Rice Lake Public Library

Strategic Plan
2007

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Introduction

Members of the 2007 Strategic Planning Committee

Mary Hoeft, Facilitator
Carla Powers, Library Director
Nancy Chick, Board member, Friends of the Library
Sue Dietz, President, Library Board of Trustees
Mary Ellen Fisher, President, Friends of the Library
Ashley Hansen, Library staff
Marge Hoyer, Library Board of Trustees
Beth Luikart, Library Board of Trustees
Linda Mullin, Library staff
Tami Richardson, Library staff
Ryan Scheel, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Club
Judy Schnacky, Barron Area Literacy Council
Tammy Will, CESA 11 representative

In 2007 this committee spent six hours studying and updating the Rice Lake Public Library's original strategic plan, which was developed in 2003. The original plan provided an excellent foundation, and many of its goals and strategies were carried over into the new plan. Thanks to a group of dedicated stakeholders who are committed to helping their public library continue to grow, this strategic plan will provide guidance to decision makers for years to come. On behalf of the library staff, the Board of Trustees, and library patrons from throughout the entire Rice Lake community, I thank you for your hard work and creative vision, and I pledge to do everything possible to see that the vision and goals expressed in this plan are acheived.

Carla Powers, Library Director
June 2007

Mission Statement

The Rice Lake Public Library connects all people to their community and the world by promoting literacy, providing opportunities for recreation, supporting lifelong learning, and ensuring free and open access to ideas.

Vision Statement

This is our vision for the future of the Rice Lake Public Library

The Rice Lake Public Library is the center of community life in the Rice Lake area. It is a source of pride for local residents, most of whom make extensive use of the library's materials and facility. All people feel welcome at the Rice Lake Public Library.

The library has a large, architecturally stimulating building located in the heart of the city. People come to the library to enjoy a cup of coffee and a good book, to gather for a community meeting, to attend one of the library's varied programs, to play or have quiet time with their children, to make use of the library's state-of-the-art technology, to seek out information from a trusted source, or simply to "hang out." Making customer service a top priority, the library consistently anticipates and meets the needs of Rice Lake area residents.

Strategic Goals

The strategic goals were developed to ensure that the Vision and Mission of the Rice Lake Public Library are realized. Each goal includes strategies to accomplish the goal and key indicators to measure performance. Although goals are numbered for ease of reference, they are not prioritized.

1. Expand the library's "customer base" by increasing outreach, expanding programming, and enhancing the collection.

2. Determine what facility will best provide expanded services to meet the current and future needs of the community.

3. Cultivate and maintain community partnerships to extend the reach of library services to all people.

4. Establish a financially secure library, by ensuring that the library remains a high priority with area residents and government at all levels, and by encouraging private donations.

5. Maintain adequate levels of staffing and support continued professional development for staff.

6. Advocate at a city, county, state, and national level for legislation that supports libraries, ensures patron confidentiality, and promotes free and open access to information.

Goal One

Expand the Library's "customer base" by increasing outreach, expanding programming, and enhancing the collection.

Strategies:

1. Promote the library through publicity, marketing and public relations.
2. Conduct surveys and/or focus groups with an expanded base of library patrons and members of the community, to assess what people want and need.
3. Use results of surveys to implement action plans.
4. Use technology as a resource:
    a. Market the library through its website.
    b. Use technology for the collection and dissemination of information.
    c. Evaluate and utilize demographics.
    d. Keep hardware and software up-to-date.
5. Reach out to potential customers with varying language, cultures and abilities.
6. Continue high level of children's and young adult programming.

Performance Measures:

1. Patron count
2. Circulation count
3. Number of programs and attendance
4. Number of surveys and/or focus groups

Goal Two

Determine what facility will best provide expanded services to meet the current and future needs of the community.

Strategies:

1. Foundation focused on fundraising for facility
2. Apply for grants (i.e. Main Street Association)
3. Hire a consultant to conduct a facility study
4. Disseminate facilities study to community
5. Find and prepare a diverse group of library ambassadors
6. Conduct ongoing assessment of patrons
7. Create tally sheet of needs that the library can not presently meet

Performance Measures:

1. Creation of foundation
2. Number of grant applications and funds received
3. Progress on facility study
4. Number of library ambassadors
5. Existence of “tally sheet”

Goal Three

Cultivate and maintain community partnerships to extend the reach of library services to all people.

Strategies:

1. Use newsletter as a contact with community partners
2. Utilize community based brainstorming to create a database of service groups, university, elderly facilities, etc.
3. Contact and continue to cultivate present partnerships
4. Work with and through the Board of Directors of Friends of the Library

Performance Measures:

1. Creation of database
2. Dissemination of newsletter to different community partners
3. Number of community partnerships
4. Level of activity for Friends group

Goal Four

Establish a financially secure library, by ensuring that the library remains a high priority with area residents and government at all levels, and by encouraging private donations.

Strategies:

1. Write to community organizations requesting donations for library updates
2. Encourage membership in Friends of the Library
3. Increase public awareness for donation opportunities by putting donation form on website and in newsletter
4. Dedicate April as donation awareness month
5. Advocate for the library by sharing what the library means to the community

Performance Measures:

1. Number and amount of financial donations
2. Number of Friends members
3. Financial statement for Friends of the Library
4. Amount of funding received from municipality

Goal Five

Maintain adequate levels of staffing and support and continued professional development for staff.

