

Eastern Monroe Public Library Strategic Plan 2024 – 2030



Eastern Monroe Public Library
Strategic Plan: 2024 - 2030

This strategic plan is the result of a planning process undertaken by the Director, Trustees and staff of the Eastern Monroe Public Library. The planning process surveyed library patrons and staff to identify and address challenges and opportunities facing the library.

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Cheryl Brice, Library Director



Hughes Children's Library

Introduction

With a history dating back over a century, the Eastern Monroe Public Library plays a critical role in our communities. It is the place where children discover the world of books, stories and words, where teenagers find help with their school projects, where adults escape a hectic day by browsing for books by favorite authors, where job seekers locate resources and expertise to move forward, and where the entire community finds engaging programs to expand their personal and civic horizons.

Change has quickened in the world, and that has created new challenges for our communities and libraries. Among them are an increase in digital resources and content and the subsequent need for digital literacy among all residents, a dramatic change in the ways people seek information, new communication technologies, and transformations in the publishing industry.

This strategic plan will be a tool for guiding library staff and the Board of Trustees in meeting these and other challenges. The staff and Board of Trustees developed the plan, with input from the community. The plan identifies key priorities for the next few years for meeting the needs of people of all ages, for maintaining the library's physical and technological infrastructure, and for responding to rapid change.

The Eastern Monroe Public Library consists of a dedicated staff, generous volunteers, and enthusiastic residents. We operate the main Hughes Library, the Library of the Smithfieds, and the Pocono Township branch, as well as a Bookmobile and a library branch in the Monroe County Correctional Facility. We promise to continue to serve the needs of our community and respond to the ever-evolving needs of our residents.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Brice, Director

Trudie Lear, President, Board of Trustees

This is what we believe

The Eastern Monroe Public Library is supported and used by tens of thousands of residents who value the role the library plays in all of our communities. Our interactions with residents helped shape our new vision and mission.

Our Vision

The Eastern Monroe Public Library is the community center for social and cultural engagement and discovery.

Our Mission

The Mission of the Eastern Monroe Public Library is to serve a diverse population by promoting lifelong learning and enriching the overall quality of life in our communities.



This is what we have accomplished

The library has many accomplishments to be proud of during the past few years. A few examples include:

- The integration of resources with one Integrated Library System for all seven Monroe County libraries, with sharing of resources across all libraries.
- The elimination of library fines in 2022.
- Construction of a new and permanent home for the Library of the Smithfields, opened in 2020, in cooperation with Middle Smithfield Township. The new branch located in Echo Lake Park is equipped with modern technology and meeting space for community organizations
- Renovation of the main Hughes Library, adding additional meeting rooms, study rooms, proctoring rooms, and a new library café.
- Implementation of a Museum Pass program
- Hi-speed free WiFi in all libraries.
- Forums and meeting spaces for political debate, author presentations, and community non-profits.
- Digital book and magazine services, streaming music, and expanded video collections.
- First-rate customer service for those in need of specialty academic resources, inter-library loans, or insider tips on the hottest new novels.
- Outreach to the community through social media including Facebook, and an electronic newsletter.
- Expansion of online books, magazines and videos with Hoopla & Libby
- A well used and popular Bookmobile service.
- Weekly computer classes
- Redesigned website with easy access to the library's online resources
- Cultural programming that includes the "BookHouse" concerts, monthly film series, and writers' workshops.
- ESL and GED programs.
- Additional adult programming including workshops on finance, gardening, and genealogy.

