

**JACOB EDWARDS LIBRARY  
SOUTHBRIDGE, MA  
LONG RANGE PLAN FY2005-FY2009**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Part I – Long Range Plan**

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>GENERAL INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>THE JACOB EDWARDS LIBRARY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PROCESS/PLANNING METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>COMMUNITY NEEDS FOR THE LIBRARY TO ADDRESS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THE JACOB EDWARDS LIBRARY SERVICE RESPONSES.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>LIBRARY SERVICE RESPONSES AND RESULTANT GOALS, RATIONALES, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>14</b>

**PART II – APPENDICES**

<b>APPENDIX A: JACOB EDWARDS LIBRARY VISION STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>A-1</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: SOUTHBRIDGE COMMUNITY PROFILE .....</b>	<b>B-1</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: TOWN VISION STATEMENT.....</b>	<b>C-1</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY NEEDS .....</b>	<b>D-1</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS. THE LIBRARY SWOT ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>E-1</b>
<b>APPENDIX F: JACOB EDWARDS LIBRARY BASE DATA .....</b>	<b>F-1</b>

**LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Jacob Edwards Library staff would like to thank the following individuals who served on the Long Range Planning Committee. Other individuals and representatives of community groups were invited to join the library planning process, but they were unable to commit their time to the process. The following individuals thoughtful insights and commitment to the planning process enabled the development of a five-year plan that will help the library make a positive difference in the lives of Southbridge residents.

Ms. Cassandra Acly, Economic Development and Planning  
 Ms. Mel Blake, Library Patron and Teacher, Wells Middle School  
 Lt. Gary Fontaine, Southbridge Police Department  
 Ms. Jane Cutting, Literacy Volunteers Board Member  
 Ms. Paulina Dacoles, Library Trustee  
 Ms. Margaret (Peggy) Deangelis, retired school librarian  
 Ms. Karen Garlie, Parent  
 Ms. Karla Gartsu, Children's Librarian  
 Jacob Edwards Library Staff  
 Ms. Joan Greenberg, Friends of Library  
 Fr. Peter Joyce, St. Mary's Rectory  
 Mr. John Lachapelle, Library Trustee  
 Ms. Carol Muschler, Library Trustee  
 Mr. Paul Mills, Library Trustee  
 Ms. Margaret Morrissey, Adult Services Librarian  
 Ms. Esther Sabbey, Friends of Library  
 Mr. Mike Trombley, Council on Aging and Veterans' Agent  
 Ms. Ruth Urell, Library Director  
 Mr. Richard Whitney, Library Trustee

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

The process of developing a Long Range Plan helps the staff and trustees identify library service needs, and their resultant Service Responses and activities. It is important to define the community needs in order to focus limited library resources in the most effective way. Southbridge established a long range planning committee composed of community residents, Trustees, and library staff to gather valuable input for long range planning.

Long range planning is an ongoing process as community needs change over time. For this reason, library long range planning should be undertaken at least every five years. This document is the result of the library's most recent planning process.

As the library and the community-based long range planning committee met to develop this document, there were long discussions about the value of library service for Southbridge residents. The library staff and trustees are dedicated to providing quality service to Southbridge residents. Through the planning process, the Long Range Planning Committee identified Service Responses vital to the community. Unfortunately the library does not have enough professional and support staff to deliver all of the services described—young adult programs and activities; services to senior citizens; homework help; website development and maintenance; computer instruction for all ages; local history and genealogy assistance; and providing reference service all of the hours the library is open.

The staff of the Jacob Edwards Library was cut from 16 in the early 90's to where it is today—5 full-time staff, 4 part-time staff; and high school pages. The effect of inadequate funding at every level affects the library's ability to meet the needs of the community.

Additional library funding is crucial to implement the priorities identified in the *Long Range Plan FY2005-FY2009*.

