



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2024

MISSION STATEMENT

The Ruth Enlow Library uses its collection, programs, services, and technology to transform its community:

- By championing literacies and lifelong learning,
- By bringing people and groups together; and
- By promoting democracy and civic engagement.

VALUE STATEMENT

Staff will strive at all times to uphold and promote the following values:

- Equal access for all
- Intellectual freedom
- Lifelong learning
- Reliability of information
- Fostering democracy
- Diversity
- Social responsibility
- Privacy
- Service
- Stewardship of public resources
- Collaboration

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

The Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County is proud of our past service to the people of Garrett County. In recent years, Library Director Thomas Vose has brought a renewed energy and direction to the library, and our hardworking and talented staff has continued to help patrons access materials and programming.

While we are proud of our past, we are excited to look forward and consider how the library can best serve the people of Garrett County in the coming years. Our Board has adopted the following strategic plan proposed by Mr. Vose. He has rigorously collected relevant data and feedback from all parts of our community to create a plan with four areas of focus.

This strategic plan creates a vision for the library as part of a strong and engaged community. That vision calls for a solid foundation of core library functions, such as supporting the educational needs of the county and developing a culture of reading. Our library will also evolve to meet an

uncertain and changing future. In a world that is increasingly virtual, many have pointed to an "epidemic of loneliness." Our strategic plan calls for fostering real human connection in a modern world.

This plan looks to the future. A planned giving foundation will ensure that the library remains a powerfully relevant institution that helps people and enriches the lives of our citizens.

Finally, a major capital project is included in the strategic plan. There has been significant work by stakeholders in the last several years that will culminate in 2024-2025 with the construction of a new Friendsville Library. The Board of Trustees and I have every confidence that the new Friendsville Library will benefit our community.

This plan will result in actionable steps and programs that you will see at the library in the coming five years. Thank you for your continued support of Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County.

CHRISTIAN MASH
President, Board of Library Trustees

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Has it really been over six years?
Time certainly flies...

When I first arrived at the Ruth Enlow Library, one of my first priorities was to create a Strategic Plan to guide our steps in the years ahead. Over the years we were able to accomplish quite a lot of the goals on that plan, successfully repositioning the Library as a valued and public-facing partner for many groups and as a haven for readers, students and lifelong learners in Garrett County. While COVID impacted our plans (as it did everyone else's), we are proud of the progress we made, and of what the Library has shown it can do for its patrons.

While preparing this Strategic Plan I was reminded of the value that the process holds. The first time around I was newly arrived to the area, and conducting focus groups, reading survey responses, chatting with representatives from other organizations and listening to what the Board, Friends and staff had to say really helped me to understand the community and the issues that mattered to its people, and to get a feel for the communities that make up Garrett County. Developing this plan helped me reconnect with that and see what has changed and what has stayed the same in the intervening years. The input of everyone who took the time to make their voice heard for this process is incredibly appreciated – it is gratifying to see so many people invested in the future of the Library!

Based on this input, we have developed a set of goals that I believe represent a firm path forward; a path that brings the Library and its resources to the support of the people and groups it serves in meaningful and potentially life-changing ways. These goals will be reviewed annually, and our work towards meeting them will be guided by the values we have adopted, values which I believe represent the vision of positivity that libraries offer their communities.

In developing a culture of reading, we expand horizons, support mental health and provide an avenue for lasting lifelong learning for all users. In serving the County's educational needs, we strengthen the schools as well as the parents who choose to educate at home, ensuring access to quality resources and services. In fostering human connection in a hybrid world, we help build resilient communities based in real-world connections, give people a meaningful social outlet and help them learn about and strike a balance with the technology that at times threatens to overwhelm us. And in looking to the future, we preserve the Library and its services as an invaluable public space for generations to come.

Let's make something wonderful together.

THOMAS VOSE
Director, Ruth Enlow Library
of Garrett County

The
Ruth Enlow Library
of GARRETT COUNTY



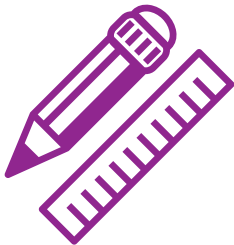
Community + Opportunity

AREAS OF FOCUS, 2024-2029



DEVELOP A CULTURE OF READING

- Create innovative new services and events that incentivize reading.
- Explore the development of a new Ruth Enlow Library Bookmobile.
- Ensure support for adult literacy instruction.
- Strengthen services targeted to teens that keep strong a love of reading.
- Improve marketing and outreach to the community that promotes reading, literacy and real-world interactions.



SERVE THE COUNTY'S EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- Provide assistance and technology access to ensure technological literacy and close the digital divide throughout Garrett County.
- Supplement the efforts of educators in schools and at home with services geared towards their needs.
- Make innovative new technologies and collections available to the public.
- Strengthen early literacy efforts to ensure kindergarten readiness among Garrett County's kids.
- Develop and host programs that teach new skills and improve the self-sufficiency and community spirit of patrons.



FOSTER HUMAN CONNECTION IN A HYBRID WORLD

- Ensure that each location is an oasis of comfort, kindness and inclusivity.
- Connect community agencies and people to benefit the County as a whole.
- Leverage Library resources to strengthen community initiatives.
- Provide socializing opportunities to cultivate interpersonal relationships and develop community resilience.
- Ensure that staff at all locations are engaged and resilient, and that they receive any needed administrative support.
- Solicit speakers and performers that bring new ideas, opportunities and perspectives to Garrett County.



LOOK TO THE FUTURE

- Develop a new Ruth Enlow Library Foundation.
- Strengthen the Friends of the Library as a vital support network.
- Complete construction of a new Friendsville Library.
- Reinforce connections with the larger library world both statewide and nationally.
- Expand digitization of local history resources.
- Work to maximize the attractiveness of employment at the Library.

Reports and data collected for this plan are available upon request at the Main Library.