Our opportunity ahead

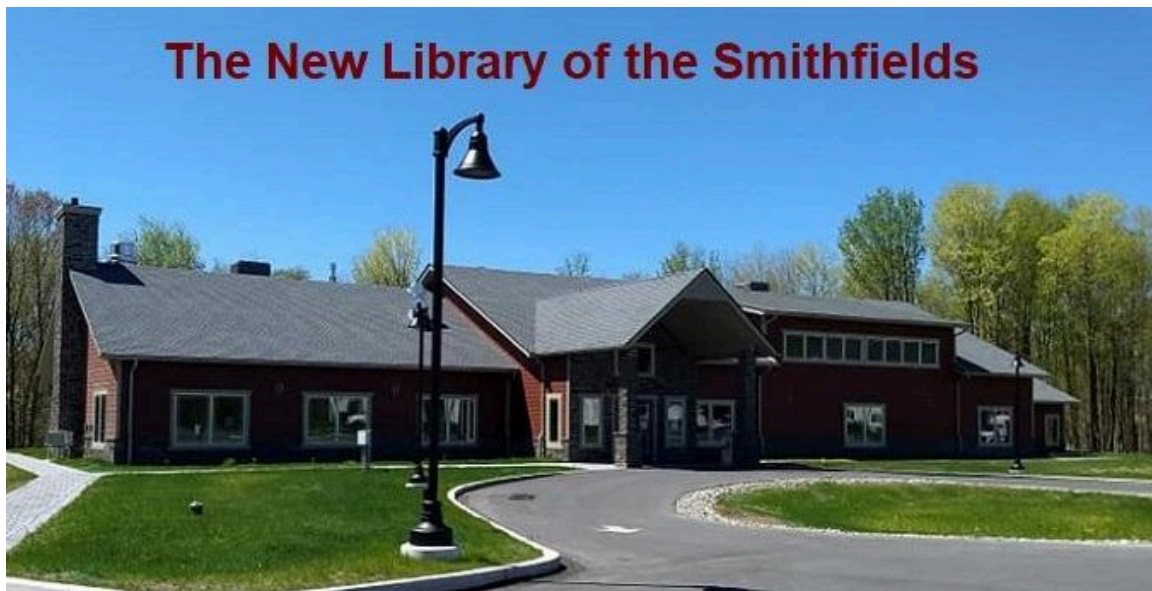
An already active place

The Eastern Monroe Public Library is the place-to-go for readers, children, adults, full time and weekend residents and tourists, as well as visitors from area communities. There are significant changes happening in publishing, technology, newspapers, music, teaching, learning, and information seeking, and people continue to come to the library to enjoy the experience and interact with staff and each other as they learn how to navigate those changes.

Greater awareness and use

The county's diverse population is evident every day in our libraries, with people of all ages and diverse backgrounds actively engaged in study, computing, reading or learning. Based on a foundation of over 100 years of service, our aim is to welcome many more residents who may not now be frequent users or visitors. In the last five years, the library has added ESL, GED and citizenship classes. The Eastern Monroe Public Library belongs to all residents, and over the next six years we will do our best to ensure that it is relevant and accessible to everyone.

We are committed to the strategies in this plan to improve and enhance collections, programs, staff, hours, services, and the facilities to better serve residents of all ages.



The Future Eastern Monroe Public Library

The Eastern Monroe Public Library, along with all libraries in the US, will change significantly in the next 5 to 10 years. Current trends indicate that library use will continue to grow as people rely on us for access to current technology, content distribution, and content creation, in addition to expecting libraries to serve as a social gathering space, learning and literacy center, and a place for civic engagement.

This plan will ensure that the Eastern Monroe Public Library thinks about the kind of future it wants to create and offer to the community.

Strategic priorities

The strategic planning process resulted in four priorities for providing focus and direction from 2024 to 2030. The specific statistical outcomes along with the metrics that measure our progress will guide annual board and staff planning and budgeting.

The priorities through the year 2030 are the following:

- A. Engage the community in new ways
- B. Integrate technology in all that we do
- C. Invest in the library's infrastructure
- D. Increase advocacy and support to build a sustainable future



Library Cafe & Friends Bookstore

Strategic priorities

A. Engage the community in new ways

Many more community members will participate in all that the library has to offer during this plan. We want people to become acquainted with the library by becoming more involved, more committed, and passionate about it.

