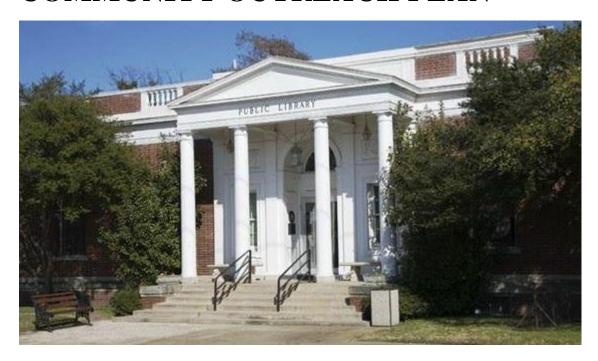# COMMERCE PUBLIC LIBRARY COMMUNITY OUTREACH PLAN

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COLLEGE of INFORMATION
Department of Library and Information Sciences

UNT
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

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Introduction
Commerce is located in the Texas Blackland Prairies, 65 miles northeast of Dallas in Hunt County. It is 10 miles north of Interstate 30 near the boundaries of Delta, Hopkins, and Fannin Counties.

The city was originally known as "Cow Hill" because of the herds of cattle that ranged in the area. In 1864, J.H. "Si" Jackson built a store just north of today's current city limits. His business attracted other settlers, and Commerce was incorporated in 1885. The St. Louis Southwestern Railroad helped to continue growth and draw more business.

Historical, Current, and Future Roles of the Library
Historically, the Commerce Public Library has been a community meeting place. It currently serves several roles, including lifelong learning, basic literacy, free and equal access to information, educational and recreational materials, technology center, information assistance, English as a Second Language, local history and genealogy, adult learning, current topics and titles, gateway to information, public computer access, early childhood literacy, and preschool door to learning. In the future, it would like to continue to fill those roles and others, including being a community meeting place, providing information literacy, cultural awareness, business support, career and workforce development, community commons, and heritage center.

Existing Programs
The Commerce Public Library offers a variety of programs to the community. These include regular story time for preschool, summer reading program for children, GED preparation tutoring, literacy program with tutors and students, digitizing local history photo archive, digitizing local history project, English as a Second Language program, exam proctoring, and interlibrary loan.

Identified Needs
The Commerce community does face a few challenges. The population is not growing, and the median household income is low. There is a real need for more public housing. Two major employers recently closed their businesses in the town, resulting in the loss of jobs for many people.

The library's historic building is in need of repair, specifically replacing the air conditioning system, fixing the roof and outdoor fixtures, assessing the structure, plastering, and painting. The parking lot is small, inconveniently placed, and crumbling. The library is not accessible to handicapped persons or senior citizens. There is a need for more places to sit, a larger audio book collection, and the addition of evening hours to the library's schedule.

Identified Assets
Commerce is a town that is fortunate to have several different assets. It is home to Texas A&M University – Commerce. Other assets include public swimming pools, tennis courts, public parks, planetarium, the Cotton Belt Railroad, historical homes, and access to major highways.

The library offers a photocopier and ten new Internet computers for public use. There is an early literacy station for children. The library is fortunate to have a local history archive and a genealogist on staff. Volunteers donate many hours to the library, and the Library Board is actively involved in supporting the library and its goals.

Thank You Statement
The Commerce Public Library is grateful to the Commerce Independent School District (ISD) for their help with adult education classes and the summer reading club. The Commerce Chamber of Commerce has been instrumental in providing collaboration for programs and space for Board meetings. The library is grateful to Isabel Davis, Mike Odom, and Debora Porter for their assistance in grant writing. The library wishes to extend particular thanks to the Robert and Ruby Priddy Charitable Trust for funding the University of North Texas PEARL project.

Community Profile Narrative
Commerce has large student and senior citizen populations. The major employers are the University, Covidien (a medical supply company), and Hydro Aluminum. Most residents commute to surrounding communities for work.