## **THE JACOB EDWARDS LIBRARY**

### **History of the Library**

Library service has been available to Southbridge residents since the 1860s, in the Globe Village section of the town. Initially, the mills provided books for their employees but the service soon expanded to the provision of materials for the entire community, at first, in the Whitford building and later from three rooms in the Ammidown building, on Main Street. Eventually, in 1904, Jacob Edwards, a native of Southbridge, provided the land and the bequest to build at the current location. Continual services have been provided to the townspeople from 236 Main Street since 1914, except for a two-year hiatus in the Town Hall basement during remodeling and expansion of the building in 1998 and 1999.

The original brick building of Georgian Colonial style was erected in 1914, and included approximately 8,260 square feet of useable space. In 1966 an addition was built, bringing the building to approximately 13,000 square feet of useable space. In 1997, Southbridge was awarded a Massachusetts Public Library Construction grant which would increase the library's square footage by approximately 60%.

## **Library Facilities**

In May 2000, the renovated and expanded library opened to the public. The three levels of the 23,000 square foot building are fully accessible. The renovation/expansion project cost approximately three million dollars.

The Jacob Edwards Library has 35 dedicated parking spaces. There is seating for 120 patrons.

Jacob Edwards Library public meeting rooms are available for educational, literary, philanthropic, and civic purposes according to the Meeting Room Policy of the Board of Trustees. The Pioppi Room is the library's largest meeting room and can accommodate groups of up to 75 people. The Southbridge Room is a smaller, conference-style room, and can accommodate up to 12 people. There are two quiet study rooms for public use.

## **Computers**

The library provides free access to the Internet for all ages. There are six Internet workstations on the main level and two in the children's room. Computers for general use are also available. Through combined regional, state, and network sources, many online information resources are available for general and specialized research.

## **Children's Services**

The new Children's Department was a major part of the addition to the library that opened in May 2000. The children's room offers books, audiobooks, movies, CD ROMs, music, and reference materials for children from birth through approximately age 12. There's a place to work on computers, an online catalog, Internet stations, and comfortable places to sit and read a book. Separate boys' and girls' rest rooms are located within the children's department. The children's room is located on the ground level of the library.

Story hours, holiday activities, special entertainers, seasonal craft programs, and school vacation specials are offered throughout the year. The Summer Reading Program is a major focus every year with a large number of children participating.

## **General Collections**

There are 73,493 books, magazines, videos, audiocassettes, CDs, and newspapers in the Jacob Edwards Library. In addition to the lending collections, the library subscribes to 160 magazines and newspapers that are available for browsing and reading in the library. Past issues of magazines can be checked out of the library. There are many new books, magazines, CDs, and children's books available in Spanish for readers of all ages.

The Reference Collection is large and varied, ranging from basic encyclopedias and almanacs, to business reference works, art books, atlases, and biographical, literary and historical sets. Important and timely topics are updated at least annually. Many of the generous financial gifts the library receives from patrons are used to purchase reference books. Reference assistance is generally available during open library hours.

The Ammidown History Room contains the Ammidown Collection, the Genealogy and Local History collections, and various collections of historic photographs. The Ammidown Collection is an 18th century gentleman's library that belonged to a prominent early citizen of Southbridge. Most of the collection is too fragile to be handled; however, library staff will retrieve reference items from the Ammidown Room for patron use in the library.

## **Networks**

Southbridge is an active participant in the Central Massachusetts Regional Library System (CMRLS). Access to services provided through regional membership include delivery of library materials, interlibrary loan (ILL), reference support services, online databases with remote access, and summer reading program materials. Library staff participate in continuing education and professional development activities provided by the Central Region office.

Southbridge is a full, circulating member of the Central Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing (C/WMARS) network. The C/WMARS online catalog provides access to the library holdings of over 140 libraries in the Central and Western sections of Massachusetts. Network participation also enables the library to provide access to specialized electronic reference sources such as *Novelist* and the *Encyclopedia of Women's Studies*.

## **Administration**

The Jacob Edwards Library is a department of the Town of Southbridge. The library is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees, three of whom are appointed by the Town Manager and four are Trustees for the Edwards Trusts, appointed by the Trusts Administrators according to the terms of The Edwards Trusts established in the 1930's by the heirs of Jacob Edwards. The Board delegates responsibility for library management, collection development, and provision of library services to the public to the library director.

