



# Hardin County, Kentucky

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Judge/Executive  
Harry L. Berry



## Our Library's Value To Our Community

### Community Value

Sometimes the key to a vibrant healthy community can be right under our nose, hidden in plain sight. Our public library is one of those keys in Hardin County.

Public libraries are a social creation binding members of the community together while evolving to reflect our changing society. Library usage is skyrocketing. In uncertain economic times, public libraries provide needed resources for education, training, job-search, and the acute need for internet access to apply for jobs and social services. Our residents cannot always afford expensive bookstores; the library becomes a critical public service for them.

Libraries, like city halls and post offices, are essential to strong communities. To meet the needs of our community, our library is moving towards a "house of access." Without personal access to the internet, public libraries provide the only free public access for our citizens to reach e-government. Federal, state, and local governments rely on the public library to provide internet access and assistance to enable its citizens to file taxes, make requests, enroll in vital public programs such as Social Security, and secure numerous essential government forms.

Kentuckians checked out almost 20 million books from public libraries and bookmobiles in addition to more than nine million audio visual items in 2012, while welcoming almost 20 million visitors.

### The Librarians' Value

The library helps our citizens become more self-sufficient. Its most distinctive feature is its librarians. They are experts on helping the visitor research topics and find answers for free! Librarians are unique individuals in today's society as they help one person at a time. The public librarian acts as a guide to helping patrons find the resources they need by teaching them how to use online databases. They are committed to promoting lifelong learning in order to create a community of well-informed individuals.

Our library is a symbol of opportunity for us. It's a place where you can go to hear interesting speakers, discuss new ideas or books, take classes, or take home a book, CD, or DVD. It's owned by everyone and can be counted on day after day.

### Hardin County Public Library's Mission

We are your contemporary resource connecting generations through learning and exploring, thereby enriching the community and culture.

### Helping People to Help Themselves

Hardin County's Library offers research databases free of charge, such as *EbscoHost* and *The Kentucky Virtual Library*. These databases help the reader find magazine, journal, and newspaper articles, reference books, and textbooks. It also provides *Heritage Quest*, a comprehensive database of American genealogical sources. The Hardin County Bar Association provides our library with *Westlaw*, a legal research database. To help the job seekers, the library offers *Career Transitions*, *Testing and Education Reference Center*, a database to assist in GED, ACT, and SAT Prep, and includes career tools and exams. And for those of us who repair our own vehicles, the library offers *Chilton Library*, a database for car and truck repair manuals).

The library provides databases to answer children's questions too, such as: *Kid's Search* (grades K-8), *Searchasaurus* (Primary through middle school grades), and *Student Research Center* (grades 6-12).

Our public library has developed training sessions open to all, covering many subjects--the basics of setting up a new business, using basic computer software, children's reading programs, and adult book clubs.

### Outreach Programs

Our library provides outreach services to our citizens through its Bookmobile. This van travels throughout the county making regular stops to provide library services to child care centers, homebound and disabled patrons, and citizens in our outlying communities.

E-books are also available through our County Library's website. The service allows the reader to download e-books to personal electronic readers for a two-week period. Our librarians will assist patrons to set up an account and use the service.

### Conclusion

The University of South Carolina conducted a research study in 2005 entitled "The Economic Impact of Public Libraries." Some of the significant finds of this study show public libraries:

- Improve overall quality of life
- Increase local property values
- Attract new businesses
- Enhance personal fulfillment
- Nurture a love of reading
- Provide a source of personal enjoyment
- Help patrons find a new job or start a business
- Assist workers to be more productive
- Introduce users to new technologies

Yes, our public library does economically impact our county—adds to our vibrancy—and, is sitting right under our nose— hidden in plain sight!