Jackson County Library Services is a library system that has had its fair share of crisis. Closed down in 2007 for a period of six months, it has climbed back from rock bottom and is on its way to being a strong leader in the Jackson County, Oregon community. To ensure future success, new procedures for library’s staffing, programing, community outreach and technology will be implemented between the 2015-2016 and 2018-2019 fiscal years in order to make the library more cohesive and higher-functioning in the twenty first century community. The changes made by JCLS will show Jackson County residents that the library desires to meet their growing and evolving needs while at the same time encouraging and development a love for lifelong learning.

“Without the library, you have no civilization” - Ray Bradbury
Jackson County Library Services (JCLS) in Jackson County, Oregon serves a population of over 200,000 through fifteen different library branches.

Our Mission Statement

1. Provides patrons with free access to high-speed Internet and other technology and communications materials (e.g. computers, printers, fax machines).

2. Advocates education and literacy for patrons to help enrich their personal goals and make everyday tasks easier.

3. Creates and maintains a safe, accessible, and relevant environment for all patrons to work individually and collaboratively with each other and staff members.

4. Helps expand the reaches of education, learning, and reading to youth and adults.

5. Maintains the library as a leader and positive contributor in the community.
The two V’s of JCLS

Vision:
Be a central technology resource. Broaden the technology resources the library has to accommodate a wider range of library patrons. Make library services available beyond the library’s four walls by strengthening the library’s and the local communities ties through outreach programming and local partnerships.

Values:
Fifteen different branches that are united as one unit to enable lifelong learning and informed decision making for users of all ages and backgrounds.

- Allow for fair and reliable access to information and education
- Allow for exceptional library service
- Value a positive staff working environment and welcoming library environment
Jackson County Oregon: At a Glance

- Jackson County is the sixth largest country in Oregon with 11 cities and 34 unincorporated communities. Their principal industries are health care, agriculture, lumber, manufacturing and tourism.
- Tourism includes the internationally famous Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Britt Music and Art Festival.
- Jackson County has one college, Southern University Oregon and is also home to various media outlets such as Jefferson Public Radio, National Public Radio and Rogue Valley Community Television.
- All Jackson County libraries closed their doors for 6 months back in 2007 due to loss of federal funding to the county which resulted in the closure. JCLS re-opened later that year but funding was still unsteady throughout the years and stable library funding was not secured until May of 2014 with a voter approved property tax vote for library services.
- JCLS has been operated by Library System and Services, LLC (LSSI), a for profit company that runs libraries, since late 2007. However JCLS’s contract with LSSI is up in June 2015 and negotiations are still being decided on both sides if the contract will be renewed or not.
# JCLS SWOT Analysis

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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<td>● Floating collection allows for flexibility of certain library items.</td>
<td>● A fiscal budget that is dependent on outside revenue for some of the library’s most popular programming such as Ready to Read, various story times and funding for technology equipment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Many popular programming and outreach are offered by JCLS for the community such as story times, educational speakers, family movie night and different types of free workshops and classes.</td>
<td>● Inconsistency of funding and staff from branch to branch which can lead to low staff morale.</td>
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<td>● Strong community connections such as the Jackson County Library Foundation and Friends of the Library.</td>
<td>● Lack of staff training in key library areas such as technology and emergency procedures.</td>
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<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<td>● Creation of the Jackson County Library District (JCLD) in 2014 that secured stable library funding through a permanent tax base with revenue dedicated specifically for library operations</td>
<td>● JCLD has the responsibility to now actively maintain voter’s support annually in order to maintain or increase levels of library funding.</td>
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<td>● Permanent funding allows for longer library hours, improving existing services and hiring additional staff members as well as an increase in technology based services offered to the public.</td>
<td>● Funding for JCLD comes from property tax which can fluctuate on a yearly basis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Support from all local business and communities no matter how small or big the businesses are must be cultivated and respected in order for funding and support of the library to continue.</td>
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Research on the topic of mission statements has addressed various concepts:

❖ **Trust**

A mission statement must ensure that libraries consistently serve accordingly with the guidelines drafted in the mission statement, in order to foster and nurture trust from the social sector.
Values

An image conscience concept. Values project a belief system by answering the question of what qualities best embodies library services.

Democracy, intellectual freedom, privacy, stewardship, literacy and reading, and aesthetic values are universal (Gazo, 2011, p. 54).
“Libraries have diversified.”
(Balas, 2007, p. 30.)

Technology is the cornerstone of information sharing in the 21st century.