## **LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT**

During previous long range planning a mission statement was developed for the Jacob Edwards Library. In PLA's *New Planning For Results* process, "a library mission statement is a marketing tool. Its purpose is to inform the community about the library's priorities in clear and easily understood terms."<sup>1</sup>

As part of the process in developing the FY2005-FY2009 Long Range Plan, the Trustees, Library Director, and Long Range Planning Committee reviewed the Jacob Edwards Library mission statement. The Mission Statement now reads:

The Jacob Edwards Library enjoys a rich legacy of excellent service and is committed to the promotion of reading, education, literacy, culture, and lifelong learning for persons of all ages in the Southbridge community.

## **PROCESS/PLANNING METHODOLOGY**

In June 2004, the Jacob Edwards Library began the process of developing a new long range plan. The Trustees retained the services of Vandermark Consulting to facilitate three meetings of the Long Range Planning Committee. The Long Range Planning Committee—composed of residents representing a range of community demographics, three members of the library staff, and three members of the Board of Trustees—identified Southbridge library service needs. The identification of Southbridge library service needs occurred through a series of activities, including a Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities (SWOT) analysis of the library, a review of the town's Long Range Plan (*Southbridge Long Term Plan*—dated May 24, 2004), the development of a vision statement, a review of previous Jacob Edwards Library long range plans, a review of comparison library data from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC), and state and national library service trends.

---

<sup>1</sup> Nelson, Sandra. *The New Planning For Results, A Streamlined Approach*. Public Library Association. Chicago, IL. 2001. p. 76.

Throughout the planning meetings, several consistent themes emerged:

- Southbridge residents value the personal service and attention that has been a tradition at the Jacob Edwards Library
- Southbridge residents are pleased to take advantage of the technological resources available at the library, including remote access to library services, and the level of technological support from the library staff
- Library services currently available need to be better publicized

Appendices A through D of this report include compilations and summaries of various activities undertaken by the Long Range Planning Committee.

During two three-hour meetings, the Long Range Planning Committee reviewed a Town Vision Statement (see Appendix B), determined Community needs that the library could address (see Appendix C), participated in a Library SWOT Analysis (see Appendix D), and reviewed base data about the Jacob Edwards Library (see Appendix E). The Southbridge Community Profile was removed from the body of this document (see Appendix A). A Jacob Edwards Library Vision Statement was developed (see Appendix F). The draft Long Range Plan was reviewed during the third and final meeting of the Long Range Planning Committee.

## **COMMUNITY NEEDS FOR THE LIBRARY TO ADDRESS**

PLA's *Planning for Results* long range planning process encourages library planners to document how the library can contribute to improved community life by meeting community needs. "Community needs can be defined as a description of what will be required to move from a specific current condition to one of the vision statements defined by members of the community."<sup>2</sup> As the Long Range Planning Committee discussed the town's 2003-2004 Southbridge Long Term Plan (see Appendix B), a variety of needs surfaced that the Jacob Edwards Library can address.

The library can help meet the need for excellent education for children and adults by

- expanding cooperation between the local schools (K-12) and the public library
- providing access to computers for residents that do not have computers at home
- providing technology assistance and informal training in use of library databases, Internet, and other electronic materials
- providing access to information that people need
- providing space for quiet study, tutoring, reading reference, children and young adult
- providing access to basic literacy training for residents that need the service

The library can help encourage and support the diversity of the population of Southbridge through social, cultural, and educational opportunities so that all residents feel welcome to participate in the community. This encouragement and support can be offered by

- providing space for quiet study, tutoring, reading reference, children and young adult
- providing a local history room with Southbridge materials
- providing technology assistance and informal training in use of library databases, Internet and other electronic materials
- providing access to information that people need in their daily lives

The library can help maintain the high quality of town services that will continue to support the quality of life desired by residents and business owners by

---

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53

- providing excellent service to every library patron
- providing access to computers
- providing technology assistance and informal training in use of library databases, Internet, and other electronic materials
- providing access to information that people need in their daily lives
- providing programs for all ages
- providing space for quiet study, tutoring, reading reference, children and young adult

The library can help Southbridge residents recognize the value of and use the service of the Jacob Edwards Library by marketing library services and events: in newsletters and articles in local newspaper, on the library website, on local cable access TV and radio.