Strategies:

1. Determine “minimum” staff needed for adequate services
   (i.e. covering for sickness, vacation, and expansion of library services)
2. Develop trained backup staff
3. Develop trained volunteer staff
4. Provide competitive wage package
5. Expand budget for ongoing staff development

Performance Measures:

1. Overall staffing levels (FTEs)
2. Presence of backup staff
3. Number of volunteer hours per year
4. Comparison of Rice Lake library wages to wages in other libraries of similar size
5. Amount of funding for staff development

Goal Six

Advocate at a city, country, state and national level for legislation that supports libraries, ensures patron confidentiality, and promotes free and open access to information.

Strategies:

1. Encourage more community advocates to attend Library Legislative Day in Madison
2. Conduct postcard writing sessions on legislative issues
3. Encourage school involvement on library advocacy at “all levels”
4. Educate community/library patrons on how important their advocacy is for legislative issues
5. Include in newsletter information about important issues and legislation
6. Educate community on “how to” advocate and give them the necessary resources

Performance Measures:

1. Number of contacts with legislators and city officials
2. Number of community members attending Library Legislative Day
3. Number of newsletter articles about advocacy

Next Steps

1. The Library Director will present the strategic plan to the Board of Trustees for approval. The board will act as a steering committee to direct and oversee implementation of the plan, with input from the Library Director.

2. After securing board approval, the Library Director will introduce the plan to the library staff, Friends of the Library, the strategic planning committee members, and the Common Council.

3. The Library Director will work with the staff to establish a timeline for completion of the strategies, and to develop tactics and action plans. If necessary, committees will be formed to implement the strategies.

4. A strategic planning committee will meet in the spring of 2008 to review the plan, check progress, and recommend changes and improvements to the Board of Trustees.

5. The Board of Trustees will review the plan in June of 2008. During its review, the board will have the option of modifying, eliminating or adopting new goals, strategies or performance measures.

6. The Library Director will use the plan to identify goals for the upcoming budget year and to recommend funding levels in different areas.

7. The plan will continue to be reviewed annually, until such time as the Board of Trustees decides that a new one should be developed.

8. Copies of the plan will be made available to the public at the Rice Lake Public Library.

Supporting Documentation

The following information documents ideas generated by committee members during brainstorming sessions. It illustrates the thought process behind the finished plan.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Youth services
- Staff (committed, approachable, flexible, enthusiastic)
- Public awareness
- Programming
- Outreach (community, youth)
- Self-pickup of holds empowers patrons
- Public relations
- Stronger, more timely collections
- Computers (internet and computer facilities)
- Reference desk
- Community-oriented
- Community collaboration

- Community support (book donations)
- Library board (good, committed)
- Friends of the Library (good core group, booksale is great)
- MORE consortium
- Environment/facility (safe place, redesign and better use of space)
- Neutral place (meeting place, not sterile – feels welcoming, décor supports this, accessible)
- Vision

Weaknesses

- Consistent attendance at storytimes
- Adult attendance at programs
- Teen services (programs, staff, computers)
- Reaching limits of staff time
- Budget limits that do not allow for expansion of services, collection, maintenance needs
- Fundraising (no Foundation for building)
- Computers not keeping pace with growth of technology
- Public awareness (limited)
- Facility (reaching limits of space for programming, staff work areas and collections; aging, staff accessibility, unsteady chairs, checkout desk, furnishing)
- Inconsistent hours are confusing
- Public perception (intimidating, need more school visits)
- Volunteers
- Advertising
- PARKING!
- No off-site book drops
- No crisis plan in place
- Not enough space to accommodate desires of all users (those who prefer quiet, those who like noise, etc.)

Opportunities

- Book drop (off-site at banks or stores, drive-up)
- Delivery of books to homebound and retirement centers (coordinate with meals-on-wheels for book delivery, book delivery by mail)

- Improve public awareness (continue relationship with *Chronotype* and radio, utilize PACT channel 14 by fostering relationship with volunteers, include brochures with utility bills)
- Increase funding from municipalities and counties
- Increase funding through fundraising and Foundation
- Increase collaboration with other organizations and community groups (high school, churches, Boys & Girls Club)
- Programming
    - Take programming to different populations in different locations (example: book clubs in retirement or senior center)
    - Increase programming for variety of populations
- "Coolness" (increase and maintain "coolness quotient by being community's living room with comfy chairs and café; increase "continuity of coolness" by continuing involvement with teens)
- Computer lab and training facilities
- Donations of computers that have capabilities that are compatible with library needs
- Volunteers to assist with additional tasks
- Website (design and publicity)
- Create partnerships to facilitate our goals
- Work with foreign language populations
- Early release day programs for all ages
- Ease of access to collection via internet

Threats

- Lack of funding
- Censorship (threat to intellectual freedom)
- Competing priorities
- Competition for people's time
- Confidentiality (Patriot Act)
- Decreased literacy
- Resources and facility maintenance
- More accessibility for internet
- Parking affects potential use
- Negative stereotypes of the library threaten attendance

- Noise and food may be seen as threats by some patrons

Approval

This document was approved by the Board of Trustees of the Rice Lake Public Library on July 10, 2007 and will be reevaluated in June of 2008.

Board of Trustees: Peter Davidson, Barbara Burns, Paul Chase, Sue Dietz, Marge Hoyer, Beth Luikart, Ryan Scheel, Tom Shervey

SIGNED:

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Peter Davidson
President, Board of Trustees

ATTEST:

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Carla Powers
Library Director