Significantly Expanding and Renovating the Library for Swain County, NC

A Case for Support
June, 2024
SwainCountyLibraryProject.com

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MARIANNA BLACK LIBRARY EXPANSION

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Dear Community Member,

Significantly expanding and renovating the Library for Swain County is an exciting and bold proposition. For many community members and visitors the status of the Marianna Black Library is a benchmark for assessing the vitality of the County. It is an indicator of health and quality of life, education and literacy, business development, employment and economic growth, public access and friendliness, and technology and connectivity.

There has been a sustained effort to assess the state of our public library and to plan for renovation and much needed additional space to increase services to our community. We believe we have been diligent in moving the library project to the forefront of local priorities.

To date our campaign has raised $5.9+ million, including $500,000 from Swain County, $3.2 million from North Carolina, $1.0 million from the Federal goernment, $845,000 from local businesses and individuals, and $414,000 from Dogwood Health Trust.

We are excited to share our Case for Support of the $6.5 million expansion and renovation of the current library in downtown Bryson City. This project will give new life to our 54-year-old facility and increase services for Swain County community members and visitors.

We ask that you consider the plans within and how you may play a part in bringing them to life. We would love the opportunity to receive your advice and answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Marianna Black Library Campaign Committee

Introduction

The launch of this campaign to expand much-needed library services in Swain County comes after years of efforts to find a new home – first on land that was donated to us, and then in a vacant facility in Bryson City. We are now pleased to present a creative plan to renovate the current downtown library and increase its size, using the 0.53-acre property to its maximum potential. For a complete timeline of the project, refer to page 14.

About Swain County

Located in Western North Carolina, Swain County encompasses some 541 square miles; yet, less than 15% is privately owned.[1] The remainder is primarily tax-exempt federal land, which creates an unusually small tax base for the county. Total population is 14,117,[2] and the median household income is $47,559 ($9,083 less than the NC median).[3] The Child Poverty rate is 26.1%.[4]

Our Library – 1929 to 2024

In 1929, Swain County resident Marianna Black initiated library services in the county. Working out of two suitcases, she was dedicated to enriching the lives of community members. By 1938, space was allocated for a small library in the community building in Bryson City. In 1944, the Fontana Regional Library (FRL) was created to operate a bookmobile in Swain, Jackson and Macon Counties. Over the years FRL became the three-county system's headquarters that coordinates a wide range of public library services for its six member locations including our library.

Marianna Black Library, Bryson City, NC, which opened in 1970.

In 1970, a new, 9,394-square-foot facility was opened in its current location and named the Marianna Black Library. It was built using federal assistance provided via the Library Services & Construction Act. Now 54 years old, the county-owned facility can no longer provide the most up-to-date services and programs for community members.

Who Uses the Library?

- 49% of Swain County's 14,117 population have active MBL library cards .[5]
- 86% of Swain County School System and charter school students can use their school ID as a library card number.[5,7]
- 2,136 people attended programs at the library in 2022.[6]
- 2,230 active guest user cards[5]
- 2,477 public computer sessions, 2022.[6]
- 20,424 public wifi sessions, 2022.[6]

1) Swain County Economic Development.
2) NC Dept. Of Commerce, 2020 Census.
3) US Dept. Of Commerce, 2020 Census (SAIPE)
4) US Dept. Of Commerce Census, 2016-2020 (in 2020 dollars)

5) Marianna Black Library, Dec 31, 2022
6) Marianna Black Library, Jan-Dec 2022
7) National Center for Educational Statistics (total students in all schools in Swain County)

The Plan: A User-Centered, Flexible Design That Best Fits Our Community

Libraries have always been community anchor institutions with a distinctly public mission to provide convenient access to resources for their community's education and enrichment, while aligning with community needs. For some years now, libraries have been evolving into vibrant public gathering places for their communities while continuing to maintain their place as the traditional information center. By actively embracing the digital era, libraries have become interactive platforms that can facilitate people's creation of their own learning and knowledge as well as in collaboration with others.

