats and Horseheads Free libraries and constructing a new library at an appropriate “north county” location.
- Action Plan: To expand library resources and services to the residents on the south side of the Chemung River, investigate the feasibility of a “south county” library at an appropriate location.

## **Third strategic initiative: Addressing short and long term building & grounds issues (concluded)**

- Action Plan: To prepare for inevitable demise of our present sturdy, unflappable but 23-year old Bookmobile, investigate alternative funding sources for the purchase of a new, ADA compliant vehicle to provide public library services to County residents.
- Action Plan: To respond to stated requests by CCLD customers for a comfortable, informal atmosphere (“I’d much rather do my reading in a comfortable overstuffed chair while enjoying a cup of coffee and blueberry muffin”) at all neighborhood libraries, investigate the options to bring a coffee shop and comfortable chairs to the library.
- Action Plan: To create a better balance between patrons participating in programs and patrons who prefer a quiet library environment, explore the possibility of creating an enclosed quiet area(s) in the Steele Memorial Library.

## **Fourth strategic initiative: Improving our services; connecting with the community**

- Action Plan: To bring new users to our libraries, continually foster new partnerships / collaborations with community organizations and the library.
- Action Plan: To listen to the community, seek feedback regarding programs and services.
- Action Plan: To be an outstanding advocate for improved literacy in the community, strengthen the Library District's ties with Literacy Volunteers, the Family Reading Partnership, the School Readiness Project, the Southern Tier Reading Council, and all public and private schools of the County.

## **Fourth strategic initiative: Improving our services; connecting with the community (continued)**

- Action Plan: To increase the capacity of each of our libraries to act as a community hub for healthy child and family development, for parent and community involvement and for lifelong learning, investigate the idea of all of our libraries becoming “Family Place” libraries.
- Action Plan: To extend the effectiveness of the CCLD web site, survey web site users to evaluate existing functionality and improve (and simplify) where possible, especially with an eye toward attracting non-users of traditional public library services and programs. Integrate web site development with the CCLD technology plan.

## **Fourth strategic initiative: Improving our services; connecting with the community (concluded)**

- Action Plan: To extend the effectiveness of the library's special collections and preserve their value for the indefinite future, explore the technical feasibility of and funding for digitizing local history and locally generated genealogy records.

## **Fifth strategic initiative: Accountability**

- Action Plan: To ensure the success of the 2008-2012 strategic plan, obtain CCLD board approval and commitment to the implementation of the plan.
- Action Plan: To ensure the success of the strategic plan, incorporate one or more of the action plans into the annual goals of Library District staff. At Library District staff meetings, discuss how the goals of the strategic plan are being addressed.
- Action Plan: To ensure that our support groups accept ownership of the strategic plan, ask that each organization vote to accept the plan as a basis of their annual activities.

## **Fifth strategic initiative: Accountability (continued)**

- Action Plan: To fully inform all residents of the Library District of the content of the 2008-2012 strategic plan, sponsor public programs for the media, for service clubs, and for other community organizations.
- Action Plan: To assist in the continual assessment of the quality and effectiveness of library programs, resources and services, identify, define, and train library staff in the collection and reporting of key statistical measures from each of our neighborhood libraries. Make regular reports to the CCLD board, our support groups, patrons, and voters.

## **Fifth strategic initiative: Accountability (concluded)**

- **Action Plan:** To ensure that all CCLD board members are knowledgeable in all aspects of the Library District by participation in an orientation, attendance at regular monthly board meetings, serving on CCLD committees or as liaison with key support groups, an annual board retreat, attendance at continuing education meetings, and serving as advocates for the Library District.
- **Action Plan:** To fully inform the voting public about the content and cost of the proposed library budget, plan and publicize public presentations on the proposed library budget.

# CCLD Strategic Planning Committee

- Kimberly Richards, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee
- Sherry Collins, Secretary to the CCLD board
- Ed Marosek, Member of the CCLD board
- Denny Smith, President of the CCLD board
- Chris Corter, Steele Library Youth Services
- Maureen Ferrell, Horseheads Free Library
- Owen Frank, Steele Library Reference & Adult Services
- Lynne Rusinko, Volunteer Media Relations Specialist
- Lynn Shepson, Neighborhood Libraries Coordinator
- Joan Santulli, Administrative Assistant
- Jim Sleeth, Library Administrator
- Patricia Owens, RPA, Inc, Strategic Planning Consultant to the Library District
- Mary Sieminski, RPA, Inc., Strategic Planning Consultant to the Library District

# Appendices & notes

- **The following documents are available by visiting the Chemung County Library District web page: [www.cclld.lib.ny.us/planning](http://www.cclld.lib.ny.us/planning)**
  - November 7, 2007 media release announcing the library's strategic planning effort
  - A timeline for our planning process
  - A 28-page document articulating our libraries' strengths and weaknesses
  - Consultant summary of the January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 meeting with the CCLD board of trustees
  - Consultant summary of their January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 visit to CCLD neighborhood libraries
  - Consultant summary of the January 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008 focus group meetings
  - Consultant summary of the February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 town hall meeting
  - February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008 report of who uses which libraries (a survey of library users by zip code)
  - and many other documents related to the library are readily available through the CCLD board section of the web page at [www.cclld.lib.ny.us/board.htm](http://www.cclld.lib.ny.us/board.htm).

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