

Library History Chronology

Early History

| | |
|------|---|
| 1816 | The Assembly passed An Act for the Incorporation of Public Libraries. |
| 1820 | First library established in Bloomington. |
| 1826 | Library moved to free-standing brick building in Courthouse Square. |
| 1912 | Library re-started in the Courthouse. |

Carnegie Library

| | |
|------|--|
| 1913 | Library established contact with Carnegie Corporation for new building. Children's collection added; library's total collection was 2,165 books. |
| 1915 | Library reorganized to serve the City, Bloomington Township, and Perry Township. Carnegie Corporation contributed \$31,000 to the library building fund. |
| 1918 | Carnegie Library opened at 6th Street and Washington; the building now houses the Monroe County History Center. |
| 1929 | "Book Truck" service inaugurated to county towns and 72 schools—third bookmobile in the state and the longest running. |

Monroe County Public Library

| | |
|------|---|
| 1965 | The Bloomington Public Library merged with the Monroe County Public Library system. The Monroe County Public Library Foundation formed. |
| 1968 | Storefront branch opened in Ellettsville on Sale Street. Construction on new Main Library in Bloomington begun. |

New Main Library

| | |
|------|--|
| 1970 | New Main Library opened at corner of Kirkwood Ave. and Lincoln; it featured a Randtriever, a series of shelves accessed by robotic arms. |
| 1973 | Library added service to homebound patrons. |
| 1974 | Community Access Television started service with one public access channel (Channel 7 - later Channel 3). |
| 1977 | Adult literacy program (VITAL), one of the first, if not the first such program in the state, began tutoring services. |
| 1981 | Main Library renovation and automation system funded by \$500,000 bond. |
| 1982 | First online automation system put in place. |
| 1987 | Second channel (Channel 12) for government access added by Community Access Television. |
| 1987 | Randtriever removed and space renovated for VITAL, Children's, and Audiovisual Services. |
| 1987 | Pilot project created library in Monroe County Jail in partnership with County. |
| 1988 | Current Young Adult Services program for teens started: for teens, by teens, on behalf of teens, and in partnership with the community. |

New Ellettsville Branch

| | |
|------|---|
| 1990 | New Ellettsville Branch (10,000 sq. ft.) opened at Sale and Temperance St. to meet growing demand for library services. |
| 1992 | Circulation reached over 1 million. |
| 1994 | Groundbreaking held for renovation and expansion of Main Library. |
| 1996 | Library connected to the Internet. |
| 1997 | Current bookmobile purchased. |

Main Library Renovated and Expanded

| | |
|------|---|
| 1997 | New Main Library facility—a full city block (137,000 sq. ft.) dedicated. |
| 1997 | Library moved to new automation system. |
| 1998 | Bookmobile added to automation system through cellular technology. |
| 1999 | Community Access Television Services was first in U.S. to offer both live and archived video coverage of public meetings on the Internet. |
| 2003 | Community Access Television added third channel (Channel 14) for international news broadcasts from over 70 countries. |
| 2003 | Revised Mission Statement and Strategic Plan approved by Board of Trustees; both emphasized library as community gathering place. |
| 2004 | Wireless Internet access added. Library achieved a circulation of 2 million. Community Access Television Services (CATS) celebrated 30 years of service, 19 national awards, and an archive of 20,000 hometown movies documenting the community's cultural history. |

Ellettsville Branch Remodeled

| | |
|------|---|
| 2005 | Remodeling of Ellettsville Branch completed. Library began offering online meeting room and program reservation option to the public. Outreach Services expanded to include library van service to nursing homes and daycare centers. |
| 2005 | Kids Alive! Community Access Television's educational program by kids and for kids and the longest running cable-only children's program on television, celebrated its 30th anniversary. The Friends of the Library and the library partnered in creating a Friends Bookstore at the Main Library to expand the weekly Tuesday book sale. At year's end, 75% of the local population had library cards. |

Top Ten American Library Ranking

| | |
|------|--|
| 2005 | Library selected as a Top Ten American Library; Hennen's American Public Library Ratings (HAPLR) ranked Monroe County Public Library fifth among 329 libraries from across the nation serving a population of 100,000 to 249,999. |
|------|--|

Updated March 6, 2017