Our user-centered design approach will enable this creativity and growth by focusing on the customers and how they use the library – individually and with others. A new flexible design will allow for creative adaptation of spaces when needed.

As a community asset, today's library is both a physical and virtual place, but the physical presence is what anchors it most firmly in the community. In addition to loaning books and other materials for free, and providing access to newspapers and magazines, the library embraces digital sources and the technology required to make them easily accessible. Unlike commercial providers that charge a fee for e-books, music, Internet access, e-newspapers, e-magazines and other offerings, publicly supported libraries like ours offer their services for free as an essential benefit to the entire community.

Because of the rural nature of Swain County, many residents in isolated locations do not have Internet access, and many cannot afford to pay commercial providers for the type of service that is available to them. Our library provides free access to high-speed Internet both inside the building during regular hours and outside the building anytime. People use our library computers to work on resumes, apply for jobs, send emails, print documents, take online tests, and more. People bring their own laptops and phones to the library to use the access (indoors or outside) for many purposes.

People in our community love the downtown location, but they do ask for expanded services, which the current library is unable to provide. They ask for larger spaces for programs, meeting rooms for small groups or quiet study; a larger space for events, group meetings and other activities; a separate space for teens.[7]

Expansion will generate increased services that will spur increased use. Over the past 15 years, the Fontana Regional Library system has built new libraries in Franklin and Sylva and renovated the libraries in Cashiers and Highlands. These new and renovated facilities have attracted more people for increased services and enhanced programming. Swain County can confidently expect similar results when the renovated and expanded library opens in Bryson City.

It's clear that the library is an essential resource for our county. However, our facility needs have not kept pace with what is necessary to enhance opportunities for the well-being, happiness and success of our community members and future generations.

8) Sims & Steele Consulting interviews and surveys, 2019.

A Welcoming Entrance with Benches, Landscaping Options, and Van Accessible Parking

The main entrance at the corner of Rector and Academy streets showcases the community room, landscaping options, benches, van accessible parking and ramping. Other parking will be parallel, with easier access from the lower level parking on Academy Street.. There will be no expansion on Fryemont Street due to the location of major utilities and loss of parking. The enclosed entrance on the left provides access to staff-only second floor offices.

A Larger Community Room with Kitchen

With the new meeting and programming rooms in the library, the Community Room can be fully utilized for a larger groups, with options for after-hours access and use of available technology. A new prep kitchen is an added amenity.

Meeting Community Needs in the Library with New and Expanded Services

In addition to its existing collection of books, magazines, CDs, and DVDs, the library will also feature a range of new amenities.

- A separate **Career & Technology Center** for informal computer use and software instruction, as well as robotics, STEM, 3-D printer, music recording, & other collaborative projects. The desks and tables will be smaller with more flexibility of arrangement.

- **Updated to meet ADA accessibility requirements** on the site and in the interior of the building. (See FAQ question, page 13)

- **Small group rooms for meetings,** NC Works career center, collaborative projects, tutoring, telehealth and more.

- A large, **adaptable multi-purpose room** to provide for a variety of programming: guest speakers, workshops, group projects, movies, and space to produce content for e-learning & other virtual programs. Options for after-hours access and use of available technology.

- **After-hours access for groups** to the community room, restrooms and **prep kitchen**.

- Outdoor spaces for **free, after hours Internet access** and safe entering & exiting the building .

- **An Appalachian Studies Room** for reference and study about the area; and to serve as a small **meeting room** and quiet study area.

- **Larger children's area** for reading, using tablets and devices; for group activities and programming, as well as a small restroom.

- **A designated space for teens** with their own age-appropriate books, music and video collections, where, they can socialize, use computers/tablets reserved for them and plug in their own digital devices.

- The ability to provide **simultaneous services & programming**. For example a children's program in their area, a blood drive in the community room, and several gatherings in the group rooms.

