

# *A Letter to the Residents of Van Wert County*

As a center of lifelong learning for generations of Van Wert County residents, the Brumback Library has strived to meet the research, informational, and recreational reading needs of individuals of all ages for the past 114 years. Since 2001 though, the Library has faced a series of funding freezes and major funding cuts, as well as changes in the percentages of the LLGSF (and later, the Public Library Fund) distribution. Like most of Ohio's 251 public libraries, we now receive the majority of our funding (82%) from the State of Ohio's Public Library Fund (PLF) which derives its monies from an allocation of the State's General Revenue Fund (GRF).

While many public libraries across the State drastically cut service hours and laid off staff over the course of the past fourteen years, we balanced our budget via the following avenues : The staff had two cuts in hours which were later reinstated, while the Director has taken five voluntary salary cuts to help make ends meet. (It should be noted that in 2009, the Director voluntarily froze his salary at a reduced level through 2022.) Operating schedules at Main Library and the branches were marginally trimmed and fewer new print and nonprint materials were purchased, while computer hardware and software purchases were made on an as-needed basis only. Last, but not least, programming and outreach efforts were reduced to some extent.

Income tax reform, major changes to the funding streams which comprise the State of Ohio's General Revenue Fund, together with any marked changes to the PLF in the future would leave the Library in a vulnerable financial position. In spite of this scenario, the demand for our services has greatly increased.

Inflation affects the Library just as it affects every household, business, and institution. We are all familiar with the rising costs of health insurance, building insurance, and deregulated utilities. At the Library though, we also have the increased costs of books and materials to consider. For all of these reasons, a local tax levy is essential. The monies obtained via the renewal levy are crucial to maintain the Library's resources and services that Van Wert County residents have come to know and expect.

A vital part of the Library's funding comes from a 1/2 mill tax which is part of the Brumback Library's operating agreement of 1898. Collected from 1901 to 1934, the tax was initially suspended due to the Great Depression. To offset decreased State funding seventy-one years later however, the levy was placed on the ballot in 2005 and approved by Van Wert County voters with an unprecedented 74% passage rate. Five years later, voters approved the renewal levy with a resounding 83% passage rate. To honor our past, to insure stability in funding, to recognize our present needs, and to plan for the future, it is imperative that the library levy be approved.

We are seeking your assistance and support as both a County resident and a beneficiary of the resources, services, and programming efforts of the Brumback Library. Your yes vote will enable the Library to maintain the services our citizens need and deserve. All funds received will be used for general operating expenses. This includes purchasing books and materials for the public to borrow or use on the premises, as well as programming, outreach efforts, and building maintenance.

**This newsletter was published and paid for by  
The Citizens for The Brumback Library, Gary L. Taylor, Treasurer**



Mr. John Sanford Brumback, together with the Brumback Family, has provided the community with an invaluable legacy. Please help us to sustain, enhance, and preserve this community resource. Your consideration and support is gratefully appreciated!

Yours truly,

The Brumback Library Board of Trustees

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## 2015 Library Levy Fact Sheet

The Board of Trustees of the Brumback Library will place a 1/2 mill five year renewal operating levy on the November 2015 ballot. Cutbacks in service hours, staff, books, and programming due to cuts and freezes in State funding over the past fourteen years and less money every year from the State's General Revenue Fund prompt the further need for the levy.

- \* State funding has continued to decline and remain stagnant. Changes to the State's GRF may continue to impact the PLF.
- \* This levy would cost the average homeowner of a \$50,000.00 home \$4.30 per year. For a \$100,000.00 home, the cost would be \$8.60 per year.
- \* The Brumback Library is the sixth largest library system in NW Ohio with an annual circulation of over 850,000.
- \* Over 5,000 people visit our libraries weekly.
- \* Over 1,200 story times are offered each year.
- \* The Library makes more than 1,000 school visits to area preschools and elementary schools annually. In addition, the Library hosts numerous classes and student visits each year.
- \* More than 12,000 people attend programs at the Library annually.
- \* The Library provides outreach services to over 300 homebound patrons.
- \* Over 19,000 people access the Internet at one of the Library's six locations every year.
- \* This levy would allow the Library to continue to purchase additional materials. It would also allow the Library to offer the public service hours, staff, books, and other services that Van Wert residents have come to expect.

