



**MAIN LIBRARY
CATAWBA COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
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Library Board adopts new strategic plan

NEWTON—Catawba County Library System will be focusing more on early education and technology as outlined by a new strategic plan adopted Feb. 8 by the Board of Trustees.

Karen Foss, library director, said that the six-point plan was developed after months of thoughtful discussion by various stakeholders: staff, board members and community leaders.

“We feel confident that this plan gives us a strong framework for the next five years. We see a number of challenges and opportunities ahead in terms of technology, resources and community needs,” Foss said. “This plan was developed realistically with those issues in mind.”

The library’s focus on early childhood education fills a growing need for reading readiness among preschoolers, Foss said. The library will serve as a support system for parents and schools as they prepare young people to become productive citizens.

The six strategic planning goals are:

- 1. Preschool children will develop a love of books and reading and enter school ready to read, write and listen.** Reallocating funds to services and materials for preschool children and their families will be a focus of this goal along with employing new technology applications that relate to early learning. The popular Bookbaggers service will continue to support local childcare centers to connect young children with high quality reading materials. New early learning “concept” bags of books will offer the same function for families.
- 2. Everyone will have consistent, high-speed access to the resources and services available through the Internet.** Library staff will continue to investigate and implement high-speed access to meet needs of the community. Specifics include upgrading electrical power outlets to support increased usage and adding wireless printing for wi-fi users.
- 3. Everyone will be able to use technology to find, evaluate and apply information and communicate with others.** Adult computer classes will be expanded and fine-tuned as technologies expand and grow. Other activities associated with this goal are increased use of NC LIVE, self check-out, e-government resources and e-books.
- 4. Residents and visitors will have the resources they need to connect the past with the present through their family histories and to understand the history and traditions of**

the Catawba Valley. To facilitate a better appreciation of history and culture, the Rhodes Local History Room will experience improvements in both print and online resources. Current plans call for digitizing unique materials and placing them online for easier and more efficient access to researchers.

5. School-age children and teens will discover materials and programs that stimulate their imagination, satisfy their curiosity and foster a love of reading. Additional children's and teen programming will include reading enrichment activities to support the science, technology, engineering and math learning emphasized in public schools. The Summer Reading program will continue to help students retain their reading skills when school is not in session.

6. Adults will have timely access to materials and services that respond to their current interest and stimulate their imaginations. Among the action steps will be to re-allocate funds and space to popular reading materials. Audio books and DVDs will be rotated throughout the county system so that customers will have easier access to the materials.

Sandra Nelson, a nationally-known library consultant from Nashville, TN, was invaluable in helping guide the library groups in discussing needs and determining the best ways to accomplish them. She was contracted through a federal Library Services and Technology Administration grant administered by the State Library of North Carolina.

Public libraries in North Carolina are required to undergo strategic planning every five years to ensure that they keep pace with changing technologies and customer needs.



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