## **JACOB EDWARDS LIBRARY SERVICE RESPONSES**

Service Responses are defined as what a library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a set of well-defined community needs.

The goals, rationales, objectives, and activities for *The Jacob Edwards Library Long Range Plan FY2005-FY2009* were developed from community input. The Long Range Planning Committee members recognized that they could select only a few Service Responses because the library has limited resources to meet community needs. The Committee decided that the most important library service responses for Southbridge are:

- 1. GENERAL INFORMATION**
- 2. LIFELONG LEARNING**
- 3. BASIC LITERACY**
- 4. INFORMATION LITERACY**
- 5. CURRENT TOPICS AND TITLES**

### **1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

A library that offers General Information helps meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school, and personal life

**GOAL:** Residents of Southbridge will find that the library provides current, accurate print, non-print, electronic reference resources, access to online information resources, and assistance they need in using these resources to make good decisions and to succeed at home, at work, and in the community. In addition, Southbridge historic information will be available. In order to meet this ambitious goal the library must add reference staff.

**RATIONALE:** People expect to be able to find answers to their questions at the library. Residents use the Jacob Edwards Library for information/reference assistance. There is so much information available that the library staff, skilled in determining patron needs and in locating information that is relevant to satisfy those needs, must help patrons find the information that best meets individual information needs.

**Objective 1: The Jacob Edwards Library will have a trained and knowledgeable staff able to guide effective community use of all materials.**

- Provide opportunity for library staff to take advantage of ongoing education and training in electronic resources held by CMRLS and/or C/WMARS to better serve the public's need for assistance and training in these areas. (FY2005, ongoing)

- Conduct an in-service day for all staff once a year. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Provide opportunities for staff to take library courses toward a graduate degree offered by an accredited School of Library Information Science (GSLIS).
- Provide opportunity for library staff to take advantage of appropriate training and instructional opportunities available through NELINET and other technical training centers. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Provide opportunities for staff to attend local, state, regional and national conferences (NELA, PLA, ALA, REFOAMA). (FY2005, ongoing)

**Objective 2: Provide reference service on-site at all hours the library is open and through email and website information when closed.**

- Library Trustees and administration will work through the budgetary process to seek additional funding to add a reference librarian to the staff. (FY2006, ongoing)
- Library staff will explore ways to improve the library website (e.g., investigate ways to add new materials easily, have more control over material added). (FY2005, ongoing)
- Library staff will answer local history and genealogical questions. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Library staff will develop a policy for email reference, and advertise the service. (FY2006, ongoing)
- Library staff will identify useful materials to place on the library website to answer Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). (FY2007, ongoing)
- The number of reference questions received via email or other electronic transmission will increase by 2% in each of the last two years of the plan. (FY2008 and FY2009)

**Objective 3: Library staff will collaborate with school libraries on meeting student needs for school assignments.**

- Library staff will meet at least twice each year with school librarians to identify school assignment schedules and needs the Jacob Edwards Library can support. (FY2005, ongoing)
- The Jacob Edwards Library will provide materials in support of homework. (FY2005, ongoing)
- School assignment forms will be developed to encourage teachers to notify the public library of school assignments. (FY2006)
- As they are made available by teachers, school assignments will be posted on the library's website. (FY2006, ongoing)
- The Jacob Edwards Library will provide resources for the Summer Reading Lists for Southbridge students. (FY2005, ongoing)

**Objective 4: As a result of marketing services of the Jacob Edwards Library, circulation will increase by 2 percent during each year of the plan.**

- Fund the library website to facilitate its development as an instructional and informational tool for library staff to reach a wider audience. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Promote new materials in all formats through new booklists and the library website. (Winter 2005, ongoing)
- Advertise training sessions for patrons through the library's website, in-library postings, and the local newspaper, cable TV and radio. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Advertise remote access services to electronic databases and C/WMARS catalog information on the library's website, in-library postings, and the local newspaper, cable TV and radio. (FY2005, ongoing)

## **2. LIFELONG LEARNING**

**GOAL:** Residents of Southbridge will find information resources at the Jacob Edwards Library for personal growth and continued learning on subjects of personal interest as they use the library's collections. Children of Southbridge will be a special focus as they will develop a lifelong love of books and a desire to learn that will help them live productive and satisfying lives.