## How Much Would It Cost a Homeowner for a 1/2 Mill Library Tax?

Value of Home	Tax per Year
\$50,000	\$4.30
\$100,000	\$8.60
\$150,000	\$12.90
\$200,000	\$17.20
\$250,000	\$21.50
\$300,000	\$25.80
\$350,000	\$30.10
\$400,000	\$34.40
\$450,000	\$38.70
\$500,000	\$43.00
\$600,000	\$51.60
\$700,000	\$60.20
\$800,000	\$68.80
\$900,000	\$77.40
\$1,000,000	\$86.00

## What Would be the Cost of a 1/2 Mill Levy on Farm Ground?

The tax rate to tillage farm ground is determined according to CAUV rates. The following outline of the cost of a 1/2 mill library levy to farm ground in the Brumback Library service district using a soil value average of \$3,370.00 translates to 1180 tax value per acre at 35%.

According to the Van Wert County/ OSU Extension Office, the average farm in Van Wert County is 347 acres.

100 acres	\$29.03 tax per year
200 acres	\$58.06 tax per year
300 acres	\$87.10 tax per year
400 acres	\$116.14 tax per year
500 acres	\$145.18 tax per year



# Vote for the Renewal Levy and Keep Your Library Services

The Brumback Library is essential! Here at the Library, learning never ends for over 28,000 Van Wert County residents who check out books, eBooks, or books on CD, read magazines, use reference materials, listen to CDs, or use computers to explore the world -- all with help from librarians and staff. At Main Library and its five branches, children learn to love reading, students use reference books and computers to do their homework, and adults search for nonfiction and recreational reading materials. Many students and teachers rely on the Brumback Library to provide a myriad of services and resources in support of the schools.

Since 2002, our State funding has been frozen and reduced significantly at times. Considering the major cuts to the Library's funding from the State of Ohio, the past 14 years have been particularly challenging. These cuts have seriously affected our ability to provide up-to-date materials and keep local library services going. The Brumback Library has been fiscally responsible and has earned perfect audits. To balance the budget, we have been trimming services since 2002. To date, we have cut or trimmed ...

- \* Purchases of new books, magazines, CDs, DVDs, and other resources
- \* Staffing at all levels, including cuts to Director and staff salaries
- \* Programming for children, young adults, and adults
- \* Operating hours at Main Library and the branches as little as possible
- \* Our delivery schedule to the homebound

**We cannot keep cutting and still provide the level of service area residents need, not to mention our ability to keep our local library buildings safe and well maintained without the passage of this renewal levy.** That is why the Brumback Library will place a 1/2 mill renewal levy on the ballot in November. The passage of this levy means the Library can ...

- \* Continue to provide up-to-date books, magazines, newspapers, etc.
- \* Keep services intact for children
- \* Maintain service to senior citizens and the homebound
- \* Conduct the preventive maintenance needed to keep our library buildings in good condition -- safe and useful
- \* Maintain library spaces as needed
- \* Maintain computers and technology

The Brumback Library needs your vote to protect the services it provides children, families, and seniors. The additional cost would be \$8.60 per year for the owner of a \$100,000 home or \$4.30 per year for the owner of a \$50,000 home. This is certainly a small investment for maintaining quality local libraries. With uncertain income from the State, local support is essential to keep services. Without



local support, there will be major cuts to services. **Please support the Brumback Library. Vote for the levy and keep library services!!!**

In a situation of this nature, questions often arise. Hopefully the following questions and answers will address any concerns or reservations you may have about the need for a library levy.

