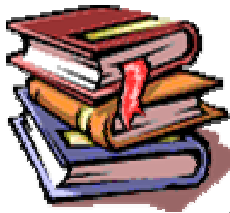




COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND
SERVICES

LIBRARIES

LIBRARIES



Libraries are vital to our communities and enrich our lives in many ways. They provide us with a place to seek knowledge, a place to gather or find quiet refuge, and a place to preserve and store our local history.

Without libraries, our society would be poorer. Libraries offer knowledge based resources and cultural amenities fostering a more educated population. For this reason, Library Facilities and Services play an important role in the future of communities.

Centre County's libraries are situated in town settings providing easy access to the County's population centers. Two of the libraries, Centre County Library and Schlow Library may be accessed via public transportation.

In 1990, the Centre County Federation of Libraries was established, "... to improve library services through coordinated efforts among public libraries in Centre County."¹

The Federation is made up of the Centre County Library and Schlow Library. Schlow Library serves the Centre Region municipalities and the Centre County Library serves the outlying regions.

The following provides an overview of Centre County's Library Facilities and Services.

CENTRE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM



Centre County's first library opened on October 25, 1939. Originally, the library was located at 203 North Allegheny Street, Bellefonte Borough. The library was at this location for 38 years

¹ Centre County Federation of Public Libraries Mission Statement (Source: Centre County Federation of Public Libraries Website)

² Source: Centre County Library System Website

before moving across the street to 200 North Allegheny Street.

Since 1939, the Centre County Library System has grown considerably while it continues to meet the increasing needs of the communities in which it serves. The service area for the County Library System includes the Townships and Boroughs outside of the Centre Region.

Today, the Centre County Library System supports three Branch Libraries located in Aaronsburg, Centre Hall, and Philipsburg. The County Library's financial contribution to the operation of these libraries includes covering the costs of staff salaries and expenditures and two-thirds of the operating expenses for each branch. Each branch is responsible for the remaining one-third of their operating budget.

Libraries

*Centre County Library and Historical Museum
200 North Allegheny Street, Bellefonte*

This public library serves the residents of all the municipalities not served by local libraries. It is also the parent to three branch libraries and is situated in the heart of downtown Bellefonte.

The building in which the County Library is housed no longer efficiently meets the space needs for this facility and service both in terms of materials and staff. In response, the Library Board of Trustees is in the process of studying the existing facility and holdings in order to determine what amount of space will be needed for a new facility. Information is being gathered on growth statistics in order to best meet these needs. As part of this study, consideration is being given to expanding the facility at its present location or moving to a new location within the next five to ten years.

*Aaronsburg Area Public Library
114 West Plum Street, Aaronsburg*

Located in an historic church building, this public library began serving the residents of Penns Valley in 1968.

Currently, the library houses in its basement the Penns Valley Museum. The Museum has plans to relocate to the historic site of "The

Aaronsburg Story". Once the Museum has moved, the library will have the ability to expand its operation at its present location.

This Library serves the residents of Haines Township and Millheim Borough.

Centre Hall Area Branch Library
109 West Beryl Street, Centre Hall

Planning for the establishment of this community library began in 1993. The library opened in 1998 and serves the residents of Centre Hall Borough and Potter Township.

Holt Memorial Library
9 West Pine Street, Philipsburg

This community library became a part of the County's Library System in 1963 and was originally housed in the Philipsburg Borough Building. Its second location was the campus of the Moshannon Valley Economic Development Partnership. In 2001, the library moved to its current location serving the residents of Philipsburg Borough and Rush Township.

County Library's Other Facilities and Services

Library Cards

All County residents are eligible for a library card with proof of a local address. Anyone outside of Centre County's service area may obtain a card if they have a library card issued from their hometown library and the hometown library participates in the ACCESS PA (statewide library system) program.

Centre County Bookmobile

Bringing the library system to the outlying areas of Centre County and to those without library facilities is the mission of the Centre County Bookmobile.

Established in 1942, the Bookmobile currently makes over 90 stops. Two bookmobile drivers are employed to provide this service.

In addition to the regular stops, the traveling Library also gives scheduling consideration to retirement communities, senior citizen centers,

daycare centers, charter schools and rehab centers.

For many, the bookmobile is a welcome alternative to the full service library.

Pennsylvania Room

Located in Bellefonte at the corner of North Allegheny and Howard Streets, the Pennsylvania Room houses specialized collections of Centre County and Pennsylvania history and genealogy. One such collection is the originals of historic County records.

This building also houses a historical museum which features documents, photographs, and family memorabilia.

Programming

One important function of the public library system is programming. Children's story hours, education classes for adults, guest lecturers/authors, and special events all make up this component of our community libraries.

These educational and informational opportunities are provided free of charge to our County's residents.