Various devices help forge the community networking bond for purposes of a universal social media connection for quality learning.
Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Incorporate modern technology and training into daily life and services provided by JCLS

Action Plan: Establish a TECH COMMITTEE made up of no more than 10 current JCLS employees

- Compile Technology Survey for JCLS staff and Jackson County community with 5-10 questions available in print and online. Available for 8 weeks in Summer 2015. Results in by Fall 2015.
- Fall 2015 - present survey findings to Jackson County Library Board.
- Research ways to find funding for technology upgrades either from JCLS annual budget FY 2015-16 or outside sources.
- Find a low cost local service for technology training of reference and circulation staff to be carried out Spring/Summer 2016, to be completed no later than Fall 2016.
- Confer with library director and branch managers to assess computer infrastructure. Compile list of most urgent and vital upgrades. Deadline for technology upgrade or replacement no later than Summer 2016.
- Winter 2017 - compile follow-up survey to gage success, failures and improvement. How well did JCLS do? Survey will be conducted on a yearly basis from now on.
- Tech committee to meet 4 times per year over next 3 years to assess effects of new tech policy.
- Summer 2019 - meet with branch managers to assess positives / negatives of tech upgrades / replacement. Look at results to make a new tech plan for next 3 years.
Goal 2: Cultivate a better work environment through improved professional development, pay and benefits, and security

Action Plan: Establish EMPLOYEE WELLNESS COMMITTEE made up of 5 managerial staff

- Conduct 2 surveys for JCLS employees. One on wellness that measures physical and mental health with an emphasis on technostress, and the other on knowledge, training and empowerment. Both surveys to be distributed via work email at beginning / end of FY 2015-16.
- Mandatory meeting for branch managers led by Employee Wellness Committee to be held no later than September 2015 in Medford to discuss results of survey and distribute literature on new standards; for example: a mandatory one hour rotation between staff members working front desk with back room circulation staff. Managers required to discuss meeting with branch staff.
- At completion of both surveys, reassessment of employee needs, especially understaffed branches like Ashland, Medford & Central Point. Potential for new hires, 5% pay increase, additional training/workshops, promotion of PT staff to full-time with benefits. Survey goal is to increase staff satisfaction.
- Fall 2015, establish a SECURITY LIBRARY COMMITTEE, to assess current / prospective needs plus budget. Draw up proposal and present to Library Board. Implement new security plan no later than Fall 2019.
Strategic Plan

**Goal 3:** Advance and maintain outreach and marketing programs at JCLS

**Action Plan:** Establish *MARKETING/OUTREACH COMMITTEE* made up of no more than 10 JCLS employees

1. Start new fundraising campaign with potential slogan of “JCLS Community Library Funds.”
2. Twice yearly book sales of discarded library books and donations. Seek new partnerships with trustees and substantial donors as well as local businesses. Maintain current community outreach programs such as storytime, family nights, free classes, and guest speakers.
3. Utilize local media such as newspapers, local TV stations, and current annual events such as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and the Britt Music Festival to promote libraries. New alliance with Southern Oregon University to create an online library newspaper that links to the JCLS website to promote the library to college students.
4. Establish 2 adult resource centers with employment seeking resources (print and digital) and workshops.
5. Twice yearly survey available in print and via email sent to library card holders and Jackson County community to assess effectiveness of advertising, i.e. what works and what doesn't?
6. At end of FY 2015-16, create and maintain budget reports to analyze cost vs. revenue. If revenue exceeds cost, excess funds to be added to technology fund and other areas of JCLS where needed.
Strategic Plan

Goal 4: Maintain and enhance current and new JCLS programs, services and collections
Action Plan: PATRON SURVEY to gain feedback from library card holders and community to
determine what JCLS currently does successfully and where to focus on further enhancements

- Survey to be distributed in print and electronically at beginning/ end of FY 21015-16
- Programming staff / managers to analyze results of survey to determine what services to maintain/ enhance.
  Attendance numbers for prior programming will also be taken into consideration.
- Continuation of programs in children’s and YA services including promotion and funding of Early Literacy.
- Continuation of Friends of the Library funded monthly family movie nights held at each branch with free popcorn.
- Renewal of Learn a Palooza for FY 2015-16 to contain activities from previous year as well as new vendors.
- Continuation of monthly Lego Makerspaces and Storytelling Guild.
- Increase availability and diversity of free computer offered workshops.
- Interlibrary loans and WorldCat to offer books not already in JCLS system. Usage analyzed at end of FY2015-16 to
determine if adding new materials to library catalog would decrease need for both programs.
Based on articles and books used in the literature review with information ranging from mission statements, outreach, finances, and management, all of which directly relate to and assist in the development of new goals for Jackson County Library Services.

Some highlights include:

- Balas, J. L. (2007). Do you know what your mission is?. *Computers In Libraries*, 27(2), 30-32. The ins and outs of library mission statements and how important they are during strategic planning.
- McMullen, A. (2013). Running on empty: The value of values. *Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances*, 26(1), 4-6. Another argument for the need for a well thought out mission statement to communicate the library’s value to staff, patrons and stakeholders.
- Collins, J. (2005). *Good to great and the social sectors: Why business thinking is not the answer: A monograph to accompany Good to great: Why some companies make the leap--and others don’t*. Boulder, CO: Jim Collins. Collins advocates that the key to success for a public library is leadership, it can make or break an organization taking it from just being mediocre to exceptional.
Conclusion

JCLS incorporates a widely diverse community so a strategic plan is necessary to address how to make the most of its limited resources by reaching out and strengthening bonds with not only current library card holders but also potential new converts. In order to remain viable, JCLS needs to upgrade its technology, maintain and enhance current programs, find new stable and ongoing sources of funding, and to take care of current and future employees in order to create a happy and healthy work environment. With the successful implementation of all of the above, JCLS will have the ability to cultivate and promote a positive library experience for all throughout the community for years to come.