**RATIONALE:** The Long Range Planning Committee would like to see an expansion of the programs offered for adults and young adults. Working with Young Adults is an unmet need for the Jacob Edwards Library because limited staffing negatively affects the ability of the library to provide specialized services for youth ages 12 – 18. As the population gets older there will be more demand for materials and programs to satisfy the interests of adults, including the Ammidown History Room. At the same time, children and young adults turn to the public library to learn about things that interest them. Patrons need a comfortable place to sit and read, appropriate places to use reference materials and consult library materials.

**Objective 1: The library will provide an extensive collection of non-fiction, popular fiction, audiotapes, videotapes, CDs, DVDs, periodicals, newspapers, and other formats as they emerge on a wide variety of topics in which the general public has a sustaining interest.**

- Library staff will use standard professional review sources to assist in collection development. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Library staff will use data collected from C/WMARS to identify and target high use and high interest areas of the nonfiction collection for increased purchasing (e.g., consumer information, job information, parenting information, literacy materials, and local history) (FY2005, ongoing).
- Library staff will continue to evaluate and weed the collections to maintain currency and subject area coverage. [The weeding process is a standard library process that allows the library staff to remove materials from the collection that are dated and/or in poor condition. The American Library Association recommends that a minimum of 5% of the entire collection should be weeded out each year.] (Winter 2005, ongoing)
- Provide topical displays of materials and resources found at the Jacob Edwards Library to promote access to and use of the collections. (FY2005, ongoing)

- Promote the materials available at the Jacob Edwards through the library's website, in-library postings, and the local newspaper, cable TV, and radio. (FY2006, ongoing)

**Objective 2: Children will enjoy a welcoming atmosphere in the Children's Room with an array of materials and a variety of programs to encourage and support the love of reading and life-long learning.**

- Library staff will evaluate one-fifth of the children's collection in each of the five years of the plan, and weed dated materials and/or materials in poor condition. (FY2005, FY2006, FY2007, FY2008, and FY2009)
- Library staff, using *School Library Journal* and other library review materials, will expand its collection of award-winning books and popular titles for children, adding a minimum of 50 titles each year of the plan.
- Library staff will increase the children's audiovisual collection (including music, audiobooks, DVD's, and VHS) by 5% each year of the plan. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Library staff will continue to develop and promote programs for pre-school, school-age, and older children, having a minimum of 5 programs each year. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Library staff will provide a summer reading program each year of the plan.

**Objective 3: Make the library a welcoming and relevant place for young adults.**

- The Library staff works with the Boys and Girls Club, other town departments, and other agencies serving youth to plan cooperatively to meet the needs of this age group. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Create and fund a Young Adult (YA) Librarian position. ASAP
- Continue to develop a Young Adult fiction collection of the best Young Adult books. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Continue to participate in the school-to-career program at the high school, and career day speaking activities at the elementary and high school levels. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Establish guidelines with high school faculty and administration to participate in the community service requirement for high school students. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Provide on-the-job-training for library pages. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Establish a Young Adult Advisory Board. (FY2006, ongoing)
- Develop and promote a young adult page for the library website. (FY2007, ongoing)

**Objective 4: The library will help support community interest in Southbridge historic materials.**

- The library staff will partner with the Southbridge Historical Society and Southbridge Historic Commission to plan for the preservation of these important materials. (FY2005, ongoing)
- The library staff will offer assistance, as possible, for in-library use of local history resources for interested patrons. (FY2005, ongoing)

**Objective 5: The library will provide outreach services to the homebound.**

- The Jacob Edwards Library has library materials that are provided for the homebound. (FY2005, ongoing)
- The library will market this service through newspapers, churches, community organizations, cable TV, and radio. (FY2005, ongoing)
- The library staff will solicit volunteers to assist with this important service. (FY2005, ongoing)

### **3. INFORMATION LITERACY**

**GOAL:** Southbridge residents of all ages will have opportunities to develop the skills required to gain access to and evaluate electronic materials that are required in an increasingly technological world.

