Kimball, Nebraska Community Profile

Kimball County is on the west edge of Nebraska, bordering Wyoming and Colorado. It is a high plains environment. The rural area is agricultural based with crops of corn, wheat, sugar beets and a variety of grains, along with cattle ranching. The City of Kimball is located almost centrally in the county. The county also contains the villages of Dix and Bushnell.

The Kimball Public Library is administered by the City of Kimball. The library is also supported by the Kimball County government. The library also services the county.

The population of the city is 2592, almost equally male and female. The vast majority is Caucasian, with a few Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, and Native Americans. The Kimball Public Schools is K-12 and the only system in the county. Area schools are Banner County Schools (Harrisburg), Potter-Dix School, Western Nebraska Community College (Scottsbluff and Sidney) and Laramie Community College (Cheyenne, WY)

The unemployment in Kimball is 2.6% and the average wage is $19.20/hour. The industries located in Kimball are manufacturing, lodging and food service, retail, education, health, and a few others.

For recreation there is the Kimball Bowling Alley, the well-known Kimball Public Golf Course and the Fitness Center. There are soccer, baseball and basketball leagues in the summer and winter outside of school. The Chamber of Commerce and the Visitors Center assist citizens and visitors in the area. The County Fairgrounds are located in the city limits.

Organizations in the community include the Business Boosters, the Lions Club, Rotary, 4-H clubs, Extension Clubs, P. E. O. and a variety of small groups. There are three foundations, the Kimball Community Health Foundation, The Kimball Public Schools Foundation and the Kimball Area Foundation.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Two different discussion groups were convened with elected and appointed officials, education and health related professionals, and business men and women. Discussions focused on the challenges and changes facing Kimball.

Appreciative inquiry was also used with the Kimball City Council Retreat and Kimball Library Accreditation Committee.

Strengths:
The City of Kimball is the county seat with three major highways - Highway 30, Highway 71 as the Heartland Express way from Denver to South Dakota, and Interstate 80. Kimball County has the highest point in Nebraska. The wind farm provides electricity for the city and can be seen for miles. The city is self-sustaining, but within easy driving distance to larger cities.
The city is proud to have the Kimball Community Hospital, and for the ‘Golden Years’ there is Vista-Villa, the Kimball Manor and Park Terraces. The Kimball Public Library is good for the size of the Community. The Recycling Center helps keep the town looking nice.

The people are friendly. There are a variety of churches available and it is a safe place for children. The community supports children in school and extra-curricular activities. The city maintains two nice city parks and a nice swimming pool.

**Weaknesses:**
The area lacks the opportunity for good new employment in all areas and employment for the youth. There is a need to revitalize the downtown area, sprucing up the business and filling the empty buildings. Housing needs to be updated. Energy costs, government regulations and mandates and high taxes prohibit growth. The community mind-set can become negative and communication channels need to be opened.

**Opportunities:**
Kimball has the opportunity to continue to be a safe and good place to raise children, and live a quality life. With the location of the city, empty buildings and people with good work ethics, there is opportunity for a wide variety of new and continuing business to service the area. Food service, lodging (including RV parks), energy efficient enterprises, oil industry, agriculture, contractors, legal professionals and retail are all open for expansion.

Encouraging pride and positive attitudes can be done to promote the positives of the community and support local shopping. Marketing of a nice downtown area for rest and shopping could be done with signage and campaigns.

The library is a vital part of the community and can provide technology and non-biased information services to citizens with advances in the Internet and partnerships with local, state and national entities. The library can also assist in supporting the family with educational and entertainment opportunities.

Agriculture, Cabela’s, Clean Harbors and George Risk Industries will continue to explore new advancements and grow their businesses. The need for good housing in all areas will be an incentive to improve rentals and quality family homes.

**Threats:**
Low unemployment is a good thing but it can be extremely challenging for the business community to fill their openings. Abandoned and un-rentable buildings do not enhance our image. The highway bypass is creating a loss of retail customers.

Politically the loss of area population creates less U. S. congressional district representation. There is competition with surrounding states on taxation issues. Local, regional, state and federal regulations and policies affect the opportunities.

Our nation’s economy will have the biggest impact on all of us. Health care costs make it vital for strategic planning for the hospital, the Manor and our Social Security recipients.
Kimball Public Library Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Strengths:
The library has adequate computers for the demand and provides free WiFi for individuals and educational activities. The Children’s Area is large and contains a huge selection of books and educational toys. The library has a website, a blog and a Facebook presence.

The staff is ethical, pleasant and helpful to the public. They strive to please and desire to offer programming for all ages.

The library collection is diverse with best sellers, history materials, non-fiction selections and a young adult collection, audios and videos. Library cards can be used at any consortium library. The Plains Genealogy Society maintains a huge local history collection. There are several children and youth programs as well as adult programs each month.

Weaknesses:
Funds are predicted to be lowered in the next fiscal year. There is no room for facility expansion if the need developed. Parking space is very limited when there are activities. Communication can always be improved. The Friends group was adequate, fresh and engaged, but has slowed down.

Opportunities:
The library has applied for and received some grants from foundations. More grants need to be applied for in the area of technology and children’s programs. Investigation and implementation of new ideas that worked at other peer libraries can be encouraged.

More programs for teens would be beneficial, especially in the areas of tutoring, testing and scholarships. Employment for young people is needed. Cultural and educational programing could be expanded.