The library will invite, welcome, and engage larger numbers of residents by reducing barriers to involvement and increasing the rewards and benefits associated with attending library programs and activities. The library will focus on measuring and increasing the value of the user experience to help attract new users and advocates. The library has the exciting opportunity to engage current customers along with thousands of new library customers by attracting them to fun and high-energy new programming during this plan.

1. Increase community use of the Library

- a. Review and change policies that staff find are barriers to access
- b. Offer new programming and events for our patrons.

2. Develop new programs that encourage active participation by larger numbers of residents

- a. Emphasize and increase young adult, older adult and all adult programming by providing offerings that will engage each group at the library
- b. Offer early literacy programs to get young parents and their children into the library for multi-year early literacy experience
- c. Provide job, career, and résumé counseling for residents. Continue to offer GED tutoring and ESL classes.
- d. Offer outdoor programs that connect patrons with nature by fully using the outdoor spaces surrounding our libraries.
- e. Position the library to become the home for residents interested in using a small business and new technologies incubator.
- f. Create a Library MakerSpace, with 3D-Printers and a podcasting studio to engage teens and adults.

B. Integrate technology in all that we do

Technology is the primary critical component of today's library. The library currently serves four generations of residents and users, but there are really two distinct generations: one consisting of young digital natives who are comfortable and competent with current and emerging technologies, and one of digital immigrants who arrive at new technologies out of necessity. The challenge public libraries face is in how to serve both groups using traditional and new formats and content and with staff that needs to curate and facilitate use of new and traditional formats.

Digital literacy and closing the digital gap are focuses of this plan.

This strategic priority affects all else that the library does. It concerns a complete integration of technology into all that takes place in the library. Residents expect the library to be the primary place to go where they can find accessible useful technology devices as well as the technical assistance and instruction to help improve their comfort and competency with software and new devices.

1. Increase outlets and USB ports throughout our libraries to better support patrons using mobile devices.
2. Evaluate the current number of Ethernet connected public desktops
3. Create more public workspaces that support mobile devices with electrical and/or USB outlets.
4. Put all staff and public Ethernet connected desktop computers on a three-year replacement cycle.

C. Invest in the library's infrastructure

Over the past eight years the library has made considerable progress in upgrading library facilities and infrastructure, including:

- A major renovation of the main Hughes Library, and continuing improvements to the flooring, lighting, landscaping, and parking areas. In 2023 the library added solar panels to the Hughes Library, resulting in a major savings to the library's electric bill.
- Opening a brand new Library of the Smithfields in Echo Lake Park
- New flooring in the Pocono Township branch.

Challenges for the next six years include:

- Moving the Pocono Township branch to the new Township facilities in the former NCC Campus on Old Mill Road. The move offers the opportunity to create a state-of-the-art branch in the new facilities.
- Create a dedicated teen space at the Hughes Library
- Improve the garden space at the Hughes Library

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- Continue to replace flooring at Hughes Library until all of the original library flooring has been replaced.



New Reading Area and Study Rooms

D. Increase advocacy and support to build a sustainable future

Increase awareness of the library

- Increase library card registrations during the life of the plan
- Increase our presence on social media
- Build programming and registration at the library branches
- Work to increase funding to support the rising costs of personnel and infrastructure.

Metrics and measurements

Alongside the traditional statistics that are recorded annually by local libraries in Pennsylvania such as program attendance, visits, circulation, and cardholders the following includes specific new indicators that the Eastern Monroe Public Library plans to use to gauge successful implementation of this plan.

Success Indicators

- The community supports and advocates for the Eastern Monroe Public Library and provides the political and financial support needed to reimagine and accomplish physical improvements to the facility
- The library conducts a short annual satisfaction survey and ranks highly
- The library is recognized as an important civic anchor, a vital partner with local businesses, and a key driver of local and area civic and social health
- The number of visitors to the libraries increases in each year of the plan
- The number of followers on social media and email recipients of the newsletter increases in each year of the plan
- The library receives regular positive press coverage and praise and is weekly referred to in the local news and newspapers for its programs and activities.