**RATIONALE:** People in Southbridge need to know how to locate, evaluate, and use information resources of all types. In addition to giving the answer to a question, the library will provide training on how to find and evaluate information. The staff of the Jacob Edwards Library will market the availability of access from home computers to library materials.

**Objective 1: Patrons of all ages will have useful information in an easily accessible format, accessible both within the library and from external (home, school and work) sites.**

- The library will provide individual and group instruction on the use of the online catalog. (FY2005, ongoing)
- The library will provide individual and group instruction on the use of the online reference databases. (FY2005, ongoing)
- The library will provide individual and group instruction on the use of the Internet, including information on evaluation of websites. (FY2005, ongoing)
- In each year of the plan, the library staff will provide at least 200 library users of all ages with assistance and/or informal training on the use of the online catalog, online reference databases, and/or how to find, use and evaluate information found on the Internet.
- In the final two years of the plan, the percent of residents who say they found the information they need using the library's electronic resources on their own will increase by 5%. (FY2008, FY2009)

#### **4. BASIC LITERACY**

**GOAL:** Southbridge residents will have the opportunity to reach their personal literacy goals through basic literacy training, adult basic education opportunities, and family literacy opportunities.

**RATIONALE:** Some library users need assistance with learning to read to help them perform essential daily tasks. Adult basic literacy training is provided through Literacy Volunteers of the Tri-Community with the support of Jacob Edwards Library and other agencies. Other library users need basic adult education or family literacy opportunities. The Library will investigate and partner with organizations to offer a variety of literacy opportunities.

**Objective 1: Provide access to literacy training.**

- The Literacy Volunteers provide one-to-one tutoring. (FY2005, ongoing)
- The Literacy Volunteers host International Conversation nights, in-service programs, and tutor recognition nights. (FY2005, ongoing)
- The Literacy Volunteers Coordinator and library staff will meet twice annually to discuss common goals. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Literacy Volunteers will hold small group sessions if necessary. (FY2005, ongoing)

**Objective 2: Provide administrative and tutoring rooms for literacy tutors to meet with people who need literacy training.**

- Literacy Volunteers office is available during literacy hours—four days a week. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Two quiet study rooms are available in the library. (FY2005, ongoing)

**Objective 3: Provide special materials in support of literacy training.**

- The Library staff will purchase new reader materials. (FY2005, ongoing)
- The Library staff will make additional purchases as necessary based on usage statistics (FY2005, ongoing)

**Objective 4: Provide adult basic education opportunities.**

- The Library staff will investigate partnerships with the local community college to provide support materials for adult basic education sessions. (FY2006, ongoing)
- The Jacob Edwards Library will provide space for adult basic education sessions. (FY2006, ongoing)
- The Library staff will advertise adult basic education sessions on the library's website. (FY2006, ongoing)

**Objective 5: Encourage families with children to participate in family literacy opportunities.**

- Library staff will provide a series of storyhours with an emphasis on the 'joy of reading.' (FY2005, ongoing)
- Library staff will offer *Mother Goose Asks Why?* and other early childhood programs that encourage family literacy. (FY2006, ongoing)
- Library staff will provide 'reader's advisory' services for parents involved in the basic literacy program as appropriate. (FY2005, ongoing)

**5. CURRENT TOPICS AND TITLES**

**GOAL:** Patrons will have access to a collection of popular and current titles (fiction and nonfiction, print and audiovisual) and library programs that they need to be well-informed about contemporary culture and society and to make their leisure time more productive and enjoyable.

