

BOYCE DITTO PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY OUTREACH PLAN



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Outreach Plan

Introduction

The City of Mineral Wells is located approximately an hour drive west of Fort Worth and 12 miles north of Interstate 20 in the county of Palo Pinto. Palo Pinto County takes its name from a creek named by the Spaniards. Palo Pinto means "painted stick" or "painted post" in Spanish. Mineral Wells is in the Cross Timber region of Texas, a picturesque area called the "Other Hill Country of Texas."

The city is on the historic Bankhead Highway. This highway was the first all-weather trans-continental highway in the United States and ran from Washington D.C. to San Diego, California. The segment of the highway from Fort Worth to Mineral Wells featured a brick surface. The bricks were made in Thurber, Texas, a by-product of the coal mining industry there.

Mineral Wells is located on the eastern border of Palo Pinto County with part of the city protruding into Parker County. Palo Pinto County has an estimated population of 28,000 and although Mineral Wells is the largest city in the county with an estimated population of 17,000, the town of Palo Pinto is actually the county seat. The other remaining 11,000 residents of the county live in several small communities and ranches scattered over the county, with higher population density near Palo Pinto Lake and Possum Kingdom Lake.

Mineral Wells was named for the mineral water found in the area. In 1877, James Alvis Lynch, his family and 50 head of livestock left Denison, Texas looking for a drier climate in which to settle. The Lynch family chose the area that eventually became Mineral Wells. The location the Lynch family decided to settle in was four miles from the only water source, the Brazos River. In 1880 a well was drilled. At first, the water's funny taste worried the family, so they watered their livestock with it for a time to test its safety. Soon after the family began to drink from the well, they found they were feeling better. News of the "healing" water spread and within a month strangers were showing up on the Lynch property, asking about the water. With the popularity of the water spreading, the town of Mineral Wells was laid out in the fall of 1881, with Mr. Lynch naming himself the first mayor.

While Mineral Wells has historically been a town of healing waters and a resort, it has also been a base for the military. It was a primary base for the Army in World War II and during the Vietnam Conflict.

Historical, Current, and Future Roles

In the past the library had a small collection of items that came primarily from the Army post library when it closed. Programs offered by the library were limited. Currently the library strives to be a center for lifelong learning; provides free and equal access to information; serves as a formal education support; provides a community meeting place; provides public computer access; provides space for the Texas Workforce agency; provides information assistance; is a center for Local History & Genealogy and promotes early childhood literacy.

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In the future, the library would like to expand the local history and genealogy collections to create a Heritage Center. The Heritage Center is intended to become a revenue generating asset to the business community by attracting visitors interested in history and genealogy to the city. The Heritage Center would also serve as a repository of information for other attractions in the area such as the Palo Pinto Jail Museum and the Mountaineer Heritage Complex.

Existing Programs

The library's existing programs include: Summer Reading Program for children; annual Teen & Adult Summer Reading program; weekly story time programs for ages 3-5; Babygarten (6 week series for infants & toddlers) held multiple times a year; quarterly lecture series on local history and periodic special event programs. The library also has a Teen Advisory Council that meets monthly and hosts an open mic night at the library featuring music, singing, and comedy routines.

The Library takes donated and deleted books and magazines to seniors in various retirement facilities and Meals on Wheels. The consortium borrowing and ILL requests have grown along with increased foot traffic. The Library hosts a Local History Roundtable quarterly and invites all county's genealogical and historical organizations to participate. As the Library adds to its digital collections on the Portal to Texas History, there have been more phone calls, emails and face to face inquiries about the history of Mineral Wells and the surrounding counties.

Identified Needs

Identified needs for the community include: new housing for all income levels; mid-to-large sized businesses that can provide employment for local residents and there are a number social issues that need to be addressed such as unemployment, drug use, teen pregnancy, and lack of education.

The combination of upper management people living outside the community, older retired educated people passing away, and younger less educated lower income people without a sense of community is a challenge both for the community and the library.

The library itself needs more funding, more staff, more space, and deferred maintenance of the facility needs to be addressed. A challenge the library faces is its location. Vacant land is on either side of the library and across the street is a pipe manufacturing facility. The library is not in a high traffic, high visibility location. While the library is near the main East-West thoroughfare, the library is not easily identifiable. If one does not know the location of the library, it can be difficult to find. The library is on the edge of a 1970s neighborhood of primarily retired people. To the south of the library is a very mixed neighborhood of retired people and young families with small children.

