**Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County**

**Public Library**

**Introduction**

The Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library is a tax funded entity providing services to the townships of Beech Creek, Center, Jackson, Highland, Richland, and Taylor in Greene County. Non-residents may also purchase a yearly library card at a price set yearly by the state of Indiana. The library district facilities are the Bloomfield Branch, Eastern Branch, and Annex.

The Library provides programs and services to the townships in our district as well as to anyone who would like to visit us. These services are to enhance the informational and recreational opportunities for our patrons. We do this by acquiring, organizing, distributing, and furnishing access to information and recreational resources to the public. The library has developed programming and resources to encourage lifelong learning skills. The library not only has information and recreational materials in regards to local topics of interest but also ones throughout our State of Indiana, the United States, and the world through Interlibrary Loans, materials purchased, and Internet access to everyone who needs it.

The Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library District Strategic and Technology Plan is to map out where the library district would like to concentrate its resources. Including financially, facilities, and personnel planning for the next few years. What goals are set, how to achieve them and how best to evaluate the goals from year to year.

The five main goals were set using community surveys, discussion groups, strengths and weaknesses of the personnel, observational and anecdotal assessments.

**Community Description**

Greene County has three distinct geographical areas: hills, river basin and prairie. The library district encompasses the hills and the river basin areas of the county. The town of Bloomfield is the county seat which has a population of around 2,500. The other towns in the library district have a population of less than 500. Population growth is expected in the next 5 to 10 years in the eastern and southern part of the library district according to Greene County Economic Development. Currently the library district’s six townships have around 13,900, a decrease since 2010 of 1,000 people. The decrease in population could be attributed to the mortality rate of an elderly population and to that of COVID-19.

The population make up is 94% White and 5% Hispanic, according to the two local schools that the libraries. While we lost people from natural causes, 40% of the population is over fifty. Associated with this fact contributes to 60% of households being single or married without children. The rate of poverty in this segment of the population is high even though most do own their own homes. People that are employed include those in farming, timber industry, factories or retail in Bloomington, Bedford, Linton, and Bloomfield. Another big employer is Naval Sea System Command, Crane Division, where there are a wide variety of positions from janitorial to high tech.

The two school districts that we support are Eastern Greene County and Bloomfield. These two school districts with 321 students in 9th through 12th at Eastern and 244 students in 9th through 12th at Bloomfield. Both schools are above average in their reading and math skills, with the Eastern School in the top 20% and Bloomfield in the top 50% in the state. The library does support a large number of homeschooled students, though the exact percentage is unknown, more of an anecdotal observation.

The county has a lower income level than that of the state. This has given rise to a homeless population both adults and children. The median capital income per household is $55,500.000 with most people commuting 30 minutes to and from work. The county also has a reduced number of places for people to rent with 77% of people owning their own homes. What there is to rent is usually in trailer parks or lower income housing units.

The county has four specific needs: Transportation, Health Care, Childcare and Access to Technology. Transportation, there is no public transportation in the county except for unreliable rural transportation. Health Care, we do have three clinics staffed with Nurse Practitioners and one primary physician for every 3,500 people. One hospital with two other good regional hospitals is 45 minutes away. Childcare is a big obstacle as there are limited qualified childcare facilities in the county. Preschool in the area is very scarce with the schools each having Early Learning Centers that are full and cost $35.00 per day. Access to technology continues to be limited in Greene County. 17.1% of the population have limited access as compared to 7.6% of the population of Indiana having limited access, according to Statistics of Indiana thus making our libraries important technology centers of people of Greene County.

**Community Needs**

Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library conducted a community survey to determine the wants and needs of the library community. It was through the use of survey findings as well as discussion groups and observations of the staff that these needs were found. The library community needs will help determine what the library district should set as its goals for the next four years.

The consensus is that the libraries’ materials are in line with what the community wants. The circulation numbers also show this as true as they have gone up.

The wants are in the programming area, for adults, school age and especially preschool children. In-person programming in general was lacking due to COVID-19. Request for virtual programming was asked for during that time. This could additionally be a product of parents not having transportation to bring their child to our story times. The library has been asked for outreach story times, such at the park or at the smaller communities.