Commerce is a college town that has many cultural and entertainment opportunities. Texas A&M University-Commerce offers exciting concerts, art shows, and plays. Commerce houses the Northeast Texas Children's Museum. The city offers its residents many exciting festivals and community events, including the annual Christmas Parade, Chamber Banquet, Spring Bridal Expo, Skatepark Fundraiser, Chuck Pierce Memorial Charity Golf Tournament, Bois d'Arc Bash, Annual Cotton Belt Railroad Symposium, and the Annual Car and Truck Show.

Main Geographic Features
Community Features
Assets and Challenges
Commerce has several assets, including Cooper Lake, ponds, ranches, horse ranches, a tree farm, farmland, and a community garden.

The community does face some geographic challenges, though. Its distance from large city centers is difficult for residents who require services other than what Commerce provides.

Library Features
Assets and Challenges
The Commerce Public Library is located in a stand-alone, historic building, which is close to the local hospital, senior citizens center, food bank, post office, and grocery store. Its location next to so many buildings and destination centers in town is fortunate.

The library does not face any geographic challenges.

Community Demographics
Commerce has a population of 10,203 people. The median household income is $30,097. Of the population, 10.2 percent speak a language other than English. 69 percent of the population is white, while 17.8 percent are black, and 11 percent are Hispanic. 85.5 percent are high school graduates, and 30.2 percent have a bachelor's degree.

Library Profile Narrative
In April 1954, a group of Commerce citizens formed the Friends of the Library group to start and operate a public library. The City of Commerce gave the Friends permission to use a city-owned building at 1903 Park Street if the Friends would agree to cover the sides of the building with asbestos shingles. The Friends complied and also constructed a concrete porch and steps, installed screen doors and electric lights, painted all inside walls, and installed a restroom. When the library opened on October 12, 1954, Commerce finally had a public library 82 years after its founding.

The Friends of the Commerce Public Library received its 501(c)(3) status from the federal government in April 1965, and was officially chartered and incorporated as a non-profit organization by the State of Texas in August 1967.

Eighteen years after the Commerce Public Library opened its doors, the city purchased the former post office building constructed in 1917 from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare with the understanding that it would be designated as a library. The City Council provided $30,000 to renovate the building and purchase library furniture. The Friends moved the library to its new home and opened for service on March 26, 1973. This building is the oldest public building in town. The Texas Historical Commission recognizes it as a historical structure. A plaque on the front of the building displays this designation.

Dr. Otha Spencer, World War II veteran, author, Friends member, patron, and long-time supporter saw an opportunity to improve the lives of local citizens. He initiated an Adult Literacy Program, including Adult Basic Education, GED, and English as a Second Language in 1991. Currently, the library director oversees that program, and volunteers serve as tutors and instructors.

A Cooperative Library Committee with Texas A&M University-Commerce was formed in 2007. During several meetings the participants suggested ways that the university could be helpful to the public library. University personnel offered expertise and were given permission by the university president to help the library with strategic planning, building issues, grant writing, digitization of local history materials, and the long-term loan of a microform reader/printer.

The Commerce Public Library provides free materials and services that promote the enjoyment of reading, support lifelong learning, and contribute to the informational and recreational needs of the community. It collects and preserves archival materials related to the history of Commerce and surrounding areas. Library users include all races, religions, nationalities, and income levels.

Most Important Library Statistics
The Commerce Public Library has 27,798 books and 1,590 videos in its collection. It has one local licensed database, Ancestry.com, and access to 49 more through the Texas State Library. In 2010, there were 35,563 circulations and 17,553 library visits. The library provided 74 programs with 1,224 attendees. There are 7,977 registered borrowers. The library employs 6 people who keep the library open for a total of 38 hours per week.

Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives
Vision Statement
The Commerce Public Library will be an attractive, comfortable, accessible center for information exchange, responsive to the changing needs of the community. It will reflect the local culture, serve all age groups, and have a caring and competent staff. Financially viable, the library will play a vital role in addressing the cultural and educational growth of Commerce and the surrounding area.