Identified Assets

Today ranching, small business and light industry support the area. Identified assets for the community include: local airport; a regional hospital; an extension of Weatherford College; a state contracted penal institution; public swimming pool; public park with skateboard ramps; cinema; bowling alley; golf course; city recreation center; tennis courts; baseball fields;

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pharmacies, fast food and small retail businesses. The largest employer in Mineral Wells is the school district.

Assets for the library include: a large 10,000 square foot facility; large digital collection of historical photographs available via the Portal to Texas History through the University of North Texas; collection of children's books in Spanish/English received through Amo Leer grant; large collection of military history and is located near 2 elementary schools. The staff assets include staff with knowledge and skills in: technology; local history; grant writing; commitment to encouraging early literacy; establishing partnerships; genealogy experience; storytelling and gaming experience.

The Library Staff would like to thank the City Manager, the City Council, and the Library Advisory Board for their support and help. The Library appreciates the financial help provided by the Friends of the Library and the many civic organizations that have allowed us to increase the number of people we serve and how we serve them; to offer more programming to address the needs of targeted populations, and to promote local history.

Community Profile Narrative

In October Mineral Wells holds the Crazy Water Festival, named for a "crazy" woman who was supposedly healed by the mineral waters in town. The one day festival is well attended and folks from around the area, as far as Fort Worth and Dallas, come to enjoy the activities. One favorite event at the festival is the Crazy Car Show sponsored by the American Veterans featuring mainly antique autos. Mineral Wells is a destination for bikers with a number of bike races held throughout the year. A rodeo is held in May.

The community as a whole is not economically or socially homogeneous. The more educated segment of the population is the retired folks who have enough to carry them through retirement, but not enough to pass on wealth to a younger generation. The majority of this group chose to retire in Mineral Wells however their children and grandchildren live elsewhere. A larger segment of the population is not as educated and is lower income to poverty level. Often mid-to-upper level management employees choose to live outside the city rather than be an integral part of the community.

Main Geographic Features

Community Features

The Lake Mineral Wells State Park and Trailway is located at the outskirts of town and is one of the most popular state parks in Texas. Beyond the state park is a commercially owned botanical park called Clark Gardens Botanical Park. The 35-acre Clark Gardens Botanical Park welcomes visitors year round. The Clark Gardens Chapel with its permanent tented pavilions is a favorite spot for weddings. The Boudreau Herb Farm consists of 77 acres featuring native perennials, herb gardens and antique roses.

The Mineral Wells Fossil Park opened to the public May, 2010. It is located just northwest of Mineral Wells. This public fossil park allows fossil collecting by individuals or groups and no admission fees are charged. Typical finds include: crinoids, trilobites, and brachiopods of the

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Pennsylvanian Age. The park is a joint project of the City of Mineral Wells and the Dallas Paleontological Society.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall replica is one feature of the National Vietnam War Museum site in Mineral Wells. Other features include the Camp Holloway Memorial Wall, a Meditation Garden and a Huey Helicopter mounted on a stand in the middle of the Memorial Garden. The vast majority of the helicopter pilots who flew in Vietnam were trained at Fort Wolters at Mineral Wells.

Community Demographics

According to the 2009 estimate, the population of Palo Pinto County is 27,567. In the 2000 Census, figures show that only 71.2% of the residents over the age of 25 had the equivalent of a high school education. Fewer than 7% of the residents have a bachelor degree and fewer than 5% have a master's or doctorate's degree. In the 2009 estimate, 25.4% of the population in the county was under 18 years old with 15.4% of the population over 65. 14% of the population is below the poverty level; the median household income is \$41,162 (2008 estimate). 77.6% are white and 17.5% are Hispanic or Latino (2009 estimate). As an indication of the lack of new housing, only 6 building permits were issued in 2009.

Library Profile Narrative

The Boyce Ditto Public Library had its beginnings in 1907. The Friday History Club decided the community needed a library. They each brought books from their personal collections and purchased other books to create the first library. They charged 10 cents a book to check it out as a way to raise funds to sustain the library. The library was first housed at the Elks Club and later moved to the reception room of a local doctor who was married to one of the members of the Friday History Club. The library was housed at different locations through the years including the Crazy Hotel. When the hotel burned, the salvaged books were housed in an alternate location until it was re-built. The library was then able to move back into space provided for it. It was not until 1970 that it became a city library.

