

# COUNTY-CITY LIBRARY COMMUNITY OUTREACH PLAN



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# County - City Library Community Outreach Plan

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## County - City Library Community Outreach Plan

### Outreach Plan

#### **Introduction**

The County-City Library in Sweetwater is the public library of Nolan County, Texas. Sweetwater, the county seat, is on Interstate Highway 20, U.S. Highway 80/84, State Highway 70, Farm Road 419, and the Santa Fe Railroad. It is forty-two miles west of Abilene, 125 miles southeast of Lubbock, and 130 miles northeast of Odessa.

The area that is now Nolan County had no Anglo settlers until after the Civil War when buffalo hunters came to the plains. Initial settlements were trading posts to support these hunters. As the area was settled cattle ranching and farming took hold. The Great Depression had a tremendous impact on cotton growing in the area causing a drop in planting from 80,000 acres in cotton in 1930 to 39,000 in 1939. The number of farms, farmers, and farm laborers dropped in proportion to this reduction.

The economy of Nolan County recovered with World War II. The clear weather and flat plains made the local airfield an important training base, the only location providing pilot's training to women. The economy continued to expand with petroleum production; since 1939 over 172,176,000 barrels of oil have been produced in the county. Oil production has slowed since the mid-1990s and the county is now a center for wind power production. Nolan County's production of wind power in 2008 was more than the entire state of California and would rank sixth among nations if the county were counted as a nation.

#### *Historical, Current, and Future Roles of the Library*

The library's historical roles were to provide educational and recreational materials and information assistance to the community. Additional current roles include: local history and genealogy; English as a Second Language; early literacy and preschool door to learning, and community meeting place. The library offers computers for public access to the Internet as well as wireless Internet connections. A future role for the library is to become an expanded technology center.

#### *Existing Programs*

The library offers many programs including: art displays; story times for preschool children; basic computer classes; adult book club; exam proctoring; English as a Second Language classes, and Interlibrary Loan service. The library provides educational sessions on health and financial concerns as well as writing, book discussion, and support groups. The library provides nursing home outreach by reading to the residents during lunch once a month.

#### *Identified Needs*

The community needs more jobs for residents. The recent drought has contributed to further decline of farming and ranching and livestock prices in the area, resulting in job losses in these sectors. Power production shifts from oil and gas to wind farms has resulted in fewer people employed in power production because fewer workers are needed to tend the wind farms. The county population has decreased with each recent census: 4.4% drop in 1990, 4.8% drop in 2000

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and 3.7% drop in 2010. These population decreases have resulted in a depressed housing market, difficulties for small retailers, and 19.4% of the population living under the poverty level. Lack of public transportation and difficulties for people who speak English as their second language are further challenges. Activities for young people are offered primarily through the school districts; summer and after school entertainment are needed for children who do not participate in athletics.

The library faces funding challenges. Survey responses included requests for updated public access computers, more library space, longer hours, and more downloadable materials.

### *Identified Assets*

The library staff has a good relationship with school personnel. Local fundraising by the Friends of the Library and Library Board book sale supports programming. The library features a Community Room for library and civic programs and meetings. The library has 12 computers available for public use, 9 connected to the Internet and three for children's games.

### *Thank You Statement*

The County-City Library would like to thank the County Commissioners, and the people of Nolan County and the City of Sweetwater for continuing funding and support. The library also wishes to thank the Friends of the Library for their financial support and Pam Lawrence, Sweetwater High School Librarian and Ruth Ann Campbell, Sweetwater Middle School Counselor for their support and input in developing the PEARL project program. The continuing hard work and support of the library staff is also appreciated. The library thanks the Robert and Ruby Priddy Charitable Trust for funding the University of North Texas (UNT) PEARL project. The library's participation in the PEARL project will assist the library in developing a new program for Teens and will help in writing grants for future outreach programs.

### **Community Profile Narrative**

Nolan County is family oriented; it is home to four school districts and the Texas State Technical College. Among Sweetwater's entertainment and recreational facilities are: the Pioneer City-County Museum, the World War II WASP Museum, the Historic Sweetwater Municipal Auditorium, the Coliseum with the Annex and rodeo grounds. Outdoor activities venues include: two city parks, two golf courses, two swimming pools, a country club, and three lakes. The Annual Rattlesnake Round-Up receives attention nationwide through news reports from the festival.

Residents have a full range of community services including: police, fire, sheriff, health department, Avenger field airport, and a local hospital. The area is served by a local daily newspaper, and radio station. Sweetwater and Nolan County are home to several chain department stores, and restaurants as well as local retail establishments.

