

REVIEW OF THE LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC PLAN

The consultants have reviewed the current Mission Statement of the Albany County Public Library (ACPL), as well as the current Strategic Plan.

MISSION STATEMENT

We find the current Mission Statement generally acceptable. However, we do offer some modest changes to the current statement. We also offer two new mission statements. In addition, we offer two Vision Statements for consideration. The Vision Statements would not replace the Mission Statement but would supplement it.

Inasmuch as we have introduced – during our initial site visit – the suggestion of changing the name of the ACPL to The Public Library of the City of Laramie and Albany County, we have included in all of our suggestions this alternate name.

Lastly, if the decision is made to not change the name of the ACPL we do suggest that the word “The” precede “Albany County ... “ (see first modest change in current mission statement below).

CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Albany County Public Library is to meet the needs of the public by offering open access to a diverse collection of materials, a friendly environment, and community-based programs to encourage learning throughout life.

MODEST CHANGE IN CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of ~~The~~ Albany County Public Library is to meet the **informational** needs of the **general** public by offering ~~open~~ access to a diverse collection of materials, **by maintaining** a friendly environment, and **by offering** community-based programs to encourage lifelong learning. ~~throughout life.~~*

SUGGESTED NEW MISSION STATEMENTS

First Suggestion

The Albany County Public Library, a community center, provides general information and current library materials for recreation and lifelong learning and assists in the development of basic literacy skills.

Second Suggestion

It is the Mission of The Albany County Public Library:

- To anticipate and effectively respond to Albany County's need for information;
- To make available current and popular materials in a variety of formats;
- To facilitate lifelong learning;
- To participate in raising the level of basic literacy in the area; and
- To enrich and enhance the quality of life throughout Albany County.

SUGGESTED VISION STATEMENTS

First Suggestion

The Albany County Public Library enhances the quality of life in Albany County by being a key area partner in education, cultural enhancement, and economic strengthening.

Second Suggestion

To be recognized by persons of all ages and backgrounds as their doorway to recreational reading, information, and lifelong learning.

ALTERNATE LIBRARY NAME FOR MISSION STATEMENTS

CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT WITH ALTERNATE LIBRARY NAME

*The mission of **The Public Library of the City of Laramie and Albany County** is to meet the needs of the public by offering open access to a diverse collection of materials, by maintaining a friendly environment, and by offering community-based programs to encourage learning throughout life.*

MODEST MISSION STATEMENT CHANGE

The mission of **The Public Library of the City of Laramie and Albany County** is to meet the *informational* needs of the *general* public by offering open access to a diverse collection of materials, **by maintaining** a friendly environment, and **by offering** community-based programs to encourage lifelong learning. ~~throughout life.~~

First Suggestion

The Public Library of the City of Laramie and Albany County, as a community center, provides general information and current library materials for recreation and lifelong learning, and assists in the development of basic literacy skills.

Second Suggestion

It is the Mission of ***The Public Library of the City of Laramie and Albany County***:

- To anticipate and effectively respond to the need for information in Laramie and Albany County;
- To provide current and popular materials in a variety of formats;
- To facilitate lifelong learning;
- To participate in raising the level of basic literacy in the area; and
- To enrich and enhance the quality of life throughout Laramie and Albany County.

ALTERNATE LIBRARY NAME FOR VISION STATEMENTS

First Suggestion

The Public Library of City of Laramie and Albany County enhances the quality of life of Laramie and Albany County by being a key partner in education, cultural enhancement, and economic strengthening.

Second Suggestion

To be recognized by persons of all ages and backgrounds as their doorway to reading, information, and lifelong learning.

STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

The Project required that Godfrey's Associates, Inc. review the Strategic Plan of the ACPL and the roles the Library plays in the Albany County community, with corresponding goals and objectives.¹

The consultants have been provided with an electronic copy of "Albany County Public Library 5-Year Plan: APPROVED AUGUST 2007." Work on the Plan was initiated in 2005. The document provided to the consultants is a PROGRESS REPORT Summary.

The 5-Year Plan is organized into four major categories:

- I – Programs and Services/Non-Infrastructure Technology with four goals.
- II – Facilities and Space/Infrastructure Technology with two goals.
- III – Funding and Budgeting with one goal.
- IV – Friends/Foundation/Library Relations with one goal.

