

St. Joseph County Public Library

Public Survey on Library Expansion: Feedback from Main Library Patrons as of 9/1/06*

What do you like about the library you visit?

Most everything! Especially the friendly staff. I really have no complaints.

I use the Local History & Genealogy Room when I go to Main. It is full of wonderful resources and I am so thankful it is available to me.

I love the audiovisual department. I tremendously enjoy the genealogy department for family tree research. My kids love the children's room.

Much greater selection of books, magazines, movies and music than my local (Mishawaka) library. Staff is very helpful. Library is well maintained; a clean, quiet place where I can work when I need to do research. Internet is available.

Service, Children's Room and resources (computers).

I like the large open concept. Staff seems adequate, always friendly and helpful. The fees are fair. Selection is always good and if I'm not able to get what I need, they can tell me what branch I can get it from.

It's comprehensive, close to home and has a good audiobook and DVD collection (though it could be better). Also, free rentals of children's videos are excellent for working families.

The people who work here are pretty nice. Self-checkout is cool.

Computers, books on Asia, especially Viet Nam and Cambodia.

Collection is fabulous; staff is also fabulous.

Pretty much everything.

Huge selection of materials, helpfulness of staff.

The good selection of television series and helpfulness of the staff.

Friendly.

Great selection of music CDs; great selection of periodicals. Neat idea to display the NYT bestsellers on a prominent shelf. Usually, the staff is very warm and friendly.

Great selection of material. Online availability of catalog and ability to check account and pay fines online.

What I like most about the Main Library is the vast selection of books, especially considering the fact that I am a homeschool Mom. I have five children ranging in age from two months to ten years old and there is something for everyone. I also appreciate the knowledge, patience and courtesy, primarily, of the staff.

Free Internet access.

Friendly, social space. Wonderful staff. Kids and adults not shushed, which makes everyone feel comfortable. Public art reflects the community.

What don't you like about the library you visit?

The Microfilm Room!!! It's like being in a darkened cave and the equipment is antiquated.

You don't offer free wireless access for laptop users. Some audiobooks aren't kept up to date. (For example, there is a Vol. 3 of The Count of Monte Cristo, but no Vols. 1 or 2).

Parking isn't always available in the library lot. I think there should be a bigger selection of books on sociology with more attention paid to acquiring books on "women's issues"/ women's studies/feminist issues.

Computer set up on the children's floor. Noise level sometimes gets loud and the computers are competing with each other. This also makes it difficult for people who are reading to concentrate.

Better lighting above the book aisles. More seating area to browse books where you found them.

Teen area is not very good. The seats to sit on are dirty. There are no laptops like at Centre.

Need more books on Cambodia and get a Cambodian dictionary.

Parking should be closer to the entrance.

The "old" books get out of circulation too soon, it seems. That is, the ones not regularly being checked out get sent to the Friends of the Library book sale. But some of those books have been ones I liked, because later when I tried to check them out again, I noticed they were gone (not in the computer databases). I particularly liked the Dick Williams autobiography. He was a former major league manager who published his book in about 2000. Yet last year, it no longer was in the SJCPL circulation.

Children's area is too cluttered now. Attractive when new (travel theme), Would like to see more space, lower shelves, simple and bright colors.

I find that there are not as many less-known bands and artists as I would like. Some of the CDs are scratched when I check them out.

Too far to walk from the parking lot to the front door. Computers are in too many different areas. Need more light on the first floor at night.

The computers are all scattered in the library, making it inconvenient to get printouts, and remembering which floor has what.

The selection of science books is very poor. Many are old and outdated and whole subject areas are not represented. The library is not open enough hours on the weekends. It could use more seating areas. The audiobooks are not available in electronic format or downloadable from a computer to a portable mp3 player. The music CD shelves are always very disorganized.

Although I have had a very good overall experience with most of the departments at the library, the personnel in the computer/DVD/video area have not been very hospitable. They don't usually smile when they are serving us and rarely show the courtesy of other departments.

The library doesn't have any study areas where it is quiet for college students.. I have to study at the Notre Dame Library instead.

Noise travels, especially from the area where staff is socializing while checking in books. Magazine reading area is especially dreary. Children's room, while wonderful, is too centered on computers, rather than books.

What would you like to change?

Add a snack area with coffee, tea, light snacks and a few comfortable chairs for perusing magazines or the first few pages of a new book. Set aside a specific area, with at minimum half walls, for the Internet section. More open space would be nice in the media area as it feels a bit crowded at times. Can the movies section be set up more like a Blockbuster so it would be easier to locate movies with front of container facing the patrons?

Wish the library could buy more classics. There are many videos from PBS, i.e., Mystery Theatre, Rumpole, As Time Goes By, Morse, Foyle's War, Shakespeare, etc. Distribute these to branches. I wish the library set aside a section for classic movies just as is done for books. So much of Sights & Sounds is devoted to Urban Rock and runs of ordinary TV shows.

The library should purchase (if it hasn't already) a resurfacing device which works on CDs and DVDs by removing an extremely thin layer of plastic from the bottom of the disc, thus eliminating all but the most irreparable damage. There should be a suggestion section on the library website and at the libraries themselves. That way, if the library doesn't have something, one can specifically request that the item be made available.

Move the entrance closer to the parking lot.

More audiobooks, particularly classic movies. Free wireless access for laptop users (after all, they're providing their own computers that you don't need to pay for).

More parking/bigger parking lot. Add a café. More women's studies books and other resources.

Better software programs for children. Seems as if they are not always working properly. More programs after school for younger children. Have an African-American reading section to make it easier to find these authors.

Larger computer area on its own not where you have to walk through the computer area to get books. I would also like a café for a cup of coffee and relax with a book. Would be nice to see more library items for sale like pencils, pens, bags, t-shirts. Would like book clubs on popular authors and subjects.

Get more stuff in the teen area. Get laptops and clean chairs too.

Maybe a little coffee shop.

More bookshelves at Main St. because then books could be kept longer. I prefer sports, biographies, history and interesting nonfiction. Also, perhaps have an even larger "new books" area, with more new books purchased annually. I especially would like for the Main Library to buy more DVD collections of old TV shows. These seem to be very popular with middle-aged and elderly who remember the shows when they were first run on TV.

I would move the Local History & Genealogy Room to the Centre Township Branch. I have several friends who won't use it at Main Library because of the fear of going downtown. I too am a bit intimidated by fear of the type of people who are downtown. Also, it would be more convenient at Centre for people who come to use it from other towns because of it being so close to the bypass.

The faces of the people who work in the Microfilm Room. They need to at least attempt to smile at everyone who stands in front of them. I would change the Microfilm Room and equipment. Use some of the influx of money to pay off everyone's fines, giving them a clean slate and leaving no one behind in learning and reading!

Less popular movies and more educational videos.

The library needs to have a computer room with all computers in one room. All printouts need to print in this room, as well as being paid for. This would be a lot easier.

More comfortable type seating.

If I could change anything it would be the summer hours.

I would like there to be a cell phone policy where people can't use cell phones in the library. Ivy Tech Library and the Notre Dame Library both have policies against it but so far you have done nothing about it!

More quiet areas to read, with comfortable chairs that are not right out in public lobby areas. Model might be the new children's area, where kids can read in train cars. Also, a café would be fantastic!

*This includes both online and printed surveys. This document will be updated at the conclusion of the survey on Sept. 15, 2006.

B. Bahu 9/1/06