

Raymond A. Whitwer
Tilden Public Library
Strategic Plan ♦ 2015 - 2018

The Library Director and Tilden Public Library Board worked together to comprise a three year strategic plan for the Raymond A. Whitwer Tilden Public Library. This plan reviews the library's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; presents a series of fundamental statements relating to the library's vision, mission, values and objectives; and sets out proposed strategies, goals and action plans in response to the needs of the library, encounters with patrons, and engaging with associations and organizations. In addition, data gathered through a community survey process revealing the needs and concerns of community members is also summarized in this plan, which will be reviewed annually and revised as needed.

Mission Statement

It is the central purpose and role of Raymond A. Whitwer Tilden Public Library to provide each individual with equal and adequate access to informational resources, providing valuable information and opportunities, constructive and enjoyable programming & events, and a place for learning and discovery.



Community Demographic Profile

Tilden is a friendly town located in both Madison and Antelope Counties. Tilden is served by U.S. Highway 275 and Highway 45. The city is 22 west of Norfolk, is 134 miles northwest of Omaha, and 148 miles northwest of Lincoln. Tilden is the home of famous Phillies baseball player and Hall of Famer, Richie Ashburn, and the birthplace of Scientology creator L. Ron Hubbard.

Population:

- As per the 2010 official census, the population of the City of Tilden is 953. Factoring in the rural areas of Tilden with the same zip code, 68781 and which are serviced by the library, increases the count to 1,407. There are 403 households within the city limits.
- 8.3 % of the Tilden city population is under 5 years; 13.7 % is 5 – 14 years; 17.1% is 15 – 29 years; 21.9% is 30 – 49 years; 17.5% is 50 – 64 years; 21.3% is over the age of 65.

Education:

- Elkhorn Valley Schools (EVS) resides in the City of Tilden, supporting elementary K -6 and high school 7 - 12, with a current (2014) total enrollment of 322 students, or 218 elementary and 104 high school students.
- According to 2012 statistics: 7.10% of the population has a less than 9th grade education; 9.4 % has a 9th to 12th grade education with no diploma; 44.3% are high school graduates (includes equivalency); 18.5% have some college with no degree; 10.9% has Associate's degree; 6% has Bachelor's degree; 3.7% has Graduate or professional degree.
- Media facilities in the Elkhorn Valley Schools include a Library incorporated with updated technology such as smart boards, virtual field trips, and wireless internet access throughout, all of which meet and exceed the needs for our area.
- Although higher education facilities are located at a distance of 25 miles and greater, EVS has available any institution of higher education that is online. EVS's most common partner is with Northeast Community College in Norfolk.
- Currently in 2015 there are 3 families with 2 or more children who are not enrolled into the public school system but do participate in a state approved homeschool curriculum.

Language and Ethnicity:

- Based on statistics from the 2010 census: 96.4% of the population in the city of Tilden speaks English only. 3.3% speaks Spanish and .30% speak another language.
- The population of Tilden is predominantly white, 96.2% while 0.4% are black or African American, and 2.2% Hispanic or Latino. Other race makes up 1.4% of the population including 0.2% American Indian and 0.6% Asian.

Employment and Economics:

- According to the 2010 census, the number of residents over 16 years of age is 821, with 433 or 52.7% in the labor force. Of those 419 or 51% are employed and 14 or 1.7% are unemployed. (2013 data shows an increase in the unemployment rate to 2.4%). 388 or 47.3% are not in the labor force.
- 86.8% of those employed commute to/from work by car, van or truck, however, the Mean travel time to work is 22 minutes theorizing that the majority of residents are working outside of the city.
- Of those in the labor force, education and health care services make up the largest industry or occupation, 22.2% while agriculture only makes up 2.4%. 79.7% of the labor force are private wage and salary workers, 14.8% are Government workers and 5.5% are self-employed.
- As per the 2010 census, the median household income for the city of Tilden is \$35,833 while the median family income is \$49,500. Median income for male, full-time year round workers is \$38,250 and for female full-time year round is \$29,375.
- The overall percentage of all families whose income was below the poverty level for the 12 months leading up to 2010 was 6.7%. 2013 statistic show an increase of 8.1%. Taking into consideration varying factors based on the age and number of family members produces a range of those below the poverty level from 1.9% - 28.6%.
- In 2010-2011 the number students at Elkhorn Valley Schools on the Free and Reduced Lunch program: Elementary (PK-6) 70 or 35.53% and High school (7-12) 40 or 41.24% of those enrolled. In 2014 – 2015: Elementary 71 or 31.84% and High school 51 or 43.22% of those students enrolled.