The present 10,000 square foot facility was built in 1986. The library uses Facebook, Twitter, and its own website to raise awareness of the library and its many services and programs. Several times a month, the library updates its in-house slideshow to promote its events.

Most Important Library Statistics

In 2009 the library had 36,466 titles with a total collection of 43,767 items. 65,051 items were circulated in 2009, doubling from 2003. There are approximately 4,737 cardholders and 44,872 library visits for 2009. Over 2,000 volunteer hours were served at the library. The library is open 40 hours a week.

Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives

Vision Statement

The Boyce Ditto Public Library will provide opportunities that support the informational, cultural and leisure needs of people of the area and will be a contributor to the advancement of the community. The Library will provide information in traditional and diverse formats and be a place where the community can connect socially and intellectually.

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Boyce Ditto Public Library is to transform a repository of books into a dynamic portal to information by the use of traditional and emerging technologies and the potential of the community.

Goals & Objectives for the Library

Goal 1: To serve the community and the surrounding area.

Objectives:

1. Provide online website with access to library's catalog.
2. Provide capability for online reserves.
3. Participate in a shared catalog with other local libraries.

Goal 2: To acquire and make available to all library users materials such as books, DVDs, videos and local newspapers that will address their information and recreational needs.

Objectives:

1. Purchase new materials as possible within budgetary constraints.
2. Utilize inter-library loan to borrow materials the library does not have.
3. Participate in shared catalog with other local libraries.
4. Provide research and informational materials through electronic databases such as the TexShare databases.

Goal 3: Support lifelong learning.

Objectives:

1. Have Summer Reading Program for children each year.
2. Annual Teen & Adult Summer Reading program.
3. Weekly story time programs for ages 3-5.
4. Babygarten (6 week series for infants & toddlers) held multiple times a year.

Goal 4: Serve as a community meeting place.

Objectives:

1. Host monthly Book Club.
2. Host monthly Writers Group.
3. Provide meeting room for non-profits such as the Retired Teachers Association.

Goal 5: To make accessible the rich history of the area to both its community and to distant researchers.

Objectives:

1. Provide access to digitized historical photographs via the University of North Texas Portal to Texas History.
2. Provide microfilm scanner/reader for public use of microfilmed newspapers for Mineral Wells and other local communities.

Goal & Objectives for Outreach Plan Program

Goal: As part of the library's Goal #1 "To serve the community and the surrounding area" the library will create and promote a Local History Research Center in the library.

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Objectives:

1. Develop partnerships with appropriate organizations to promote heritage tourism.
2. Apply for grants to promote local history.
3. Offer programs to inform the community of its local history.
4. Develop information to be available to visitors about the Local History Research Center.

Outreach Program

The Library's outreach program is to partner with other organizations in the community to collect, make accessible, and promote local history resources.

Mineral Wells and the surrounding communities have a rich history. Informational brochures are available at the Mineral Wells Chamber of Commerce however there is not a real center for local history research. The Boyce Ditto Public Library currently has a Genealogy Section for family research. The Library can offer a unique history-oriented attraction by transforming its Genealogy Section into a Local History Research Center. There are a number of natural partnerships the library could enter into to promote local history.

Collecting and making accessible local history resources strengthens both the community and the library. Whether it is material for a school project, an online request or visitors touring the city, the Library can be the place to go for local history information and resources. Event planners, family history researchers, and those who just want to know something about the area could access the resources in the Local History Research Center to find what they need. It is envisioned that the Library would become the repository of historical information on organizations, agencies, and businesses in the area.

Statement of need

The library distributed approximately 40 surveys. 80% of the completed surveys indicated local history would be valuable to the community. For the question "What programs are most important to you?" history programs ranked highest. Genealogy was also selected as a program of importance by 1 person surveyed. When asked what improvements you would like to see in the library's collections, 30% of those answering this question cited Texana and/or the cattle era of Texas. For the question "If the Library had a Local History research section, do you think it would help promote historical tourism?" 47% said yes.

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

The target group the library wants to reach is organizations, agencies, businesses, or other groups that have local history information, photos, oral histories, or documents.

Description of the specific segment of the target group the proposed program will reach

The specific segment of this group the Library will initially target is the Palo Pinto Historical Commission and the Mineral Wells Heritage Association.

Estimated number of potential participants

The Library estimates approximately 12 organizations will contribute resources to and/or promote the Local History Resource Center (LHRC).