Mission Statement
The library's mission is to provide free materials and services that promote the enjoyment of reading, support life-long learning, contribute to the informational and recreational needs of the community, and to collect and preserve archival materials related to the history of Commerce and the surrounding areas.

Goals and Objectives for the Library
Element 1 – Financial Resources
Goals

- ***Increase Cash Flow for Operations***
    - Increase number of participants and amount received from Friends
    - Increase/stabilize operations support from City of Commerce and Hunt County
    - Increase financial support from businesses and corporations

- ***Increase and Stabilize Capital Resources***
    - Increase capital support through public and private grants
    - Increase partnerships with A&M-Commerce
    - Develop a planned giving program
    - Increase capital support from businesses and corporations

- ***Explore and Develop Alternative Financial Opportunities***
    - Corporate Underwriting Opportunities
    - Pledge Drives

Element 2 – Facilities
Goals

- ***Address Current Facility Issues (Immediate Needs)***

- Stabilize custodial and maintenance support from City of Commerce
- Develop fund drive to pay for immediate maintenance needs

Element 3 – Governance
Goals

- *Review Current Board of Directors*
  - Expand Board to full number of 15 members
  - Engage in Board of Director training and establish an ongoing training schedule
  - Develop strategies to increase level of engagement of Board members

Element 4 – Programs/Services
Goals

- *Maintain Current Programs*
  - Story Time
  - Summer Reading Program
  - Literacy Program (GED, Adult Basic Education, ESL)

- *Implement New Programs*
  - Classes to help public improve technology skills

Element 5 – Marketing
Goals

- *Effectively tell "The Story" of the Commerce Public Library*
  - Aggressively tell "The Story"

Element 6 – Staffing
Goals

- *Maximize the Human Resources of Employees and Volunteers*
  - Develop and leverage to the fullest extent the volunteers of the Commerce Public Library

Goals and Objectives for Outreach Program
In keeping with the library's Goal #4 to provide more technology programming for adults, the library will offer a series of basic computer classes for senior citizens in Commerce.

Objectives:
The program objectives are:
1. To develop partnerships with local organizations.
2. Offer free basic computer classes to senior citizens.
3. Improve basic computer skills of senior citizens.

Outreach Program

The Commerce Public Library plans to implement a six-week Basic Computing Course for the community, especially targeted to seniors. The program will acquaint those with little or no computer skills with the uses, parts, and applications of personal computers. The course will cover keyboarding, mouse skills, emailing, basic word processing, and Internet searching. The program will begin in early August and meet once per week for six weeks. The classes will be held in the computer lab at the Commerce Independent School District's (CISD) Administration Building. The classes will be limited to 20 participants.

Statement of need

Survey results clearly demonstrated the need for basic computer classes. Library staff distributed surveys at the library, the university, elementary school, local businesses, Chamber of Commerce, and to staff. One hundred surveys were returned. Of those surveyed, adults, particularly senior citizens, expressed a desire for computer classes at the library. The library has also received several calls and face-to-face patron requests to add computer classes. The majority of those came from senior citizens.

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

The library's target audience is composed of the senior citizens of Commerce, who comprise approximately 10% of the population.

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

The library will specifically target senior citizens who lack basic computer skills and who would like to take free classes at the library. Of senior citizen survey respondents, 44% said they were interested in such classes.

Estimated number of potential participants

The library will be using the computer lab at the current CISD Administration building, which has 20 computers. Thus, the class will be limited to 20 participants.

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

The audience will be composed of adults, the majority of whom will be senior citizens. Participants will live in the city and drive to the library. The library will offer six one-hour classes held weekly beginning in August on Wednesdays in the evening. This time has been successful for adult programming in the past.