S.W.O.T Analysis

This strategic plan addresses the following key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which apply to Raymond A. Whitwer Tilden Public Library now and in the foreseeable future:

<p>Internal Strengths:</p>	<p>Internal Weaknesses:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced & friendly staff • Tech & design proficient Director • Beautiful and spacious facility • Room to expand collection/displays • Original displays/artifacts /pieces bring visitors into library. • Attached large auditorium for programming / events and rent out. • 10 public access internet computers and WiFi. • Full-time operating hours for customer convenience. • Private additional funding available. • Understanding, willing, and suitable Library Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited staff for innovative and imaginative ideas. • Shortage of working/storage space as library shares space with City. • Insufficient number of volunteers for programs and functions. • Increased workload for Director due to age and health of some staff, and mandatory requirements. • Insufficient publicity and marketing of library services available. • Building maintenance, upkeep and repairs. • Not enough time to accomplish desired projects.
<p>External Opportunities:</p>	<p>External Threats:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increasing population of children and young families in our community. • The availability of grants and resources. • New assisted living center offers opportunity for new outreach programming. • New child day care facility increases circulation for Easy books. • A growing need for afterschool activities. • Growing interest in entrepreneurship. • Social media for additional marketing. • Donations earmarked for particular items of interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition for available time and dates due to other organizations (i.e. school sports, church activities). • Shrinking elderly population who support the library. • A history for limited advocacy and library participation from a majority of local city officials. • Shortage of available and/or interested volunteers. • Insufficient marketing avenues; lack of communication within community. • Vision, growth or self-enrichment not a priority for many in the community due to lack of time and other commitments. • Very low local newspaper circulation. • City budget constraints.

S.W.O.T. Strategic Plan

The following critical strategies will be pursued in order to address those attainable weaknesses and threats, and expand upon the opportunities and strengths that encompass the library and library personnel.

1. Redesign website, or utilize NLC Wordpress website for a more professional look and less work.
2. Design a professional trifold brochure with library information to use as a tool for marketing and promoting the library, hand out to new patrons, and increase membership of Friends group and volunteers by January 2016.
3. To help improve visibility of new collection arrivals, redesign newspaper library column or design new flyer or website information for public.
4. Apply to the Kreutz-Bennett grant fund for facilities (flooring for Lied Auditorium) and digitizing newspaper on microfilm by October 1 2015. Keep searching for other grants that will benefit the library.
5. Budget for and increased hours of employment for Library Director, submit by August 31, 2015.
6. Clean and reorganize areas of library to be used more efficiently.
7. Create more appealing spaces, add unique and innovative displays, and enhance collection with off-the-wall books and publications to attract the younger generation.
8. Develop more outreach programs for the elderly and public at the Assisted Living Center.
9. Make use of Foundation funding to hire instructor for basic computer classes by November 2015.
10. Work with local newspaper toward developing a marketing campaign to increase paper circulation which will be beneficial to all businesses including the library.
11. Find ways to involve other organizations to work with the library.
12. Continue trying to convey to City officials through reports, data and media attention the important role the library plays in the community and the need to increased funding.
13. Stay on top of maintenance and repair issues, and keep library clean. Reiterate to staff to stay observant and attentive at all times.

Assessing Community Needs

The following analyses is a result of a Quality of Life survey which was distributed by mail, handed delivered by Library Board members, Foundation members and library staff, and made available at the library to a diverse group of 100 Tilden community members, both rural and city, This survey consisted of 10 demographic questions and 16 yes/no/essay questions, and was completely anonymous. Of those surveys distributed, 42 community members responded, ranging in age, gender, economic status, employment, level of education, property owners or renters, and number of household members.

Of the responses received, 35 people were completely satisfied with the quality of life in the community. 1 was not satisfied, 1 was somewhat satisfied, and 5 responded with a comment, concern or desire.

While the majority of those respondents were satisfied with their overall quality of life in Tilden, the following issues and concerns were expressed repeatedly, listed in order of importance.

