

# BUILDING THE FUTURE

Planning for Results in the Saratoga Springs Public Library

2006-2009

## Introduction

In the twelve years since the library moved into our expanded facility on Henry Street, we have experienced tremendous growth and change. The Internet, for example, which now impacts virtually every aspect of our service, was barely imagined when we began planning the building in the mid 1980's. To the over 100,000 people a year who visit the library to take our computer classes, use our public computers and our wireless access, the absence of these services would seem unimaginable.

Looking back on ten years of this tremendous change and growth, the library board felt the time had come to once again involve the community in our decision making process as we plan for the future. Following the guidelines developed by the Public Library Association, we began a year long planning project. It has been an exciting, rewarding, and sometimes difficult project that resulted in a document we will use as a blueprint for developing our services over the next three years.

Many thanks are due to the community volunteers, the staff committee chairs and committee members, and the library system consultants who helped us along the way. All are listed below, and each person helped to make this project work. A special thanks is certainly due to staff member Mary Ann Hunter, who served as project coordinator. With her customary grace and efficiency she kept us on track and on target throughout the project.

Harry Dutcher, Director

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**Project Coordinator** – Mary Ann Hunter

### **Consultants**

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Pamela Polacsek – Communications Specialist, Saratoga Bridges

Jo-Ellen Unger – Executive Director, Academy for Learning in Retirement

**Staff Committees****Current Topics and Titles**

Dan Hubbs – Chair, Teri Blasko, Laura Clark, Beth Donworth, Cyndy Eddy,  
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**Information Literacy**

Shobhan Parthasarathy – Chair, Colleen Bodane, Bob Cifrino, Kathy Handy,  
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**Lifelong Learning**

Rhona Koretzky – Chair, Randy Barlin, Ellen deLalla, Mary Hill, Jeannine Jeter,  
Rita McNamara, Linda Morzillo, Leslie Nover, Mary Turcich

**Commons**

Harry Dutcher – Chair, Linda Bullard, Bob Cooley, Bob Eckardt, Josh Kuperman,  
Mike O'Dunne, Ann Passinault, Sue Pettit, Matt Senac

## Goals for the Saratoga Springs Public Library

### Current Topics and Titles

**Goal 1 – Saratoga Springs Public Library will provide all school district residents with ready access to high demand materials and programs of current interest.**

Objective 1.1: Circulation of New and Popular materials will increase by 5% and overall circulation will increase by 2% in 2007. Efforts to increase circulation will be revisited and evaluated annually for the following two years.

Activities:

- a. The library will increase the amount of materials provided via rental programs.
- b. The library will shorten the amount of time library patrons have to pick up requested materials.
- c. The library will review circulation reports to aid in establishing New and Popular subject categories.
- d. The library will establish and maintain additional new material display areas on all floors.
- e. The library will designate more popular items “non-request” to improve the likelihood that library patrons browsing in the New and Popular area will find materials of interest.
- f. The library will review and update ordering guidelines and selection policies to better meet community interests.
- g. The library will train staff to provide readers’ advisory service.
- h. The library will process materials as quickly as possible, so new materials get to the shelves faster.
- i. The library will establish a best-seller budget.
- j. The library will evaluate the entire collection, via circulation reports, and weed the entire collection to ensure that shelves are not crowded, that materials are in good condition, and there is room for newer, high demand materials.
- k. This committee will submit to the library a recommended floor plan for the first floor, including suggestions for types of shelving.
- l. The library will highlight new materials in the online library catalog.

- m. The library will evaluate current webpage efforts to connect library patrons to library materials.
- n. The library will review display and arrangement of CDs and DVDs to improve access for library patrons.
- o. The library will review DVD and VHS loan periods and renewals to improve circulation.
- p. The library will designate an in-house “Listening and Viewing” area for DVDs or CDs. MP3 players will be available for loan.
- q. The library will shift the arrangement of the periodical collection from alphabetical order by title to subject area.
- r. The library will assign staff so that the New and Popular shelves will be replenished and attended to throughout each day.

Objective 1.2: At least 60% of library patrons surveyed will indicate they found high demand materials when visiting the library.

Activities:

- a. The library will create an online survey to measure library patrons’ satisfaction with Current Topics and Titles efforts.
- b. The library will introduce an online blog for discussion of current books.
- c. The library will post an online FAQ regarding material requests.

Objective 1.3: Attendance at library programs that are topical and meet community interests will increase by 5% each year for the next three years.

Activities:

- a. The library will establish an interdepartmental committee that will meet regularly to plan and publicize programs.
- b. The library will make display space available to coordinate material displays and public programs.
- c. The library will increase the number of local history programs offered each year.
- d. The library will survey library patrons to aid in evaluation of programming efforts and to gather ideas for future programs.