Major employers are the school districts and government agencies. Businesses in the county produce gypsum, radiation detection equipment, aluminum products, and wind energy.

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### *Main Geographic Features*

#### Community Features

##### *Assets and Challenges*

Assets of Nolan County include rich underground oil reserves and gypsum deposits. The wide open plains are home to cattle ranches, dairy farms, farmland, quarries, oil fields, and wind turbines. Sweetwater is serviced by railroads and a local airfield. Interstate 20 is a major route through Texas. It brings travelers to Sweetwater for the night and tourists to the museums, historical sites, and campgrounds.

The geographic challenges to the region are the low population density, and the distance to the nearest large city, Abilene, which is 42 miles.

#### Library Features

##### *Assets and Challenges*

The library's location is an asset. It is in a stand-alone building near city and county offices. The building is clearly marked and easy to locate. Proximity to the post office and government buildings brings residents to the area and provides convenient access for library visitors. The library has a meeting room, children's area, and wireless Internet as well as public access Internet computers.

Lack of public transportation is a challenge to the library. The library is located north of I-20 in a busy downtown area. The library is not difficult to find but is a challenge to students due to the heavy traffic and the frequent extreme weather that discourages walking.

##### *Community Demographics*

In the 2010 federal census the county population dropped 3.7% to 15,216. Educational attainment in the county was 77.4% having high school diplomas, 17.1% also earned a bachelor's degree or higher. The median income of a household in the county was \$37,102. Per capita income throughout the county was \$19,973, with 19.4% of the population under the poverty level.

The 2010 population of Sweetwater was 10,906, with 81.8% White, 6.2% African American, .5% Native American, .6% Asian and 2.5% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race was 38.3% of the population. In the city the population distribution by age was 35.4% under the age of 18, 48.8% ages 18 to 64, and 15.8% who were 65 years of age or older.

The median income for a household in the city was \$32,547. The per capita income for the city was \$17,762. Over 24% of the population was below the poverty line.

#### **Library Profile Narrative**

In 1907, the Saturday Club established a public library in Sweetwater. The library was housed in different locations until 1965 when it moved to its present location. In 1998, a major building renovation project was completed adding 3,040 square feet to the building and making it ADA compliant.

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The County-City Library became one of the ten charter members of the Big Country Library System in 1972. The library continues to meet state library accreditation standards.

The library provides: hardback and paperback books for adults and children; audio books on audio cassettes, CD and Playaway; public computers with Internet access and children's learning games; wireless Internet service; photocopier and fax service; microfilm reader/printer, typewriter; TV with VCR, and DVD players. Downloadable e-books and audio books are available through the library's participation in the Big County Digital consortium.

### *Most Important Library Statistics*

In 2010 the library had 7,200 registered borrowers; the assigned service area had a population of 14,879. Library circulation was 43,315 from the library collection of 36,853 materials. Total attendance at library programs was 2,719 people with 2,233 attending children's programming. The 9 public Internet access computers were used 10,326 times.

The library is open 41 hours per week and operated by 4.7 full time equivalent staff. In 2010 the 42,380 library visits were equal to 2.84 visits per capita.

### **Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives**

#### *Vision Statement*

The library serves the community by promoting life-long learning, serving as an information center and providing a safe and welcoming gathering place for all.

#### *Mission Statement*

The mission of the County-City Library is to provide a secure and dynamic environment for lifelong learning with access to informational, educational and recreational resources, as well as maintaining a realistic combination of technological and traditional library services to adequately serve all the citizens of Nolan County and the City of Sweetwater.

#### *Goals and Objectives for the Library*

Goal 1. Maintain and develop collection to provide materials for information, education and leisure.

##### Objectives

1. Purchase materials in a variety of formats.
2. Maintain a current collection by removing items no longer needed or in poor shape.
3. Preserve local history materials by continuing the digitization project.

Goal 2. Develop and maintain programming to promote reading for all ages.

##### Objectives

1. Provide preschool story times.
2. Offer reading discussion clubs.
3. Provide nursing home outreach by reading to residents.
4. Provide Summer Reading Club each year.

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### *Goals and Objectives for Outreach Program*

As part of the library's Goal 2 to, "Develop and maintain programming to promote reading for all ages" and objectives 2 to "offer reading discussion clubs" and 4 to "provide a Summer Reading Club each year" the library will add a Teen Book Club to the Summer Reading Club.