Programming for after-school and school breaks has been asked for and both are starting up again. This is also true for programming for homeschooled students, where we provide group meeting times and this is happening at both locations.

Adult programming, especially in those for cooking and crafts have been asked for and are in the planning stage. Food as Medicine, a joint venture with three other organizations, is being offered presently and seems to be successful. The library and the other organizations hope to plan and conduct more of these types of programs in the future.

Crafts programs for all ages were asked for by several individuals though when we offered them especially for adults, we had low turnout, making the decision to have them more often hard to make. We need more information to the exact type of craft and the best days and times to offer them.

We are reaching out to the community with our Community Garden at the Bloomfield Library. It has received a grant to keep it running at least through 2024. The library hopes to use this as a springboard for more programming in gardening, nature, and food topics.

The Bloomfield Library has a Law Kiosk from the Indiana Bar Association with forms and information on a variety of topics and issues.

The Bloomfield-Eastern County Public Library needs to focus more on promoting the library and what we have to offer. The library staff has heard that we are not needed anymore. Explaining the cost saving of the library per individual, it becomes apparent that using the library instead of purchasing an item that will only read, viewed or used once or twice is a savings to that person. Programming for the most part is free at the library so the cost of trying or learning something is also a savings to that person. We also offer free internet access thus saving people that expense.

**GOALS**

Our goals are based on information received from surveys and anecdotal responses that we have had since 2020.

1. Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Library District will make everyone in our service district aware that they have library service, what services are available and how to access them. To know the location of the libraries.
2. Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Library District will increase the variety and number of programs offered to all ages at both libraries.
3. Bloomfield-Eastern Greene will increase its presence at community activities and outreach to the area.
4. Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Library District will develop a plan for sustainable finance through community involvement, individual awareness, and contributions, along with grants besides monies that are tax generated.
5. Bloomfield-Eastern Greene will make the Annex a more functional part of the Library Operating System.

**Goal 1:** Understanding library service areas and how best to reach the community members. Who should we reach out to and how best to reach them? Needing to make people aware of everything the library has to offer in the digital age. The cost of having a library in the community is a great investment and not just for children but for all the public citizens in the district.

1. Objective: Create new and expanded information outlets
   1. Activity: Produce a new general brochure that gives out the necessary information without being crowded in appearance.

Finish by the end of 2024.

* 1. Activity: Create brochures to specific areas. example Libby, for Eastern, Children, Teen, Library of Things, and Programs for each season.

c. Finish setting this up by Spring of 2025.

2. Objective: Where do people gather in the different communities, which has changed since COVID. How can we best reach them?

a. Activity: Reach out to the schools, fire stations, township trustees, and county commissioners and county council.

b. Activity: Determine what organizations are currently active, including - Tri-Kappa, VFW, and others ask to present at one of their meetings.

c. Activity: Contact Real Estate Agents inform them about what the library has to offer and give them brochures to give to their clients.

d. Activity: Contact local businesses, especially diners, and hand out information about the library district.

e. Activity: Contact places of worship and ask them to have informational brochures about the library district available for the worshipers.

3. Objective: Provide a cost analysis of the use of using a library.

a. Activity: Determine the use of the library to that of comparison materials from other sources. (Free at Library vs. Amazon).

b. Activity: Cost of eBooks and streaming services to what the library has to offer you. (Figure out Hoopla in June of 2024).

c. Activity: Using the “Library of Things” instead of purchasing the item if only going to use item once or twice a year then having to get rid of the item or donating them to someone.

4. Objective: Upgrade the Website and Facebook pages for the library. Start using other platforms by the end of 2026.

a. Activity: Hire or assign someone on staff to oversee the social media, website, and publicity. (5 hours/week)

b. Activity: Bring all Facebook pages under one or two pages.

c. Activity: Story Times with Internet access. If possible, contact others that have interactive story times and how do they do it. Place them on a dedicated You-Tube account for future use.

d. Activity: Upgrade our Website, to make, it less cluttered.

e. Update or create different media platforms.