## Information Literacy

**Goal 2 – Saratoga Springs Public Library will assist library patrons in the use of library services and accessing information in various formats.**

Objective 2.1: The adult use of the library's electronic and computer services will increase by 10% each year with a focus on developing programs and services to local businesses, health and social service organizations.

Activities:

- a. The library will develop programs of interest to clients of local businesses, health and social service organizations.
- b. The library will develop and distribute brochures and handouts targeting local businesses, health and social services organizations.
- c. The library will survey library patrons and local agencies to measure the success of programs and services to local businesses, health and social service organizations.
- d. The library will provide one-on-one assistance and group instruction on using databases, the online library catalog, the Internet and the SSPL website.
- e. The library web pages will be updated on a regular basis with current and topical web links and information to promote the online databases.
- f. The library will create and distribute maps of the building and directories of services in multiple formats.
- g. The library will install assistive technology such as JAWS for Windows (a screen reader and Web navigating device) and MAGicpro (a magnification and speech program to assist low vision readers) on at least one workstation.

Objective 2.2: The use of the library's electronic and computer services by children and students will increase by 10% each year.

Activities:

- a. The library will train staff to be knowledgeable and up-to-date on research databases, the online library catalog, the Internet and the SSPL website.
- b. The library will provide one-on-one assistance and group instruction on using databases, the online library catalog, the Internet and the SSPL website.

- c. The library will develop age appropriate programs of interest to students and children.
- d. The library will review, evaluate and design web pages for children and young adults.
- e. The library will increase the awareness of children and young adults of library programs and services by utilizing new technologies.

Objective 2.3: Each year, 70% of library patrons who use the library's electronic and computer services will report that they are satisfied and value the service.

Activities:

- a. The library will develop an online survey to measure satisfaction and value.
- b. The library will promote the survey to library patrons attending library programs, on outreach visits and during one-on-one instruction.

Objective 2.4: Each year, use of the library information and reference services will increase by 5%. When surveyed, 70% of library patrons will rate these services favorably.

Activities:

- a. The library will provide staff development and inter-departmental training resulting in a knowledgeable staff that is proactive and customer service oriented. Suggested activities to include:
  - 1. Reader's Advisory training
  - 2. Reference Interview training
  - 3. Creation of a Roving Reference Librarian service
  - 4. Coordination between Computer and Reference Services
- b. The library website will promote access to information and reference services to various library patron groups. Whenever possible, existing web resources will be used to accomplish these activities. Suggested activities to include:
  - 1. Expansion of the "Contact Us" page
  - 2. On-line booklists and recommendations by staff



3. Ongoing updating of related website links
  4. E-newsletters to be sent to target populations (e.g. school teachers, fiction readers via BookLetters, etc)
  5. Blog on the Library's home page will give updates of library happenings
  6. On-line application for library card when feasible within the SALS/MVLS consortium
  7. On-line tutorials on evaluating web sites and on Internet safety
  8. Form for suggested purchases on SSPL website
- c. Each year, the library will evaluate print and electronic materials for information and reference services to monitor changing patterns in library patron use.

## Lifelong Learning

**Goal 3 – Saratoga Springs Public Library will provide all library patrons with materials and programs to support their pursuit of learning at all stages of life.**

Objective 3.1: The library will double the number of families with new babies who come to the library by increasing its participation with Project PURR (Parents Using Reading Resources). Since 1987, the Project has been giving books to parents of babies born at Saratoga Hospital and encouraging these parents to use the library's resources for children.

### Activities:

- a. The library will update the promotion of Project PURR. Suggested activities:
  1. Change the certificate: clarify the benefits; make it more "jazzy".
  2. Include a refrigerator magnet in the packet.
  3. Add a board book with an information sticker about the library attached.
  4. Include a flyer so that parents know that ALL children may have a library card from the moment that they are born.
  5. Obtain eye-catching bags to creatively package the packet.
  6. Involve the circulation staff; ask them to mention the program when parents come in with infants.
  7. Have information about this program on the library website.
  8. Expand publicity to other area hospitals and to families who move into the area with infants.

Objective 3.2: The library will double the number of school children who visit the library as part of a class activity by adding 5<sup>th</sup> grade visits.

### Activities:

- a. The library will conduct tours of the entire library, emphasizing the bridge to the adult department.
- b. The library will have a treasure hunt or scavenger hunt.
- c. The library will offer small prizes to each student who participates.
- d. The library will ensure that each student has an active library card.

