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Mission Statement

The mission of the Fulton County Library is to enrich the lives of Fulton County residents through access to materials, information, and services imparting the knowledge, experience and wisdom of others through qualified staff members, programs and partnerships with other local agencies.

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Fulton County Library History 1955—1987

Local library services began in 1955 in a small building owned by the First National Bank and located at the rear of its parking lot. Books were donated by local residents and members of the McConnellsburg Women's Club operated the library as a service project for five years. In 1960 over two thousand books were transferred to the local school district library to be used by the community as a supplement to the school library.

The idea of a public library was not revived until the early 1970s when the McConnellsburg

Ministerium collected books and opened a small library in a vacant store on Lincoln Way West owned by Miss Martha Lodge.

In 1974 the Conococheague District Library of Chambersburg was awarded a \$50,000 Federal Demonstration Grant to establish a library in Fulton County. The small one-room building owned by the Bank and used by the library in 1955 was moved to 129 North Third Street. A full time librarian was hired and a large number of books were purchased. Later on a bookmobile was purchased and operated on a regular schedule around the county.

Library supporters hoped to obtain public funding for the continuation of the library after grant funds were exhausted, but after two unsuccessful referendums the library closed its doors and the books were stored in the Shockey Annex.

In an attempt to ensure that Fulton County would have a library sometime in the future, a group of local residents incorporated in 1978 as the Fulton County Friends of the Library, Inc. and set a goal for a trust fund to be raised in the next ten years. At that time it was thought that the interest on this amount would be sufficient to take care of most of the current expenses of a library. In 1981, before the trust funds could be raised, largely through the efforts of Mr. Paul Shockey, a small one-room library was opened in Courthouse Annex No. Two. It was staffed by volunteers and was open for a limited number of hours though the books from the Shockey Annex were available as a resource.

Later that same year, the Shockeyes purchased the Mary Jane Duffey house at 121 West Market Street, McConnellsburg, and gave it to the Friends of the Library as a permanent home for the library. A library-trained volunteer, Mildred Henry, recruited a large volunteer staff, trained them and operated the library twenty hours a week for a period of two years during which time local residents contributed new furniture and fixtures including a two section card catalog and bookshelves. Some ten thousand volumes were cataloged.

In 1983 Conococheague Library District received a LSCA Title I Federal Grant to establish library services in Fulton County. The grant provided for a full-time librarian, a public relations assistant, the purchase of a computer, photocopier, new books, new furniture and supplies, and about a thousand new books for adults and children.

The library fulfilled requirements to enter into the State Aid Program in 1984 when the grant was continued on a three-to-one basis through the generosity of a friend in the county who made a \$10,000 gift through the county treasurer. The requirement for another year's continuation would have had to be on a two-for-one basis and the Friends could not meet that requirement. However, one year ahead of the ten-year deadline for raising the trust funds, the Friends of the Library launched a drive to raise the last ten thousand. The drive was successful and the interest from the fund is being used to help meet operating expenses for the library. Because of the change in the buying power of the dollar over the last ten years, the Library still needs the support of all in the County and it is hoped that if they are given an opportunity in 1988 to list the Library as one of the expected necessary services, they will go to the polls in large numbers and see to it that the third time is the successful referendum vote.

Library History 1987—1990

The trust fund goal of \$100,000 was realized in 1986 and its income, together with governmental and private grants plus local fund raising supported continued growth in service. This included the establishment of small branch libraries in Hustontown and Needmore.

The library soon outgrew its home. As a result in 1989, The Friends of the Library successfully bid \$125,000 for the former American Legion building. The new building has provided much needed room for operations and offices. Servicing the mortgage caused an ongoing strain on resources which caused renovations to come to a stand-still.

Library History 1990—present

In 1997, the library became automated and a new handicapped accessible children's room was built with help from the Alexander Stewart Foundation. The Hustontown Branch was automated in 1999. In 2000, the stage area was removed and a handicapped accessible office was built in its place. In 2001, the Fulton County Historical Library moved its collection to a room in the library which had been the office. Carpeting was installed in 2001. In 2001 and 2002 additional shelving was purchased to house a growing collection of books and materials. Also in 2002 the library moved its catalog online. The holdings of all Franklin and Fulton County libraries are now accessible online from the library's web page. In the same year the Hustontown Branch Library successfully applied for state aid after meeting the qualifications to be a branch library. In 2002, the library hired its first full-time children's services coordinator.

In 2008, the library received a \$500,000 Keystone matching grant to be used for rehabilitation and renovations to the library. The renovations include installation of an elevator and automatic doors, renovation of the upper floor for library use, façade work and interior remodeling to make the library more functional, accessible, and attractive. The renovations will add 3,800 square feet of library space for patron services and collections.

Over 6,400 Fulton County residents have library cards and use the library for free access to reference information, the Internet, audio books, videos, DVDs, local newspapers, business information and children's programming in McConnellsburg, Hustontown and Needmore. In 2008, 140 separate programs were held for children. Over 3,000 adults and children attended these programs. Total circulation in 2008 was 65,378 items. The number of library visits in 2008 was 32,230. The library continues to serve more Fulton County residents each day. Patrons can access important library services, such as Mango Languages from the library's website at fultoncountylibrary.org at home with an Internet connection. The library is now online with those of Franklin County so patrons can determine from home if a particular item is available. Patrons may now also reserve books online.

Because of the rural nature of the community and the lack of a dedicated library tax, the Fulton County Library continues to rely on funding from grants and assistance from local businesses and individuals to upgrade and maintain services.