

Foley Public Library

2019 Annual Report

The Foley Public Library's mission is to provide members of the Foley community with the resources necessary to fulfill their evolving informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs in an environment that encourages lifelong habits of reading, community engagement and self-expression. In doing so, our primary purpose is to obtain and organize books and other printed and digital material and establish programs in a manner that allows everyone easy and free access to information regardless of age, sex, race, creed, or social, economic, or educational level.

To achieve our purpose we are dedicated to:

- Providing reliable print and digital materials and activities for the pursuit of personal and community interests.
- Engaging children entering the world of learning and reading, and provide supplementary resources and activities that encourage the love of reading.
- Serving as a reference center by securing or locating authoritative sources for information needs.
- Providing access to the Internet and assisting patrons in gaining the skills necessary to use computer hardware and software.
- Providing recreational materials to all ages that aid in the pursuit of quality leisure time.
- Stimulating the enjoyment of and appreciation for the fine arts, humanities and the sciences.

The Foley Public Library remains dedicated to seven primary strategic initiatives that we believe will enhance our service, improve the lives of our patrons, and create an institution central to the positive development of our community. Those strategic initiatives include:

- A commitment to enriching the quality of life for Foley residents through our services, community outreach, and partnerships.
- Thoughtfully managing collections with a focus toward providing what is current, popular, and useful along with the best of the cultural and historical record, and with a special emphasis on preserving the rich history of the city of Foley and Baldwin County.
- Providing outstanding services and facilities that are convenient for our patrons, including local businesses and non-profit organizations.
- Providing accurate, timely information to create a stronger, more visible organization. The Library is committed to improving the flow of information, in all directions to create an open dialogue with the community, in essence, fashioning an institution that is community oriented.
- Providing ample training opportunities for all members of the Library staff as a means of remaining current in Library technologies and trends. Continued training allows staff the ability to better serve the community.
- Maintaining up to date technology for our patrons to use in the computer lab, for use in research or as a device that can be checked out (in-house and home use.)
- Continuing to make the most efficient use of the space that we have in order to maintain a large, diverse collection while, at the same time, providing an inviting space for patron use.

The Foley Public Library strives each year to provide meaningful, relevant speakers and presentations that fulfill a need by the community. And, in 2019 the Library provided monthly activities that satisfied a diverse audience. For example, the Library has partnered with the Foley Kiwanis Club to bring a quarterly Lunch and Learn to the meeting room. Topics of the quarterly lunch and learn revolve around community development and activities associated with Foley and Baldwin County. Speakers range from elected officials to members of the business community. We also include routine discussions of the state of the educational system in Baldwin County.

Our focus on community services also includes an ongoing monthly presentation calendar that incorporates a variety of entertaining, educational, and topical presentations. This past year we have included astronomers, musical guests, craft demonstrations, gardening programs, and literary presentations. Monthly creative programs for adults have been very successful this year led by the crafting series taught by Melanie Schnieders. Melanie has also created programming focused on the youth of the community including the Pokemon Club, the Doki Anime Club, and Makersaurus. All have been very popular and provide an opportunity for young members of the Foley community to explore the world of the Library.

Throughout 2019 the Library's Genealogy Department, headed by Jeanette Bornholt, continued to participate in the state's bicentennial celebration as Jeanette spoke at numerous local organizational meetings. She provided presentations on local historical events of interest and worked as a member of the local Bicentennial Committee and with the Baldwin County Historic Development Commission. In addition, Jeanette supported the Baldwin County Genealogy Society in their monthly meetings which have been a mainstay at the Library for several years.

Again in 2019 the Library featured weekly story time book readings and activities for children from birth to 12 years old. Each Tuesday and Wednesday the staff welcomed scores of children and their parents to partake in the activities scheduled for that day. In addition the children's department has reached out to local schools and the ARC program to offer reading and interaction in an outreach program. A monthly YA program has also worked toward retaining teenagers in the Library by creating opportunities to underscore the importance of the Library in a fun atmosphere.