- **More parking spaces and a drive-up book drop**

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Demand-Driven Interior Design:
New & Expanded Services

The diagrams demonstrate how we are expanding on two sides of the current building, and renovating the interior. In the expanded library, **YELLOW areas** indicate new services for teens, meeting/collaborative work rooms, career & technology center, work rooms, Carolina reference room, drive-up book return and more.

Project Budget & Funding Objectives

Expansion & Renovation	Projected Cost
Library Construction, all site work and permits*	$4,778,800
Architect / Engineering*	$311,000
Furnishings, Fixtures & Equipment (FF&E)**	$750,000
Construction Contingency*	$477,880
Project Sustainability	
Administration, Project Management & Marketing***	$200,000
Total Estimated Project Cost	**$6,517,680**

* ARCA Design, 12/23.
** Librarian & Regional Director, 1/2022. *** Campaign Committee (ongoing)

The Library aims to secure $6.5 million in projected funding from:

- Individuals, Civic Groups, Businesses & Bequests, $1 million
- Business & Foundation Grants, $800,000
- Government Funding, $4.7 million from local, state & federal sources
  via appropriations, grants and in-kind services.

Government Funding $4,700,000 · Individuals, Civic Groups, Businesses $1,000,000 · Business & Foundation Grants $800,000
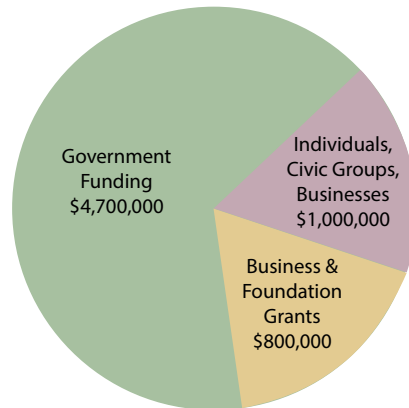
Ways to Give

- Unrestricted pledges and checks for the general fund, our highest priority
- Designated pledges and checks for specific areas or items, with
  donor recognition; or in memoriam, or as an honorarium
- Gifts of stock
- IRA Charitable Rollovers
- Matching gifts - businesses and employees; individuals
- Planned giving - wills, bequests and / or estate gifts
- In-kind giving of material resources and/or reduced product rates

Donor Information and Giving Levels

- Donors will receive an acknowledgment letter for tax purposes. Fontana Regional Library is
  a qualified 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and donations are tax-deductible to the extent
  permitted by law. All donors at any level will be recognized in the final campaign report, which
  may be on the website, unless they ask to remain anonymous. All donors of $1,000 or more are
  eligible to have their name(s) on the group donor plaque in the library.

Donation Recognition Levels

Campaign Giving Levels	Gift Range	Donated To Date
Clingmans Dome	$1,000,000+	2
Buckhorn Bald	$500,000 - $999,999	1
Andrews Bald	$250,000 - $499,999	1
Fry Mountain	$100,000 - $249,999	3
Kelly Bennett Peak	$50,000 - 99,999	6
Big Witch Overlook	$25,000 - 49,999	1
Shuckstack	$10,000 - 24,999	3
Sharp Top	$5,000 - 9,999	4
Deep Creek	$1,000 - 4,999	21

Naming / Honoring / Memorial Opportunities

- Donors may designate their gifts in honor or in memory of individual(s) or organization(s).
- The following are available for naming/honoring opportunity requests on a first-come first-served basis. These requests must be approved by the Campaign Committee. Donor generosity will be recognized on the main giving plaque and individually in the library.