Objective 3.3: Young adults who attend library sponsored or co-sponsored programs and/or use library resources will increase by 5% each year.

Activities:

- a. The library board of trustees will investigate the establishment of a branch focusing on young adult services.
- b. The library will investigate ways to offer homework help.
- c. The library will implement school and community visits by the YA librarian.
- d. The library will partner with schools to promote summer reading.
- e. The library will plan programming and seek recommendations on material purchases from the Teen Advisory group.
- f. The library will offer computer instruction on various topics of interest to this target audience.

Objective 3.4: The library will expand daytime programming to reach 50% more participants.

Activities:

- a. The library will present library programs at senior centers and/or senior housing facilities such as Prestwick Chase, Woodlawn and the Home of the Good Shepherd.
- b. The library will investigate the video taping of library programs for library patrons to view at home if they are unable to come to the library.
- c. The library will offer computer instruction on various topics of interest to this targeted audience.
- d. The library will obtain museum passes for circulation.
- e. The library will offer transportation to the library in cooperation with the Senior Center and work with the city to add the library as a stop on the shuttle service.
- f. The library will promote adult library programs in the local media.

Objective 3.5: The library will increase use of special collections in all formats by 5%.

Activities:

- a. The library will further develop the collection of oral histories by interviewing local residents or asking people to donate their own oral histories.
- b. The library will ask young adults to assist with these projects, enabling a cross-generational exchange.
- c. The library will digitize unique items such as maps and Saratoga related documents.

## Commons

**Goal 4 – Saratoga Springs Public Library will provide all library patrons with well equipped and comfortable space for group meetings and individual reading and studying.**

Objective 4.1: Public use of the meeting rooms will increase by 10% each year.

Activities:

- a. The library will create an online calendar to clearly show the times and spaces available for use.
- b. The library will identify additional space that can be used for meetings and group studies.
- c. The library will change current policy to increase the number of bookings allowed per organization during the non-demand times of M-F, 9am – 5pm.
- d. The library will enforce room booking limit during high demand times – weekends and evenings.
- e. The library will review and simplify booking procedures.
- f. The library will post scheduled room activities online and in the library.

Objective 4.2: Less than 5% of the groups using the meeting rooms will report problems with the meeting room equipment each year.

Activities:

- a. The library will provide staff training in the operation, setup and maintenance of equipment.
- b. The library will provide equipment for each meeting room that can be supported, operated and maintained by the library staff.
- c. The library will evaluate charging groups for dedicated technical help during meetings.
- d. The library will install listening assistance devices in each meeting room.
- e. The library will broaden the selection of tables and seating arrangements.

Objective 4.3: Downtime of the library's wireless system shall be less than 5% of hours open by the end of 2006.

Activities:

- a. The library will identify and train staff to troubleshoot the wireless system during all open hours.

- b. The library will put in place equipment and policies as necessary to manage and effectively share bandwidth.
- c. The library will install additional electrical outlets to aid wireless users.
- d. The library will provide printing for wireless users by 2007.
- e. The library will advertise wireless access through signage and handouts.

Objective 4.5: Waiting time for a public computer will not exceed 15 minutes.

Activities:

- a. The library will develop plans and procedures that minimize computer downtime.
- b. The library will carefully review software to simplify what is available.
- c. The library will create steps to be taken to better control activity in the public computer area.
- d. The library will promote the range of computer supplies available for purchase.
- e. The library will investigate use of vending and change machines.
- f. The library will investigate designating a computer equipped for disabled users.

Objective 4.6: By the end of 2007 the library will redesign the library space to accomplish the service goals and objectives recommended by the planning process.

Activities:

- a. The library will engage the services of a library space planning consultant.
- b. The library board will approve the resulting plan.
- c. The library will purchase furnishings and equipment.
- d. The library will investigate self-service checkout.
- e. The library will begin investigating ways to ease the pickup and return of library materials.

Objective 4.7: Building safety, parking, and evacuation procedures will be reviewed by the end of 2007.

Activities:

- a. The library will install a public address system.
- b. The library will install a backup generator to keep the elevator, doors, telephones, and selected heating equipment operating during a power outage.
- c. The library will review procedures and staff allocation related to building cleaning and maintenance
- d. The library will continue working with the city to review and improve parking for library patrons.
- e. The library will eliminate one dedicated parking space and more aggressively address unauthorized parking in the remaining space.
- f. The library will review and possibly increase the number of parking spaces for disabled library patrons in the Henry Street city lot.
- g. The library will renew the request to establish a parking space for disabled library patrons on Henry Street.
- h. The library will improve communication with library patrons concerning library parking and access options. A map of nearby parking lots will be available on the library website.