The Library's three main annual events continued to grow in 2019. The third annual Forward City Con was once again held in the Foley Civic Center with the Anime Film Festival taking place in the Library's meeting room. The booths were expanded as were the day's activities. The attendance saw an uptick as well. Summer Reading once again drew huge crowds of local children throughout the month of June with reading skits, entertainment and treats for all that attended. The event culminated, as usual, with a finale that featured entertainment and prizes for the big reading winners for the summer. The Library's traditional fall event, the Halloween Extravaganza, netted big numbers once again. At least 2,000 people attended the combination fall carnival and haunted stacks. The event featured more than double the activity booths for the children's carnival as well as an all new haunted stacks.

During 2019 the Foley Library continued to expand its collection of physical and electronic titles. The physical titles rose to the 85,000 range making the collection the largest in Baldwin County. The digital titles available to Foley Library patrons topped the 50,000 mark in databases such as Camellianet, RB Digital, Capstone, and ABDO. The titles feature a diverse range of topics that can

satisfy a wide variety of patron tastes. And, as a member of the Baldwin County Library Cooperative, Foley Library patrons have access to over 200,000 titles.

The Library's physical collection continuously undergoes growth and change through weeding and through additions. We currently hold 85,000 physical titles making ours the largest collection of the libraries serving Baldwin County. We add to the collection weekly purchasing best sellers, popular authors, and requests from patrons. Our goal is to remain current and provide a collection that is in demand by our patrons. In the past we have bolstered our collection through grants and will continue to do so in the future. In house we have a robust book budget and use it for the benefit of our patrons. In the past year we have sought to enlarge our electronic titles list through ambitious purchases in all of our databases including Capstone and ABDO (children's titles), Camellianet and RB Digital (adult titles). Camellianet continues to host the vast majority of our electronic titles with over 40,000 titles available, many with multiple copies. Unfortunately this database is available to a statewide audience which makes wait times for titles longer than we would like. In order to solve this issue we have continued to increase the number of books available in RB Digital whose titles are accessible only by Foley Library patrons.

In order for the staff at the Foley Library to remain current in information trends and technology we provide ample opportunity for training. The Library provides a funding source for staff members to train either online through webinars or onsite if necessary. We also host an annual staff development day which allows us to focus on issues that we see effecting us each day. We can also bring in speakers that can teach us more about technology that we use each day or to introduce new technology to us. This past year's staff development day was a special event as we planned and executed our own schedule of speakers and activities for the first time. Previously the Library's staff development day had been held in conjunction with the members of the county library cooperative.

In seeking ways to become more involved in our community the Foley Library maintains meeting space for local individuals, groups, civic organizations, and businesses. The Library provides a 52 seat meeting room that can host large group meetings. It is complete with electronic equipment that allows the use of a computer in conjunction with built in projector to facilitate meetings. Our 8 seat board room can be used for small meetings, studying in a private setting or in small groups. In addition, we provide two private study rooms that can also be used to take online, proctored exams.

In 2019 the Library undertook several projects to improve the appearance of the interior of the building. For the first time in eleven years the interior walls were painted. In addition the large reading area seats on both floors were recovered in an updated fabric.

For those patrons who lack the proper equipment at home, we provide 28 computer work stations that can be used to check email, search for jobs, apply for jobs, allow research, and to produce documents that can then be printed, if necessary. In 2018 the Library completed an overhaul of the lab replacing all computers with new units. Much of that expense was covered in an LSTA grant awarded in 2017. Those computers now have Windows 10 as their operating system and are complete with updated software. In the upcoming year the remaining public access computers as well as the Circulation Department computers will be replaced by new units which will complete the Library's overall computer upgrade.

In 2019 the Foley Library continued to be ranked in the top ten of libraries in the United States in our category based on findings by Library Journal. The rankings are based on income levels and each library is judged on levels of per capita service and involvement by their community. This year marked the fourth year in a row that the Foley Library has received a 5 Star rating from Library Journal and has been ranked in the top ten of libraries in the United States, in our category. The Library also received a Gold Standard Award from the Alabama Library Association making it one of the top libraries in the state.