The public library can work with the school library and other elements to enhance AR reading and testing by relabeling books by levels, utilizing the woodworking classes for signs and shelving and promoting ESL and adult learning classes. Volunteers could be used and home delivery can be added.

The library collection could be expanded to include toys, art and craft materials, and baking items. Large screen computers and handicapped areas could be added. More signage would be helpful.

Threats:
It is predicted that funding will be cut in the next fiscal year. Parking will continue to be a problem because there is no room for additional parking. Educational and entertainment programming will be limited by funds and staff hours. Staff has many demands on their time when providing assistance to the public. New technology will need funding also. E-Readers may affect the annual patron statistics.
Community Need: There is a need for adult education/training programs to train the current workforce. Our community has lower education levels than the national average.

Goal I – Develop Kimball Public Library as a user-friendly place for lifelong learning and educational opportunities.

Objective 1 – Develop Kimball Public Library programs and resources to provide information access for existing and potential patrons of all ages.

Action Items:
1. Update materials on STEAM topics (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics). This will be reviewed annually
2. Enhance research capabilities within the Kimball Public Library. Reviewed annually
3. Continue reciprocal agreements with fourteen other area libraries and the Nebraska Library Commission. Reviewed annually
4. Provide library cards to all K-6 grade students in the area, with an option to leave their cards at the library by spring 2016.
5. Facilitate homework and tutoring opportunities for area students in 7-12 grades by 2018.
6. Assist area Junior and Senior students with test preparation – ACT, SAT, etc. Reviewed annually
7. Develop partnerships with local educators – area schools, home schools, Western Nebraska Community College, the University of Nebraska Extension, etc. Reviewed annually
8. Provide Accelerated Reading testing capabilities at Kimball Public Library by working with the Kimball Public Schools by 2018.
9. Create an outreach to those unable to visit the library. Reviewed annually
10. Offer workshops on electronic devices – iPad, Kindle, etc. Two times per year

Objective 2 – Strengthen Kimball Public Library Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers as a team of knowledgeable experts and ensure that are focused on quality customer service and professional development.

Action Items:
1. The Board of Directors will review and revise as needed library policies annually.
2. Staff and volunteers receive on-going training as needed on policies, procedures and customer service Review annually
3. Post mission statement, vision statement, policies and annual report on website. Reviewed annually
Community Need: Residents feel there is nothing to do in our community and that they need a source of entertainment and activities.

Goal II – Develop Kimball Public Library as a user-friendly place for entertainment opportunities for all ages.

Objective 1 – Organize and host entertainment activities, events, programs at the library.

Action items:
1. Develop and provide games (Chess, Checkers, Cribbage, etc.)
2. Plan and host movies, family nights
3. Hold book discussions
4. Serve as venue for artists, authors, musicians, etc.
5. Organize and host cultural events
6. Continue/create/enhance Youth Programs at Kimball Public Library – story time, preschool/youth/teens
   All the action items will be reviewed annually.

Objective 2 – Market services and programs available to all ages at Kimball Public Library.

Action Items:
1. Continue to utilize ‘small clips’ in the local newspaper, social media, informational inserts in local utility bills, and the Chamber of Commerce email event updates and other community advertising that is already in place. Reviewed annually
2. Post flyers of upcoming events and special announcements at local businesses. Send out press releases to area radio stations as needed. Reviewed annually
3. Develop an e-mail notices/post cards method of announcements on new books and services. Reviewed annually
4. Speak to area organizations about the library services and activities, two times per year. Reviewed annually
**Community Need:** In our community survey, several teens stated they were looking for places to volunteer so they could gain community service hours to put on college and job applications as well as to help them explore different career options and expand their interests.

**Goal III – Increase involvement of community members of all ages in the operation and support of Kimball Public Library.**

**Objective 1. Create a volunteer program.**

**Action Items:**
1. Maintain the partnership between Kimball Public Library and Friends of the Library.  
   *Reviewed annually*
2. Encourage the recruitment for community service with volunteers especially teenagers.  
   *Reviewed annually*
3. Continue and expand the Teen Intern program.  
   *Reviewed annually*
5. Consider appointment of teen member(s) on Kimball Public Library Board of Directors by 2017.
6. Find volunteers willing to write grants for the library.  
   *Reviewed annually*

**Community need:** The community needs a library that is modern and up-to-date to provide resources to people of the area.

**Goal IV - Develop additional funding sources to provide for library operations in the event that city and county funds are cut or reduced.**

**Objective 1 - Conduct targeted fund raising efforts to improve Kimball Public Library – local events, grants, etc.**

**Action items:**
1. Create annual and ongoing fundraising events as well as one-time events
2. Ask for donations
3. Pursue grant funding for projects
4. Ask for increases in public funding from the city and county
5. Utilize the relationship with the Friends of the Kimball Library for funding
   
   *All the action items will be reviewed annually.*
Objective 2 - Create an educational campaign for the library directed towards donations and estate planning in partnership with the Kimball Area Community Foundation.

Action item:
1. Work with the local attorneys to provide donation and bequest information to their clients by 2017.

Evaluation

The library board and staff will develop and implement the programs mentioned above, and the staff will be responsible for recording statistics. The strategic plan will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and library staff. The goals will be reviewed during this time, determining whether the objectives have been met and if additional goals need to be added. They will also review the number of patrons and visits and determine whether or not they have increased as much as expected based on the new programs.