**Q : How is the Brumback Library funded?**

The Brumback Library receives 82% of its total operating funds from the Public Library Fund, otherwise known as the PLF. Established in 2008 by the State of Ohio, the PLF receives its monies from a 1.7% allocation derived from the Ohio General Revenue Fund. Grants, gifts, and donations constitute 3.5% of our budget, with 14.5% of the Library's income coming from the Library levy as well as fines and fees.

**Q : Isn't there a Brumback or Reed Family Endowment?**

No. The monies donated by the Brumback Family were used only for construction purposes. Likewise, the gifts from the estates of Orville Reed and Ellen Reed were used to renovate the original building and to fund the new addition. Both of these projects were completed in 1992. According to the stipulations specifically outlined in the Reeds' trusts, no funds were used for books, computers, or on-going operating expenses.

**Q : What about the Library Enrichment Foundation? Isn't that an endowment source?**

No, it is not. The Library Enrichment Foundation is a private, non-profit foundation that operates independently of the Library. The Foundation seeks to support the Library in its mission to meet the informational, recreational, and research reading needs of its patrons. Many major projects over the years have been funded by the Library Enrichment Foundation. These projects include, but are not limited to, the window replacement project, the automation of the Library's catalog and circulation system, and the branch construction program. The Foundation which accepts gifts, grants, donations, etc. has a modest cash reserve and would, by no means, be able to financially fund the Library on a continuing basis.

**Q : Why did the Library build new branches in the 1990's?**

The Brumback Library has had an on-going commitment to the residents of Van Wert County for over 114 years. It was Mr. Brumback's implicit goal to establish a library which would serve all Van Wert County residents. The Main Library in Van Wert is the library's crowning jewel and lifeline, however branch library service is extremely important. With the completion of Main Library's renovation and addition in 1992, the Director and Trustees sought to upgrade the branch sites. A Branch Improvement Plan, designed by the Director and endorsed by the Trustees, was the catalyst for positive changes in branch building and service delivery.

In 1994, the Brumback Library only had three branches. Each of these sites lacked



indoor plumbing, air conditioning, adequate heat. etc. The book collections were limited due to size and space. Through hard work, perseverance, and a fund-raising campaign, the Library renovated and added onto the original Convoy Branch, erected new facilities in Wren and Ohio City, and purchased a building which was renovated to house a facility in Middle Point. The funds for these projects were derived from grants, gifts, and donations from various foundations, organizations, and individuals. No public monies were used for the construction projects. Then, in 2007, the Village of Willshire renovated their former Village Hall to house the present Willshire Branch.

The branches have improved greatly in a service sense as well. In 1994, the original three branches were open a total of 47 hours per week. With five branches, our current operating branch schedule is 126.5 hours per week. The book and materials collections have increased by nearly 80%. Utilized by patrons of all ages, but especially by children and senior citizens, each branch facility exists as an integral community center/resource in the village in which it is located.

**Q : If significant funding cuts occur in the future, how will such actions affect the Library?**

Such funding cuts could possibly lead to further reductions in purchasing books and materials, personnel cuts to an already small staff, a decline in the number of programs which are offered to area residents, a reduction in operating hours, and a myriad of other cost saving efforts.

**Q : What would happen if State funding for the Library was totally eliminated?**

Such a move would lead to the closure of the Library itself.

**Q : Are any branches scheduled to close?**

No. As previously stated, the Brumback Library has worked very hard to provide newer branch sites that are comprised of a variety of materials and resources. It is our collective hope that the PLF is preserved so that we can continue to offer the services that all Van Wert County residents have come to expect.

**Q : What has the Brumback Library done in terms of spending and/or staffing cuts?**

While many libraries across the State have drastically cut service hours or laid off staff over the course of the past fourteen years, we have balanced our budget by purchasing fewer materials, instituting minor cuts in service hours, and maintaining a modest staff size. Since we have cut staff positions, we are all working harder to meet our patrons' needs. The Director and Staff have had their salaries cut. In fact, the Director took five voluntary salary cuts and then voluntarily froze his salary at a reduced rate through 2022.

