

Why and How a Library for Birch Bay?

Based on the latest census data, with a population of 8,500 full time residents, there are many essential public services that the Birch Bay community needs, and a public library is one of those essential public services for community literacy and education.

The need for a library is magnified by the fact that Birch Bay does not have a school. It depends upon the Blaine School District to provide this vital and important service. When you add the fact that 60% of the students attending Blaine schools come from the Birch Bay community, you must ask: are our children being truly well served?

Community libraries are much more than merely a place for books. They are a place of engagement for children in the sights and sounds of the world in the comfort and safety of services close to home. Libraries enhance the lives of senior citizens with access to information and the opportunities to engage with others to learn, socialize and volunteer. Libraries enable tourists and visitors to learn more about this new-to-them place of forests and the Salish Sea. Libraries enable toddlers to experience the world of storybooks.

The citizens of this community are ready to make the Birch Bay Vogt Community Library a reality. A survey of residents conducted by the Whatcom County Library System received an overwhelming response indicating that over 80% of the residents would welcome, and use, a local library and that they would lend their financial support to make it a reality.

The current estimated cost to build this library is \$3.5 million. The effort to raise this money is underway; beginning with the Friends of Birch Bay Library forming a Development Committee to oversee this task. The Development Committee has begun by first taking the time to learn the steps of and understand the mechanics of developing and implementing a Capital Fundraising Campaign of this nature.

This process begins by building relationships with local businesses, citizens and other interested parties who will assist in this endeavor. The Development Committee is working in a close relationship with The Whatcom County Library System, the Whatcom County Library Foundation, and other interested partners to build a campaign that will stand the test of time, leading to its ultimate success in building the Birch Bay Vogt Community Library.

If you would like to help in making this very worthy project a reality, now is the time to step forward. Whether it is by serving on the Development Committee or simply joining The Friends of Birch Bay Library (FOBBL) organization, adding your support can help provide the community-wide support that is needed for a successful outcome.

Pat Jerns, Chair, Development Committee
Friends of Birch Bay Library