Naming Opportunities & Number Needed	Gift Amount	Reserved To Date
Community Multipurpose Room (1)	$135,000	(1)
Entrance Plaza & Foyer (1)	$100,000	
Teen Area (1)	$100,000	
Technology & Career Center (1)	$100,000	(1)
Youth Services Area (1)	$100,000	(1)
Appalachian Reference Room / Study Room (1)	$75,000	(1)
Circulation Services Desk (1)	$75,000	
Adult Services Area (1)	$50,000	
Youth Services Program Room (1)	$50,000	
Magazine / Newspaper Reading Area (1)	$50,000	(1)
Conference Room (1)	$30,000	
Collaboration / 4-5 Person Meeting Room (1)	$25,000	
Collaboration / 2-3 Person Meeting Room (2)	$20,000	
Drive-Up Book Drop (1)	$20,000	
Youth Services Desk (1)	$10,000	
Prep Kitchen for Multipurpose Room (1)	$10,000	
Shelf Ends (20)	$5,000	

Smaller amount naming opportunities may be added as the campaign progresses. Additionally, contributions are welcome for furnishings, and interior decoration including signage, landscaping, and local art, and will be acknowledged appropriately. Not all donors choose a naming opportunity, but will be recognized accordingly on the main donor plaque. This list will be updated as gifts are received and naming opportunities chosen and approved.

Gift Chart To Raise $6,517,680

Size of Gift	Number Needed	Total Needed	Donated To Date
$3,000,000+	1	$3,000,000	1
$500,000+	3	$1,500,000	3
$100,000+	10	$1,000,000	4
$50,000+	10	$500,000	6
$20,000+	8	$160,000	1
$10,000+	10	$100,000	3
$5,000+	20	$100,000	4
$3,000+	8	$24,000	1
$1,000+	40	$40,000	20
Under $1,000	Many, Many	$93,680	80
Total		**$6,517,680**	

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need a renovation and expansion of the library? The Marianna Black Library opened in 1970 when a growing demand for library services made it necessary to have more room for books and magazines. Over the years in response to increased demands from the public, services have needed to expand to include more digital products, more STEM and other educational programs, and spaces designed for individuals and small groups to collaborate and socialize in a safe, public space. We need to expand now more than ever.

What will the renovation and expansion cost? Originally the Library Board had considered a new location and new facility with estimates of $8 million plus. The board and staff wisely re-worked the project scope to become a renovation of the existing 9,394 sq. foot facility. The updated facility will have 16,294 sq. ft., and will cost an estimated $6.3 million.

Where will the money come from? Individuals, civic groups; business and foundation gifts & grants; and government entities at the local, state and federal level will have the opportunity to contribute.

What is the anticipated timeline for completion of the project? Construction is scheduled to begin in fall of 2024 with an estimated completion date iof mid- year 2026.

Will the expansion mean more people will use the library? Yes, over the past 15 years, the Fontana Regional Library system (of which Marianna Black Library is a member) has built new libraries in Franklin and Sylva and renovated the libraries in Cashiers and Highlands. These new and renovated facilities have attracted more people for increased services and enhanced programming. Swain County can confidently expect similar results when the renovated and expanded library opens.

How will accessibility in the current library and the expansion be improved in the project? The proposed library site is designed to meet the requirements for ADA accessibility and will provide accessible parking with accessible routes to entrances for patrons and employees. The new proposed building interior is also designed for complete ADA accessibility throughout. The circulation desk, interior corridors and circulation routes, door approaches, plumbing fixtures, and all required areas are to be accessible.

Will the Library need a larger operating budget with the expansion & renovation? Of course. Expanded and improved Library services will mean increased staffing levels and expenditures for collections, resources and supplies. Swain County library costs are still way below the costs of other neighboring counties.

Why should I support the expansion and renovation project? For Swain County families and businesses to have the kind of community that inspires life-time learning, our community and county needs – and deserves – a larger, more modern facility, with updated equipment and greater capabilities, to serve community members and visitors alike. With increased space and the group meeting rooms, we will finally have the capability for simultaneous programming.

How can I help to support the library project? You are welcome to contribute to the Marianna Black Library Fund in your own name, as a family, in honor of a loved one, or for your company. Contributions are tax- deductible to the extent permitted by law, and you will receive a written acknowledgment for your records. IRA Charitable Rollovers, gifts of stock, and in-kind giving of material resources and/or reduced product rates are also options for giving. In addition, there will be unique naming opportunities for many spaces.