1. The lack of emergency medical care (due to the loss of the Tilden hospital) and EMT / Ambulance service.
2. A need for a transportation service for the elderly to travel to Norfolk for shopping and doctor's appointments, along with elderly day care for activities, and elderly fitness programs.
3. The appearance and condition of Main Street, sidewalks and buildings, and the condition of roads and sidewalks throughout town.
4. The removal or clean-up of abandoned & unmaintained houses and buildings.
5. The lack of decent housing for purchase or rental, and the need for more (decent) housing projects for the elderly and lower income families.
6. After school activities for younger kids and those not involved in sports.
7. A variety of more stores, restaurants, and entertainment in town.
8. Improve or replace the city auditorium.
9. A concern over keeping the local school in our community.

Other comments and concerns were singly conveyed, some indicating individual needs, while others suggested unrealistic desires.

Library Action Plan – Goal & Objectives:

The Quality of Life survey was designed to aid in the structure of this strategic report and to gain a better understanding and determination of how the library could contribute its services to fulfil community needs. With the information provided, the library plans to take the following actions:

Community need #1 – Lack of emergency care and EMT/ambulance service.

Goal

To help increase the number of volunteers needed for a quality EMT/ambulance service.

Objectives

1. The Library Director has been approached by the officers of the Rescue Squad / EMT service to design a pamphlet outlining the importance and need for volunteers.
2. Information about requirements and training is needed from the Rescue Squad officers.
3. Meet with officers to determine for distribution of material.
4. Completed pamphlet should be ready for print by end of year, 2015.

Community need #2 – Transportation needs and day care / activities and fitness programs for the elderly.

Goal

To spread awareness that there is a need for a transportation business or company for the elderly, and to offer activities and programming for the elderly.

Objectives

1. Library Director will submit an article with results to the local newspaper in conjunction with the October 2015 City Council meeting, outlining this particular need in hopes of generating entrepreneurship or ideas.
2. Library staff will research the transportation groups recommended in survey to see how these operations work.
3. Contact transportation groups directly, or pass information onto the City, Senior Center and Assisted Living Center for input and assistance.
4. Work with Director of Prairie View Assisted Living Center for more outreach programs at the center for their residents and elderly in the community.
5. Research the possibility of offering an over 60 and Fit exercise type program for the elderly to be held in the Lied Auditorium at the library at least once a week.
6. Talk to local fitness center owner and/or North East Community College to find instructor and expense associated.
7. Look for funding. Approach the Library Foundation with the idea, and as possible funding solution. If plan is doable, aim for target date of March 2016.

Community need #6 - After school programs and activities for younger children not involved in sports.

Goal

To provide a space for local children's organizations (i.e. 4-H club, Scouts, etc) to hold after school activities, or develop library sponsored programs or activities for younger children.

Objectives

1. Library Director will contact counselors at EV Elementary School to determine an accurate account of the need for after school programs.
2. Library Director will contact local organizations to make them aware of this need, and determine if there is a demand for available meeting spaces. Talk with leaders of these organizations to see if library can assist in developing specific programs or activities, or work with them in an outreach capacity.
3. Search for activities or programs that the library could hold weekly, or that would give a child a specific project to do throughout the week, reporting to the library once a week, taking into consideration that the library is not a babysitting service and staff is limited.
4. Research the possibilities for volunteers, such as senior organizations.

5. Approach the Library Foundation about the possibility for funding.
6. If such a program can be implemented, the target date would be set for Fall/Winter of 2017.

Other community needs listed – Additional areas of concern were expressed including the appearance of Main Street, buildings & sidewalks; old and neglected buildings and homes, inadequate supply of decent housing; the need for a new city Auditorium; more stores and businesses in Tilden. Regarding these concerns, the library will carry out the following:

Goal

To make known the concerns and issues of those who responded to the survey and to create an awareness to those people who have the capability to pursue and make changes.

Objective

1. The Library Director will create a spreadsheet outlining all of the data, concerns and issues collected and will present a copy of the spread sheet to the members of the City Council and Mayor at the City Council meeting in October 2015.
2. Additionally an article in the local paper will also outline the concerns and issues in hopes of promoting and generating entrepreneur possibilities.

Conclusion:

The Raymond A. Whitwer Tilden Public Library will continue its efforts to identify the needs of the public by asking questions and listening to new and existing customers, by searching out information via the newspaper, newsletters and local social network sites, and by uniting with local organizations and associations. The library understands that it is beneficial to both the library and members of the community to create and maintain awareness, and to continually seek out opportunities which will generate interest and engage the public.

Upon review of this strategic plan on an annual basis, the Tilden Public Library Board and the Library Director will explore what efforts have been made, accomplishments that have occurred, and analyze the reasons for successes and failures.

Approved by the Tilden Library Board on Sept 14, 2015