

Action from Discussion

Many Nebraska librarians, staff, boards and others participated in either the Nebraska Libraries Future Search conference or in focus groups for the conference. We certainly want to keep the conversation going and provide follow-up information on some of the ideas that have come out of that conference.

So, the Nebraska Regional Library Systems will share a topic bi-monthly based on **12 Vision Statements from that 2008 conference**. If you want to use these for conversations with library boards, friends, or your community that would be a way to ensure the discussion continues. Nebraska Library Commission will provide continuing education credits including for library trustees if you put it on the agenda and discuss during a board meeting. A series of questions and activities to choose from in helping initiate the conversation are listed below the vision statement. We suggest choosing at least two questions and two activities, however you can choose many or all of them – and utilize them throughout 2009, as a way of continuing the Nebraska Libraries Future Search discussion.

Vision statement to consider:

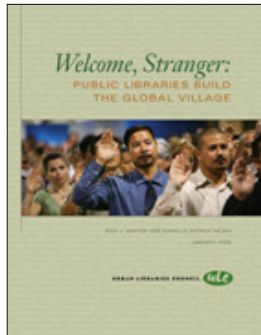
The library is a vital hub, woven into the fabric of the greater community, responding to and empowering people through local and global connections.

Questions:

- Talk about ways your library is a hub within the community, or services that might reflect the library's involvement in the community as a whole locally and beyond.
- Let's say a newspaper wants to do a story on the library and the role it plays in the community, what would you list? Provide examples of how library services impact library customers in their day to day lives. Talk about connections made locally, regionally, statewide and internationally.
- List community and customer needs that are prevalent today. In what ways can library services assist in responding to those needs or how are they perhaps already responding?
- Library websites are one way of providing access to library services and information around the clock. Two of many are Holdrege Public Library at www.holdregelibrary.com, or Bennington Public Library at <http://library.bennington-ne.com/> where the possibility to chat or blog is available any-time. Libraries are also investigating the use of kiosks, or mall locations where the library is placed where people tend to congregate. Connecting the library to customers with particular needs such as English Language Learners or finding a job, as well as partnering with organizations like a literacy council or Nebraska Workforce are examples of services provided as a direct response to a particular need while collaborating to make the most of community wide resources. List outreach services your library provides, or might consider developing, or partnerships with other organizations that reinforce the library as THE community center – the place that will “connect” individuals with product in response to customer need or desire, within or outside the walls of the library during the hours the library is open or closed.

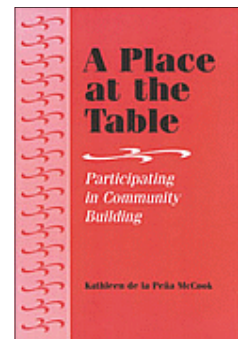
Activities:

Nebraska libraries include the Library Bill of Rights as part of a policy which lists service to all people of the community— not restricting access based on origin, age, background or views. Review the Library Bill of Rights at: <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statementspols/statementsif/librarybillrights.cfm>.

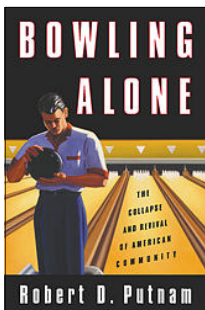


Veronda Pitchford, of the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), was the speaker at the Fall Colloquium October 2008. ULC's publication: *Welcome, Stranger: Public Libraries Build the Global Village* is a great resource for libraries of all types for strategies in welcoming and helping immigrants in transitions into the community. It also provides information on the major role libraries provide in this process. You can find copies of this publication to borrow, 17 pages, as well as the 25 page toolkit at the Nebraska Regional Library Systems' offices and the Nebraska Library Commission, or on the Urban Libraries Council website: www.urbanlibraries.org/publications/print.html. Review and discuss for insight in successfully serving a growing constituent in Nebraska.

Nebraska Regional Library Systems and Nebraska Library Commission have copies of Kathleen de la Pena McCook's book: *A Place at the Table: Participating in Community Building*. It outlines methods for ensuring that librarians are a part of community discussions, planning and problem solving with tools for strengthening community partnerships and connections while promoting the library's assets. Use the book to begin discussion for building community collaboration and empowerment through library services and involvement. Or take a look online at McCook's – A Librarian At the Kitchen Table - www.urbanlibraries.org/publications/print.html. The blog provides great articles for discussion and consideration, as well as timely information on libraries building community in a variety of settings.



Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community by Robert D. Putnam was a national bestseller and provided provocative ideas on social change focusing on American behavior increasingly disconnecting from each other and social structures. Listen to an interview with Professor Putnam on NPR's All Things Considered: www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1074874. Listen as a group and use for discussion. What do you agree or disagree with? This program and book were published in 2000, how are things different or the same in 2009? For more information on the book or Putnam go to: <http://www.bowlingalone.com/>.



Please feel free to share your comments and feedback from these discussions and exercises. Nebraska Regional Library Systems will be posting bi-monthly discussions on system e-mail lists, newsletters and websites. We are also exploring ways of presenting the discussion in an interactive online format that could involve statewide participation. There is a Nebraska Libraries Future Search wiki hosted by Nebraska Library Commission where we can post discussion information and feedback:

www.nlc.state.ne.us/wikis/fs/Whats%20Next.ashx