¹ The consultants have not been able to identify a clearly stated set of roles that the Library is now guided by as far as serving the community is concerned. There are, as stated in this review, several goals identified in the 5-Year Plan, but the objectives are embedded into various Steps to complete. The consultants will identify and recommend a set of service priorities that we believe the Laramie facility of the ACPL should adopt and pursue.

Inasmuch as the consultant study is to focus primarily on the Laramie facility our review of the 5-Year Plan will address Category II.

The category has two goals. The first sub-goal is stated as follows:

Provide appealing and functional facilities in a friendly environment.

Three action items were proposed:

- A. *Match physical environmental and use of space to library programs and services.*
- B. *Update technology plan.*
- C. *Develop a disaster plan to protect staff, patrons, collection, and facilities.*

For sub-goal 1, seven “Steps to complete item” were identified. The County Librarian and the Administrative Services Manager were identified as “Responsible for Action.” Proposed Start dates were set for six of the seven Steps (none set for 1. *Create maintenance and painting schedule.*

Proposed Completion dates were established for four of the seven. Those lacking Completion dates were 1., 3. *Modernize elevator operations,* and 4. *Improve lighting and signage.*

Estimated Costs and/or potential funding sources were identified for each of the seven steps. Only two of the seven had hard numbers - \$84,000 for *Improve lighting*

and signage and \$42,000 for *Assess furniture condition and repair/replace damaged furniture and carpet.*

As for progress, the 5-Year Plan states of each of the seven steps that:

1. Is in progress; painting begun. Dates need to be completed.
2. Complete.
3. Architect has promised bids documents by 2-20-09. (NOTE: While on-site during our initial visit it appeared that this step was very near to being completed, and subsequently we have been informed that all of the work has been completed).
4. Funding needs to be identified and procured.
5. Same as 3. Completed while consultants were on-site.
6. FY08 for completion. “Shabby chairs replaced, new couches, and funding for carpet in place.
7. *Explore contract for beverage service* has not begin and a start date needs to be postponed.

For action items 2 (*Update technology plan*) and 3 (*Develop a disaster plan ...*) minimal work has progressed due to loss of staff and/or a decision to postpone in the case of action item 3.

The second sub-goal is stated as *Create a vision for the library of the future.* There are action items: A. *Explore feasibility of renovating, expanding, or replacing current Laramie facility for 2012 funding ballot,* and B. *Involve stakeholders in the process.*

The County Librarian and staff are the Responsible parties for A. and the Staff, Board, and stakeholders for B. The Proposed Completion for A was stated as 2008, now shifted to 2009. The Proposed Start for B. is 2010 and Completion also 2010. “*Steckel money for planning*” is listed under Estimated Cost.

SUMMARY & CONSULTANTS’ RECOMMENDATIONS

The 5-Year Plan is not, in the best sense of the word, “strategic” – and perhaps it was never intended to be. The Goals are clearly stated, as are the Steps/Action Items. The Dates are not firm, and were too ambitious to start with. A strategic plan should have broad goals, detailed steps or tasks to achieve the goal, reasonable dates, funding requirements and sources for funding, and responsible parties. It should be set over a three-year period, not one year.

The Albany County Plan meets some of these requirements, but not all. It can be used as a springboard to establish a true strategic plan for FY2011 – FY2013.

The primary Goal is number 2, *Create a vision for the library of the future*. In essence, that is what this Needs Assessment Study is all about. Stakeholder input was achieved. Funding for the Study is adequate. However, it appears to the consultants that a design charrette, proposed as an additional service in our proposal, would be most advantageous in presenting and ultimately selling the voting public on whatever recommendation is made and adopted.

The 2012 funding ballot, identified as the primary Action Item for sub-goal 2, may well be advanced to the spring of 2010. Based upon the principal consultant’s interview with the City Manager of Laramie all decisions for a May 2010 election would need to be made sometime in February/March 2010.² If it is true that a “picture is worth a thousand words” then a design charrette could be a very cost-effective way to get the picture.

Regardless of that decision, the Plan that the ACPL is working with is a good one, progress is being made, and more will come.

² The County Librarian has reported that March 1, 2010 has now been set as the date.