**RATIONALE:** Library users want access to new fiction and nonfiction best sellers in a variety of (print and audiovisual) formats. The library needs an expanded audiovisual collection. The library should continue to promote the use of its collections by continuing to offer programs such as book talks, performances and exhibits that promote current books of interest to the community. The library has good space for developing exhibits, however the limited number of personnel has a negative impact on staff's ability to market the library's collections.

**Objective 1: Annual circulation of fiction will increase at least 2% each year of the plan.**

- The library will use e-mail to notify residents of materials available in the library on hold for them and/or for overdue materials notices. (FY2008 and FY2009)
- Library staff will improve visual appeal and access to new materials by developing theme or concept displays of materials. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Library staff will maintain a rigorous weeding schedule of 5% per year. (ongoing)
- Library staff will advertise/market the library collections in newspaper and other media, including website, with a minimum of 6 activities each year of the plan. (Ongoing)
- Library staff will implement an annual 'quick' patron satisfaction survey. (FY2006, ongoing)

**Objective 2: From FY2006 annual circulation of audiovisual materials will increase by at least 5% each year of the plan.**

- Library staff will increase purchase of audiovisual materials by at least 5% each year of the plan.
- Library staff will consult regularly both print and electronic sources which feature listings of sales of 'most popular' materials in all formats to increase the purchase of popular audiovisual materials. (FY2005, ongoing)

- Library staff will improve visual appeal and access to audiovisual materials by developing theme or concept displays of materials. (FY2005, ongoing)

**Objective 3: Residents will have access to programs, displays, and exhibits that meet their needs for information about popular cultural and social trends.**

- In FY2005, the library staff will count the number of programs, displays, and exhibits focused on topics of current interest and increase by 2 the number of programs, displays, and exhibits each year of the plan. (FY2006, ongoing)
- Library staff will identify staff and/or volunteers to develop programs, displays and exhibits. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Library staff will provide information to Southbridge residents via advertising programs, displays, exhibits, flyers, news articles, and the library website. (FY2005, ongoing)
- Library staff will provide at least one public forum on current issues each year of the plan. (FY2005, ongoing)
- The library staff will implement a 'user satisfaction' survey every other year of the plan, using data collected to assist in the development of programs, displays, and exhibits. (FY2006, FY2008)

**CONCLUSION**

The public library movement in the United States was started in the nineteenth century to ensure an informed citizenry -- educated, intelligent, and knowledgeable about the issues affecting their lives. The public library exists to provide access to the means for education, enlightenment, information, and enrichment for all. A self-governing people need education and unbiased, free-flowing information in order to make decisions about their lives as individuals and as members of a democratic society.

In twenty-first century America, this need is as urgent as it has ever been. Equity of access to reliable, accurate, current, and manageable information is crucial in a complex and rapidly changing society if citizens are going to be capable of self-government. It is the heart of the mission of every public library in America.

In fulfillment of the mission of the Jacob Edwards Library to provide access to the means for self-education and information for the people of Southbridge, the library offers and promotes the use of books, tapes, computers, electronic databases, periodicals, newspapers, and materials in other formats for all ages and abilities. Library staff also provide individual assistance to patrons to use all the services of the library effectively.

The residents of Southbridge value the Jacob Edwards Library. While they are generally pleased with the quality of the library service they receive, members of the Long Range Planning Committee identified more services essential to Southbridge.

The Long Range Planning Committee finds:

- The Jacob Edwards Library receives inadequate funding to provide the library services needed by Southbridge residents:

- Southbridge per capita library expenditure is \$23.06 compared with the state average of \$32.38 per capita.
- The mean budget of \$401,197 in Southbridge is 40% below the state average.
- Additional resources, funding and positions are needed to implement this plan.

Relevant, community-responsive library services described by the Planning Committee are defined in the goals and objectives in this Long Range Plan. In order to meet these goals, additional funding for library services is needed. The Committee recognizes that there is inadequate staffing in the library now compared to staffing levels prior to cutbacks in the early '90s.

The Jacob Edwards Library has a modern, well-equipped library facility and a committed library staff that works hard to meet community needs. This Long Range Plan will help the library trustees and staff focus limited resources on the most important library Service Responses for Southbridge.