### **Outreach Program**

The library will test a summer Teen Book Club for middle school students by having a pilot project in 2012. The club will meet once a week during school break in June and July. The teens will read a book selected for the project. Copies of the selected book will be purchased for each teen with funds earned through the book sale. The teens will work together to record a video review of the book for posting on YouTube. Teen's original reviews of favorite books will be solicited and posted on the bulletin board in the children's area.

### *Statement of need*

Library staff surveyed the community to determine community needs. The survey response rate was low, although several themes were detected. A frequent request was for more library service hours. Faster and more computers were requested. Several respondents requested repeat presentations of programs previously offered. Programs were requested for several age groups including teens and pre-teens.

Discussions with students using the library revealed that the community offers few activities for children who are not involved in sports. The library director discussed the concern with school staff and designed the Teen Book Club.

### *Description of the larger audience or target group the library wants to reach*

The project target audience is middle school students. Over 450 students are currently enrolled in Sweetwater Middle School.

### *Description of the specific segment of the target group the proposed program will serve*

Students attending Sweetwater Middle School have a book club at the school throughout the school year. Students participating in this program are the primary target for this project.

### *Estimated number of potential participants*

It is estimated there will 5-8 participants in the book club.

### *Description of the characteristics of the audience (age, gender, interest, where they live, transportation issues if any, best hours for a program, etc.)*

The project is for middle school boys and girls. The participants will be limited in their attendance by availability of transportation to the library; for this reason the expected participants will be students of Sweetwater Middle School.

The book club will be held every Thursday afternoon from 1:30-2:30 p.m. through the months of June and July. Pam Lawrence and Ruth Ann Campbell from the school system were consulted and they agreed this was a good time.

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### *List potential partners based on your assets assessment*

Library teen volunteers will assist the director with the selection of the titles to be discussed. Funds for the project will be provided by library support groups, the Library Board and the Friends of the Library. The library is partnering with the school staff in the design of the project. School staff is helping by encouraging student registration for the program. Program announcements will be distributed to the Blackwell, Highland, and Roscoe Schools inviting their middle school students to participate.

### *List available library resources that could contribute to the success of the program*

The library has the Community Room where the program will be held, and the funding to purchase the books. The library's positive relationship with the school will contribute to program success. Pam Lawrence, High School Librarian, and two library staff members will assist and facilitate the program.

### **Detailed Action Plan**

#### *Action Plan Goal(s):*

Offer middle school students a Teen Book Club as part of the Summer Reading Club.

1. Plan the program.
2. Promote the program.
3. Implement the program.
4. Evaluate the program.

#### *Action Plan Objective(s):*

1. Schedule program.
2. Select books for discussion.
3. Create and distribute promotional materials.
4. Develop, administer, and analyze evaluations.

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### *Action Plan Table*

This action plan outlines specific steps library staff will take to plan, offer and evaluate this program.

IMPLEMENTATION			EVALUATION	
Action What action, activity, or task needs to be done?	Name and Date Who will do it, and by what date will it be done?	Resources Needed How much time, money, materials, and personnel are needed?	Measurement How will progress be measured (#, % of participation or attendance)?	Analysis How and when will data be gathered and analyzed to determine success?
Brainstorm with middle school counselor	Director and counselor on March 15	Time: 1 hr, \$&materials -none Personnel-1	Gain cooperation and assistance of counselor and librarian	Program is outlined; Partnership formed
Determine meeting dates and times for the program	Director by March 16	Time: 1 hr, \$&materials –school calendar Personnel-1	Discuss dates	Dates set
Block times in the Community room	Director by April 12	Time: 1 hr, \$&materials – Community room calendar Personnel-1	Schedule no conflict dates for room	Room is available for this program
Design flyers/posters	Director by May 11	Time: 1 hrs, \$&materials –computer and printer Personnel-1,	1 master made	Count #made
Copy and Distribute flyers and posters	Director by May 11	Time: 1 hrs, \$&materials –flyers Personnel-1	Print and distribute 10 flyers/posters	Count # distributed
Design/distribute evaluations	Director by May 24	For each session – like/didn't like	1 master made; 8-10 distributed	Count #
Select book for discussion	Program facilitator with teens in June 7 session	Time: 1 hrs, \$&materials – recommended titles Personnel-1	Title(s) selected	Title identified
Order book for participants	Director on June 7	Time: 1 hr, \$&materials \$112 (\$8 *14 participants) Personnel - 1	Order placed for receipt by June 14	Books available for June 14 meeting

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Write and submit report to PEARL office	Director by July 27	Time: 2 hrs \$\$& - none Personnel - 1	1 report written	Report submitted
Send Thank you notes	Director by Aug 3	2 hours, \$7 for note cards and postage	Thank you notes written	Supporters thanked