**Goal 2:** The Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library survey saw that the public would like us to provide more programming for all ages. Mentioned arts and crafts, cooking, life skills for teens and adults. More generalized programs for children.

1. Objective: Figure out what time would best for different age groups and learn more about what they would show up for.

a. Activity: Survey adults as to what types of programs they would like us to offer. What time slots would work best for them? Finish by December 2024.

b. Activity: Survey middle school and high school students at the schools and the homeschool groups as to programs that they would want and times that work best for them. Finish by May 2024.

2. Objective: Implement cooking and technology programs.

a. Activity: Have at least one food program every other month for adults and teens, together or separate. The Library can coordinate with the Greene County Extension, Ivy Tech, Greene County Hospital, and the Health Department.

b. Activity: Plan after hours’ technology programs every other month at both locations. Concentrating on beginning skills on computer use, smartphones, word-processing, Kindle, Overdrive-Libby, Inspire.

3.Objective: Increase programming for students.

a. Activity: Plan an activity on days when students are on break during Spring, Fall and Winter at both locations. (can be led by an instructor or self-led).

b. Activity: Plan outreach programs at other locations; parks, Solsberry, Owensburg, Scotland. Reading stories, simple crafts. Once a month during the school year and twice a month in the summer.

**Goal 3:** Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library will increase its presence in the community.

1. Objective: Better signage at both locations

a. Activity: Have the signs painted and make sure the lights on the signs are operating.

b. Activity: Have the sign at the Annex that light up and displays the different businesses and nonprofits that are there and what is happening at the library.

c. Activity: Purchase two more signs that can be moved as needed. (one goes to Eastern Branch)

d. Activity: Purchase a new Golf Sign without dates on it.

2. Objective: Take part in more community activities.

a. Activity: Become more aware of what is happening at both school districts. Ask to be included in their newsletters.

b. Activity: Ask if children programs and information about the library be sent home to the students.

c. Activity: The Library will have more representation at different organizations.

1. Find out what other organizations; like the Literacy Coalition, Friends of the Library, and the Library Board belong to and ask them to spread the word as to what is happening at the library.

2. Keep a list and send out what is happening every season.

d. Activity: The Director should attend a commissioner and council meeting at least once a year to keep them informed of what we are doing and what is in the works.

e. Activity: A staff person should attend a school board meeting of each school at least every other year.

3. Objective: Increase awareness of programs by promoting them in the paper.

a. Activity: Writing up the articles and taking pictures as needed. (See Goal 1, Objective 4, Activity a.)

b. Activity: Make things more visible and current.

c. Activity: Keep up with the community Facebook Pages and other media platforms. (See Goal 1, Objective 4, Activity a.)

4. Objective: Buy and use local services whenever possible.

a. Activity: Wearing your name tags when making those purchases.

**Goal 4:** Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library will develop a plan for sustainable finances through community involvement, individual awareness and contributions besides the tax generated funding being received.

1**.** Objective: Increase money that can help with major expenses and/or programming in the future.

a. Activity: Set up a financial contribution bank, for gifts of money, land, stocks and bonds that individuals and/or corporations could give to.

1. Letters or information available about donating to the library to patrons and business in the area.

b. Activity: Investigate how the Greene County Foundation manages their account and either copy it or if possible have them run an account for us.

1. Check the legality of doing this.

c. Activity: Move part of the money in the Rainy-Day Fund or other grant funds into Money Markets and/or CD to earn money instead of it earning little interest in the bank accounts.

1. Check with the State Board of Accounts.

d. Activity: Be more proactive in writing for larger grants.

a. Purchased a Grant Gateway Database in September 2023.

**Goal 5.** Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library will make the Library Annex a functional and friendly part of the library system.

1. Objective: Determine how to design the Annex to become more functional for library use and the use of others that rent from us.

a. Activity: Hire an Architect to lay out a lift and remodeling blueprint for the basement level.