List potential partners based on your assets assessment

The library has several partners for this program. The CISD will provide the space, computers, and Promethean Boards. The assisted living facility in Commerce, Country Home Estates, is willing to help seniors with transportation, and they also helped poll their residents regarding their desire for the program and the most convenient times for the classes. The library has relationships with several computer companies and individuals in town who could possibly volunteer to teach or assist with the classes. Other partners include local restaurants, Chamber of Commerce, City Hall, the Women's Culture Club, the Rotary Club, and the Lion's Club.

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List available library resources that could contribute to the success of the program
Library resources include the curriculum called "The Keys to an Internet Driver's License," created by Web Wise Seniors, Inc., and library staff who are knowledgeable about computers.

Detailed Action Plan

Action Plan Goal(s):
1. Plan the program.
2. Promote the program.
3. Implement the program.
4. Evaluate the program.

Action Plan Objective(s):
1. Partner with local organizations to develop and present a series of basic computer classes.
2. Develop partnerships with local businesses and service organizations by giving presentations on the library's upcoming program so they will endorse and promote the workshop.
3. Implement a workshop in the library for senior citizens in Commerce.
4. Distribute post-workshop surveys and evaluate results.

Action Plan
The table below gives the library's action plan for its basic computer classes.

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?
Contact IT person to teach basic computer classes	Librarian by May 5, 2012	Time-30 min. $ & materials-none Personnel-1	1 contact made & 6 classes scheduled	Count contact made; Count classes scheduled
Contact CISD to ensure lab is available	Librarian by May 11, 2012	Time-10 min. $ & materials-none Personnel-1	1 contact made	Count contact made
Put program on library calendar and website	Librarian by June 1, 2012	Time-15 min. $ & materials-none Personnel-1	Information posted 2 or more places	Count places posted
Create promotional flyer	Librarian by June 1, 2012	Time-5 min. $ & materials-none Personnel-1	1 flyer created	Count flyer created
Make copies of flyer	Librarian by June 1, 2012	Time-1 hr. $ & materials-$4.50 Personnel-1	30 copies made	Count # of copies made

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Post information about program at library and at businesses and organizations around town	Librarian by June 1, 2012	Time – 2 hrs. $ & materials-none Personnel-1	10 posters distributed	Count # of posters distributed
Give presentation to the Lions Club, Rotary Club, Woman's Culture Club, Kiwanis Club	Librarian by June 30, 2012	Time – 1 hr. $ & materials-none Personnel-1	4 presentations made	Count # of presentations made
Print out basic computer skills handouts	Librarian by July 6, 2012	Time – 1 hr. $ & materials - $10 Personnel – 1	Handouts printed	Count # of handouts printed
Set up computer lab	Librarian by August 8, 15, 22, 29, September 5, 12	Time-15 min. $ & materials-none Personnel-1	Set up done before 6 programs	Count lab set up
Present programs at the CISD Administration Building Computer Lab	Librarian, IT person August 8, 15, 22, 29, September 5, 12	Time- 6 hr. $ & materials- $20.00 for printing handout instructions Personnel-1	6 programs presented; est. 20 in attendance	Count programs; count attendees
Administer evaluation at each workshop	Librarian by September 12, 2012	Time-10 min. $ & materials-none Personnel-1	6 programs; 20 evaluations administered	Count programs; count evaluations
Gather statistics and success stories	Librarian by September 14, 2012	Time-45 min. $ & materials-none Personnel-1	Count attendees; compile evaluations	Analyze evaluations; write report; send results to PEARL office

APPENDIX: LIBRARY EVALUATION FORM

Commerce Public Library: Basic Computer Classes
Thank you for participating!

Place an X under the number to indicate how successful the program is for you.

	Yes 3	Maybe 2	No 1
1. The day and time the program was offered was:			
Convenient for me.			
2. The subject covered:			
Met my needs.			
Was enjoyable.			
3. The person who did the program:			
Was friendly and helpful.			
4. Because of this program I:			
Feel more confident in using the computer.			
Feel more connected to the community.			

Additional comments on the program:

_____

_____

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