Timeline of Marianna Black Library Building Project

2010 - 2012. Fontana Regional Library applied for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Planning Grant to conduct a library services needs assessment for Swain County. The report was completed in 2011. A team assembled to identify a new library location.

2014 - 2015. A supportive couple purchased and donated land on Fontana Road to build a new library. There was a 7-year time limit on building a library on the property, otherwise the property reverted to the donors. Swain County Commissioners approved a budget amendment to provide for preliminary engineering work at the new library site. The topographic survey of the site was completed.

2016 - 2019. Several fundraisers for brand awareness were held including dinners, receptions, seed sales, a quilt raffle, and tethered balloon rides. Keith Hargrove Architect PC (Asheville) was hired for an architectural review of the topo map and to prepare the architect's feasibility study with renderings and preliminary budget. A presentation of the project was made to Swain County Commissioners. in October of 2017. Sims & Steele, Asheville-based non-profit consultants, was hired for a Project Study that included presentations at community gatherings, surveys and inter-views and to get feedback on our efforts and determine community interest, and the feasibility of funding the project .

2020 - 2021. With the property reversion fast approaching in early 2021, on September 16, 2020 the Campaign Committee made the decision to move forward a plan for renovation and expan-sion at the current location. A topographic survey was completed, a site development plan was created, and concept drawings were prepared. A budget was developed for the expansion and renovation using an estimate by Western Builders of Sylva, Keith Hargrove, the Swain County Librarian and the Director of Fontana Regional Library.

2022. A project update was given to the Swain County Commissioners at their workshop on Feb-ruary 24. The County included $500,000 for the project in their 2022-2023 budget. The Campaign Committee purchased fundraising software and received fundraising training. The Committee contracted with a Sims & Steele fundraising consultant and a ASI Ed grant consultant. The Committee transitioned into three specialized committees that began meeting regularly: Major Gifts, Management/Grants, and Construction. SwainCountyLibraryProject.com went online.

2023. The county included the Library in their January budget session. Major donor fundraising began in earnest. A video by Swain High School students was created for the website. Applications were made for funds from the State of North Carolina, and the Federal Government. A new site plan was created. Due to a delay with a sewer issue, the County's $500,000 was reallocated to the 2023-2024 fiscal year. $3.2 million was awarded to the project by the State on October 1, 2023.

2024. ARCA Design of Asheville, NC, was chosen by Swain County as the new architect for the project. $1 million was awarded to the project by the Federal Government on March 8, 2024. Bidding should occur in August 2024. Construction should begin in the Fall of 2024.

Quick Comparison of Current & Updated Library

Current Problems	Solutions with the expanded and renovated facility
54-year-old facility	• Upgrades for safety, accessibility, energy efficiency
Facility is too small for current & future needs	• Larger facility will enable the library to increase services and programming, including simultaneous programs.
All computers are in common areas	• A separate Career & Technology Center for both informal computer use and group software training as well as robotics and STEM projects.
The sole meeting room is also a storage area	• Large, adaptable multi-purpose room for community programs, workshops, movies & virtual programming. • Conference room for small programs and meetings
Young adult books are in the common area	• Separate space for teen materials, activities and casual gathering
No areas for quiet study or collaborative projects	• Small rooms for business meetings; tutoring; quiet study; tax prep. assistance; collaborative projects; and mobile projects such as robotics, media conversion, and arts & crafts.
Parking is limited	• Ample parking and safe, attractive entrances and exits
No designated room for special collections	• Appalachian Studies Room to study local history and view artifacts. (Also services as additional collaborative room).
Cramped children's area	• Larger area to include programming room
Accessibility is limited for the physically impaired	• The property and the building interior will meet the requirements for ADA Accessibility

Board of Directors, Key Staff & Partners

MARIANNA BLACK LIBRARY
EXPANSION