Done in 2023.

b. Activity: Bring the Annex to the Operational Fund of the library.

1. How is this done (quick answer from Board of Accounts) The board of Trustees just does it. More details and questions should be asked at the state level. Contact other libraries that have done this in the past.

2. Check to see if the board brings it under the operational side of the library does this affect the for-profit tenants.

c. Activity: Approve the plans, with the Library Board and Community input

d. Activity: Locate someone to give us a cost estimate (ask Doug Bruce) for recommendations.

e. Activity: How to pay for the remodeling?

1. Use debt services and bond services (county council approval).

2. Grants for it with Middle Way House, Literacy Coalition, and Friends of the Library.

f. Activity: Find and hire an overseer for the project.

Look for a local person.

Plan to finish by 2028.

**Annual Evaluation Process**

The Long Term Strategic and Technology Plan should be evaluated by the board every year. This should be done at a specific board meeting. The April Board Meeting would be ideal. The board should use the Strategic Plan to determine if the library is following a course of action that has been approved by the board. If the plan does not align to the current conditions of the library, it can be put aside and then picked up again when conditions improve. A revised plan should be done.

**Financial Resources and Sustainability**

The Library District is mostly supported through county taxes and state and Federal monies in the form of grants. The Library also has funding through gifts, fees, and large contributions that benefactors had made in the past. The Library District has been able to use money from our tax revenues to cover the normal annual operating expenses. It is wise to remember that the tax revenues do fluctuate with the economy resulting in the need to be prepared at the beginning of the year to stretch out funding. This is covered partly in Goal 4 of the Long-Range Plan.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to consider purchases made by the Director. The Director should give notice of any expenditures over $5,000 and expenditures over $25,000 must have Trustee approval and it should be in the Board Minutes.

The years when the Library has spent less than what is budgeted the board may consider moving up to 10% of that year’s annual budget to the Rainy Day fund. This should be done at the December Meeting. The Library Trustees have also had a $350.00 monthly withdrawal taken from our Investment Account to the Rainy Day Fund to build it back up. The Goal is to have $100,000 in the Rainy Day Fund. The Library Board should investigate having it placed in an account that can be easily accessed but still gains interest.

The Library expenses in the next four years need to include increases to staff salaries and investing in hiring additional personnel to keep up with the other library districts in the area and best benefit our communities’ needs. The other changes in expenses will be discussed in the next section.

**Assessment of Facilities, Operations, Services and Technology**

**Facilities:**

The Library District owns three buildings and two extra lots.

Bloomfield Branch is a Carnegie built in 1911. It was built on sand and landfill which has caused problems with the building shifting causing cracks in the foundation which have been fixed. A building expansion was done in 1993-1994, quadrupling the size of the library. The library expansion caused shifting to the older section, so a hydraulic system was put in place in 2014 to stabilize the building. A remodeling of the library was completed in 2017 with new carpeting, tables, and chairs in the public areas. In 2022, new shingles for the roof were added. The library replaced the flat section of the roof in 2023 as well as stabilizing the front of the building; this was done to keep the Limestone Headstone in place and keep the bricks from deteriorating and bringing down the front of the building. The HVAC system computerization was upgraded and the director, local contractor, and Jackson Controls are able to access and engage with the computerized HVAC system.

Future expenses for the Bloomfield Branch.

* Tuck and Mortar the rest of the older section and any areas of the new section that might need it.
* Repaving and painting of the parking lot
* Replace the smaller gutters in the older section with larger ones.
* Patch and paint the interior of the library.
* Cleaning of carpets and windows
* Replace the water fountains upstairs and downstairs.
* Replace the flooring in the lobby area.
* Take out the old phone booth.
* New File Cabinets for newspapers, blend it in with the furniture in the Indiana Room
* New Computer and Microfilm set up.
* Scanning Station
* Storage for larger “Library of Things”
* Fix the cement in front of the lobby doors.
* Paint the window frames on the older section.
* Phone System needs to be updated.