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

The organizations expected to participate in the program are located in or near Mineral Wells. The Library will work with the organizations in the way deemed most appropriate for each. The Library Manager will attend organizational meetings; work together in person, by phone, through video conferencing or e-mail.

Potential Partners based on Assets Assessment

The following are anticipated to be the primary partners for the Local History Research Center project: Palo Pinto County Historical Commission, Mineral Wells Heritage Association, and Historic Mineral Wells. Other potential partners include: Clark Gardens; Double J Hacienda (guest ranch); Gordon Community Library and Museum (in the city of Gordon); Lion's Club; Rotary; Senior Citizens' Center; local schools; Weatherford College; Mineral Wells Study Club; Woman's Club; Sheriff's Posse; Zonta, and the American Legion.

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

Physical

The Library has existing Texana and genealogy collections that can serve as the foundation for a Local History Research Center.

Skills

The Library has staff with genealogy and local history interests and skills. In addition, the Library has volunteers with experience in digitizing photos and monographs. There are also volunteers with experience in adding metadata for the photos before they are made available on the Internet.

Existing Relationships

The Library has an existing relationship with the University of North Texas's Portal to Texas History. Through this partnership, the library's collection of historic Mineral Wells photographs, 24 volumes of the History of Fort Wolters, and the Palo Pinto County Album have been digitized. These materials are now available on the Internet through the Portal to Texas History.

Detailed Action Plan

The first step in creating the Library's Local History Research Center is the development of partnerships with other organizations in the community. The second step, once these partnerships are developed, is for the Library and the partner organizations to work together to collect local history materials. The third step is to make the resources accessible, and the fourth step is to promote the Library's Local History Research Center.

The detailed action plan below addresses step one, developing partnerships with other community organizations. Once the partnerships are established, a detailed action plan for collecting local history materials will be written. Once the materials are collected, a plan will be written for making them accessible. After the materials are accessible, a detailed action plan to promote the Local History Research Center will be completed.

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Goal

The goal of the detailed action plan is to develop partnerships with the Palo Pinto Historical Commission and the Mineral Wells Heritage Association.

Objectives

1. Describe the project parameters and define the partnership expectations.
2. Ascertain each organization's interest in partnering with the Library on this project.
3. Recruit volunteers from each organization to participate in the project.

Action Plan

The table below gives the library's action plan for step one of the project.

LOCAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

IMPLEMENTATION			EVALUATION	
Action What action, activity or task needs to be done?	Name & Date Who will do it and by what date will it be done?	Resources Needed How much time, money, materials, personnel is needed?	Measurement How will progress be measured (#, %, participation or attendance)?	Analysis How and when will data be gathered and analyzed to determine success?
Write project description & expectations for partnering	Director 1 month before program starts	2 hr \$0 1 person	1 master created	1 master form created
Make 60 copies of description & expectations	Director 1 month before program starts	1 hr \$12.00 1 person	60 sets of expectations created	Count # sets made
Create invitations to participate	Director 1 month before program starts	1 hr \$0 1 person	1 master invitation created	Count # created
Make 60 invitations copies	Director 1 month before program starts	15 min \$6.00 1 person	60 invitations	Count # invitations made
Create information gathering form	Director 1 month before program starts	1 hr \$0 1 person	1 master information gathering form	Count # created
Make 60 forms	Director 1 month before program starts	1 hr \$6.00 1 person	60 forms copied	Count # forms made
Contact each organization President; ask to be on agenda for next meeting	Director 1 month before next organization meeting	30 min \$0 1 person	2 organizations contacted	Count # of contacts

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IMPLEMENTATION			EVALUATION	
Attend meetings of 2 organizations	Director Day of meeting	3 hr \$0 1 person	2 organization meetings attended	Count # of meetings
Hand out description & expectations form & invitations at meeting	Director Day of meeting	15 min \$0 1 person	60 sets passed out; 60 invitations passed out	Count # of each distributed
Gather completed forms	Director Day of meeting	30 min \$0 1 person	60 completed forms gathered	Count # completed forms
Gather statistics	Director By June 2011	1 hr \$0; 1 person	2 organizations agree to partner & 60 information forms are completed	Count & send # of organizations partnering & # of information forms completed to PEARL office
Identify success in recruiting volunteers	Director By June 2011	1 hr \$0; 1 person	5 volunteer to participate in project	Count & send # volunteering to PEARL office