Public Computer Access

Free public computer access is an invaluable service provided by our public libraries. This service affords residents the opportunity to access the internet for research, job search, and other related activities. In addition, many software packages, i.e. Microsoft Office Suite, are available for public use as well as laser printers and scanners.

For those with special needs, equipment and programs offer assistive technology to enable persons with low vision, decreased hearing, limited hand/wrist movement, or in a wheelchair to access the public computer systems.

District Center

The Centre County Library has been designated as the District Center for the libraries in Centre, Clearfield, Mifflin and Juniata Counties. The District Center's key function is to provide basic library support, collection, financial and consultation support services to 16 libraries within its region. State funds are provided to the District Center for carrying out these functions.

SCHLOW LIBRARY

100 East Beaver Avenue, State College

Serving the residents of State College Borough and the Townships of College, Ferguson, Harris and Patton, Schlow Library has been providing library services since 1957. This facility began in two rooms in a house on West College Avenue and has been at its present location, corner of Beaver Avenue and Allen Street, since 1965. In 1986, the Library expanded its facility in the front of the building in order to meet the ever-increasing needs of its member communities.

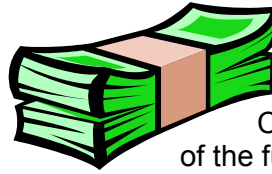
Receiving approximately 60% of government funding from the Centre Region Council of Governments (COG), Schlow Library works in partnership with COG on facilities planning. COG's role also includes employing Library staff and review of the Library's operating budget. Each of the five COG municipalities has representation on the Library's Board of Trustees.

Making up the remaining 40% of funding for Library service is non-governmental sources, i.e. contributions, interest, and membership.

Since the existing Library is inadequate for current and future library needs, a new facility, 38,000 square feet in size, has been planned for at the current site with construction beginning in 2005. During the construction phase, the Library will be temporarily housed in the former

State College Borough Building on Fraser Street.

Library Funding



Public dollars are the life blood of libraries throughout the

Commonwealth. Over 50% of the funding that supports our County's public libraries comes from the state. Increased pressure to cut spending at the state level poses a serious threat to this funding stream. The proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2003-2004 recommends a 50% cut in state aide to public libraries. A loss of 50% funding at the state level would mean imposing cuts in services provided to County residents.

At the local level, Centre County Government annually allocates funds, referred to as subsidies, to cultural and recreation entities outside of County government. In 2003, recipients of these dollars were CNET, Centre County Historical Society, Philipsburg Historical Foundation and the Federation of Libraries. The lion's share of this budget category, over \$400,000, goes to the Centre County Library System.

Financial support from the state and County is provided to the Federation and dispersed to the libraries based on a formula agreed upon by the member libraries. Municipalities contribute 4.5% of the County Library's operating budget. This contribution is not based on a formula but rather the municipalities desire to support the library.

Another important funding source is the Centre County United Way. The Centre County Library, a United Way Member Agency, received \$26,650 from the 2003 Funds Allocation. These monies are collected through employee contributions for the United Way.

Local fundraising, comprising one third of the Branch Libraries operating budgets, includes special events such as golf tournaments, bake sales, hoagie sales, and races. Support from the communities within the service areas of the local Branch Libraries is essential to the overall operation of these facilities.

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SYSTEM

The wealth of library resources at the Pennsylvania State University is abundant. The central core of Penn State's library system is Pattee with specialized libraries situated throughout the main campus. (See Penn State Map of Libraries in Figure #)

The mission of the University's library system is to meet the needs of Penn State faculty and students. Access to these specialized libraries is also made available to the general public.

CONCLUSION

Libraries are an integral component of our communities. Keeping them alive and well fosters an educated population which goes hand-in-hand with having an educated workforce. An educated workforce is key to a healthy economy.

Community libraries provide access to knowledge through branch libraries, bookmobile, and internet access. All of these services are made available to Centre County residents free of charge and offer tremendous benefits to the communities in which the libraries serve.

The documented need to expand these facilities is proof that these facilities and services are being fully utilized by County residents; therefore, continued support of Libraries in Centre County should be a priority.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOAL

Promote the appropriate location and maintenance of existing and proposed community facilities, utilities, and services for the citizens of Centre County.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES OBJECTIVES-LIBRARIES

To promote the development of modern and efficient public educational facilities and services in order to enhance our human resources for the present and future.

To provide adequate opportunities for social interaction, recreation and cultural activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Support efficient expansion of library facilities and services based on need and the interest of the residents of Centre County.

Integrate library facilities and services into workforce training development planning.

Encourage the availability of high-speed internet access to the community libraries.

Continue to provide a cultural subsidy to the Centre County Federation of Libraries in Centre County's Annual Budget.

Promote equal access to library facilities and services to all residents of Centre County.