The Eastern Branch was originally a home that was purchased and remodeled in 1989. The Eastern Branch doubled in size in 2000. A new metal roof was installed in 2018. There has been water in the crawlspace with mold problems. The basement was encapsulated, and new downspouts were added in 2020. The bathroom was upgraded in 2022. In 2023 the old appliances were replaced, and new picnic tables were purchased through money donated from two local banks. 2023 also saw a new AC unit in the new section of the building.

Future Expense for the Eastern Branch:

* Upgrading the Internet Connection with Fiber Optics.
* New Phone lines and phones
* Revamp the computer area.
* Painting the Interior of the library with something more up to date.
* Replace the blinds.
* Clean carpets
* Better landscape by the fence line.
* Mortar and Tuck the bricks if needed.
* Paint the windows and the columns. (might need to be replaced) they last about 20 years.
* Growth of the Eastern area is expected as new subdivisions are added. The library might look towards expansion in 10 years.

The Annex was purchased in 2017. Previously it was a bank with two vaults, a small one upstairs and a large one downstairs. Remodeling was done in 2018 in the upstairs and downstairs areas. Shelving was installed in 2022 in the downstairs vault to improve storage capabilities for library records. In 2023 the library hired an architectural firm to draw up plans for a lift and remodeling of the basement to make it more user friendly. The library is currently storing records and other papers in it.

* Bring into the library’s operating budget.
* Select a plan for remodel.
* Find Funding for remodeling.
* Better internet connection between the two buildings or a separate account.
* Remodel the basement.
* Replace the roof.
* Remodel the upstairs.

Outside areas:

Bloomfield Library problems:

* Remove Ivy and Sedum around the steps. It has been hard to control and manage.
* Pull out the Hosta’s and plant something better suited for the sun.
* Light up the sign, solar now should be electric.
* A Community Garden should be a nice addition to the library.
* The lot between the Library Parking Lot and the Annex Parking lot needs to be demolished.
* Redo the beds around the Annex.

**Professional Development Strategy**

The Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library has both full-time and part-time staff. The staff works together to provide a helpful, safe, and knowledgeable workplace based on their backgrounds. They should be cross-trained that if needed, they could work in other departments and locations.

Staff includes:

Library Director MLS (LC1 or LC2) currently LC1 (full time)

Adult Services Manager MLS (at least LC2) currently LC1 (part time) could be full time)

Youth Services Manager MLS (at Least LC2) plus experience working with youth currently LC1 (Full Time)

Cataloger (LC4) currently (LC1) (Full Time) could be part time. currently two people

Adult Clerk (HS) (part time) four positions

Youth Services Clerk (HS) (Part Time) three positions

Eastern Branch Manager MLS (LC3) currently (LC5) (Part Time)

Technical Assistant (Some college) (Part time)

Genealogist (LC3) (Part Time)

Assistant Library Director (Current position) (LC3) (Part Time)

Bookkeeper (currently MS in Business) could be BS in Business Management preferable in nonprofit (Part Time)

Literacy Coordinator (Part Time)

The Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library encourages staff to continue their education. This is shown by reimbursements to individuals taking classes that are in support of the library. These are after the final grade is determined along with a statement of the tuition being paid for, arranging schedules for classes. These classes are approved beforehand by the Director. The Library also encourages staff to participate in webinars, workshops, classes and conferences that are library related. The staff will be compensated for travel, rooms, and paid for a normal working time in all the situations. The Library will have an all-staff training day once a year. The staff will be paid for this time. Certain training days should be scheduled when there is a turnover of staff members, these are CPR and Safety Training, Active Shooter Training, Communications, Dealing with the Public, and INSPIRE. The library also encourages everyone to attend monthly staff meetings.

In order to obtain some of the goals set out by this plan, an emphasis on hiring people who can provide the skills needed in these areas: community programs and outreach, technical skills: internet, software and hardware for satisfying Goals 1, 2, and 3. Consideration of Goals 1, 4 and 5 should be thought about when hiring a Director or an Assistant Director and a Bookkeeper.