**Q : What will happen if I don't vote for the levy?**

To pass this issue in November, we are working very hard to make certain that voters understand how important this issue really is. To make up for, and supplement,



what we have lost on the State level, it is imperative that we maintain the present local level of funding; otherwise, we will have to make continued cuts to services, hours, and staffing, plus building maintenance and repair.

**Q : What's in it for me? I buy my own books and other materials as well as eBooks.**

Over 28,000 children and adults in Van Wert County use the Library. The entire community benefits because a good library helps to keep the community strong and property values high with important services that are available to everyone. Because the Brumback Library has had to cut hours, resources, and services due to revenue reductions, we have less available for our area residents. Further reductions will seriously hurt our community.

**Q : Why should I vote for another levy? I already pay too much in taxes.**

First, this levy request is a renewal, it is not a new tax. A good library helps to improve the quality of life for everyone by providing access to books and other materials that people need. In fact, a good library helps to increase the value of your property. After many years of decreases, funding freezes, and changes to the State's funding formulas, the cost of the levy is both small and essential. A \$100,000 homeowner will only pay \$8.60 per year, while a \$50,000 homeowner will only pay \$4.30 per year.

**Q : I am happy with the Library now. Why should I increase my taxes?**

The 1/2 mill that we are requesting is a renewal, it is not a new tax. Without funding, there will be deeper cuts to materials, staff, and hours. Without the passage of this issue, we will not be able to keep the Library as it is now.

**Q : Why are the residents of the Delphos City School District exempt from voting on this levy issue?**

As a free public county library, the Brumback Library was established in 1898 for the use of all inhabitants of Van Wert County. Our legal boundaries, however, do not include the portion of the boundaries of the Delphos City School District which overlaps into Van Wert County. The Delphos Public Library, founded in 1912, is chartered as a school district library under Ohio Revised Code 3375.15 and its boundaries are that of the Delphos City School District.

It should also be noted that the Delphos Public Library has been awarded funding through its own local levy for many years. The residents of Delphos support their library financially. The Brumback Library is not permitted to ask voters of that area to vote on any levy which seeks funding for our library.

**Q: What kinds of improvements is my local library considering?**

We do not know any specifics concerning each branch library, but we do know that with the reduction of State funding, we have had to defer purchases of books and other materials in all facilities. With the levy we will be able to maintain many of the services and



continue to keep these buildings in good condition.

**Q : Why do you need the money? How can you justify such a levy?**

The State has reduced funding to all of Ohio's public libraries over the past fourteen years. The Brumback Library is receiving considerably less annually since 2002, resulting in cuts to both services and resources. Our revenues have dropped, but usage has continued to escalate.

**Q : The Library did the right thing by cutting hours and services to live within its budget instead of asking for an increase.**

Within the past fourteen years, the Brumback Library has not had a major increase in State funding since revenues from Ohio have been reduced substantially. The funding cuts, freezes, and formula funding changes have had a long-term effect.

**Q : Why does the Library purchase and maintain an audiovisual collection? DVDs, videos, and CDs belong in a video store, not the library.**

DVDs, videos, and CDs are excellent learning tools and avenues of entertainment for all ages. With audiovisual materials, you can learn a new language, explore a new interest, learn your ABCs, examine our country's history, and visit faraway lands.

**Q : Why don't you use volunteers to run the Library?**

We do use volunteers in as many positions as possible. We are indeed grateful for their help and support, but we also need trained librarians and staff in order to provide the quality of services and programs which are needed.

**Q : Businesses and private donors give many donations. Why don't you ask them for money?**

We are constantly looking for additional sources of revenue for the Library, including businesses and private donors.