**Operations:**

The library has five well-placed people in key positions. These include Adult Services Manager, Youth Services Manager, Catalogers, Genealogy and Bookkeeper. We should have one person in charge of overall training of the staff that keeps up with all the changes that happen in Evergreen. In the past it has been the Adult Service person, but that title has too many moving parts as it is reallocating some of the tasks involved with this position. The Library Director also has too many other responsibilities to do this as it should be done. The new Technical Assistant position might be able to this if the right person is hired.

The Eastern Branch has been operating without a Branch Manager lacking an MLS for the past four years. While most things have been running smoothly, the ordering of materials, and figuring out the Statistics has been lacking. What has been positive is story hours, communication with the public, and the starting back of Summer Reading with the elementary set.

The Eastern Branch and the Bloomfield Branch need a person to reach out to the middle school and young adult population. This was a position at least, at Bloomfield. but due to finances, was delayed. Another weakness is in Outreach for all ages. The library needs someone on staff that can do outreach for homebound individuals or at specific locations, such as the firehouses in the townships. The firehouse acts as a gathering spot for the older population in the surrounding townships. This person could also make connections with the schools to make sure our information is sent to them. The Library does have a small connection with the Eastern School using the Greene County Literacy Coordinator for their summer program once a week and is the library resource person for Head Start.

The Technical Assistance person mentioned above will also be trained in copy cataloging. The budget for 2024 has an increase of $30,000 to help pay for additional hires.

**Services:**

Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library has a variety of services for local patrons to take advantage of. These include but are not limited to a local collection of over 51,000 items, ranging from books, eBooks through Libby, DVDs, Music, and our “Library of Things.” The library also offers a Streaming service through Kanapy. The library is part of the Evergreen Consortium that allows us access to the catalogs and additional resources of the library’s materials for 130 other libraries in Indiana. Evergreen is to be upgraded in 2024 making it more user friendly for our patrons. If the streaming service “Hoopla” is more in line with our budget, it might be a suitable time to change from Kanapy to Hoopla.

The library will continue to reach out to the two school districts we serve as to what we have in our collections and what they would like us to help with. This is especially true for programming and our “library of things” collections.

The Genealogy and Local History area is a source of pride for the library and the library will continue to contribute and add to the collections as well as providing services and programs about genealogy and local history.

**Technology:**

* When Fiber Optics from Smithville is available, switch from the current provider.
* Consider replacing phone systems for Bloomfield and Eastern
* 2024 Replace all computers that were bought before 2018, if not already done.
* Keep Microsoft products up to date on all public and staff computers.
* Have Adobe, if not already on staff and at least two public computers at the Bloomfield Branch and one at the Eastern Branch.
* 2024 Start Computer classes (see Goal 2 Objective 2 B)
* 2024 Facetime or Zoom story hours.
* 2025 Purchase at least three laptops for staff for Outreach and designated laptop for Projector.
* 2025 replace Projector if needed.
* 2025 Consider using AVC under contract for all security issues.
* 2025 Replace Monitor above.
* 2026 Replace all computers (if needed) purchased before 2020.
* 2026 If a grant has not been obtained use library funds to purchase Microfilm Computer Genealogy
* 2027 Upgrade public software if needed.
* 2028 Replace all computers purchased before 2022 if needed.

**Collaboration with Other Community Partners:**

Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Public Library has always tried to be involved with the local community in a variety of ways. The Annex has the Greene County Literacy Office and partly pays for the Coordinator, who does some programming for us as well. Friends of the Library also use the Annex for their Book Sales.

Library Staff are part of different organizations that help us stay informed about what is happening in the community and allows us to explain what the library is doing for the community. The Library Board of Trustees has people that are either working for the school districts or are connected to them in other ways. The Bloomfield-Eastern Greene County Library tries to encourages our staff to be interested in the different civic groups that we have, though the number of this type of group has dwindled. Both locations have both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts use our facilities as well as other organizations in the area.

The library is hoping to work with churches and social services to reach out to the homebound to provide services. The library also tries to help the Health Department in providing space for vaccines for the flu and other vaccines that they feel are necessary.