

# Marthasville library will happen, but time not yet right, director says

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Scenic Regional Library District Director Steven Campbell says the public library district will almost certainly build a location in Marthasville in the future — but maybe not as soon as some local residents would like.

Campbell and library district board members met with a committee of Marthasville-area residents in October to discuss the possibility of a branch to serve the southern part of Warren County. The committee is eager to have the programs and services a library offers be more readily accessible in their area.

Campbell told *The Record* that he was happy to see a group of people who are so enthusiastic about the possibility of having a library in their community. But he said there are some requirements, most importantly population density, that an area needs to meet before the tax-funded library district can justify the expense of building and operating a new branch.

Marthasville is heading in the right direction, and Campbell said the library district had started preliminary research for a future location there before the local committee reached out to them. But the time isn't right yet, Campbell said, acknowledging some residents might be disappointed with that stance.

"The bottom line is we would love to

have a branch in Marthasville. I think it's a matter of 'when,' not 'if.' It's going to happen eventually," Campbell said. "I just think our timeline and their timeline are a little different."

The director pointed to steadily increasing population in the Marthasville area, as well as the prospect of upcoming economic development in the region, as positive signs for the kind of growth that could eventually support a local library. But there's no way to predict if that growth will happen in just a few years, or a much longer time, Campbell said.

He explained that to determine good branch locations, the library district tries to identify how many people live within a 10-minute drive of that spot. The New Haven branch, currently the smallest branch in the district, has about 500 more people living nearby than Marthasville's would, Campbell said.

Even once the district determines that a library branch in Marthasville is a feasible investment, the process of site selection, land acquisition, surveying, engineering and construction would still take several more years, he added.

In the meantime, Campbell said he hopes area residents take advantage of an agreement that allows patrons to freely use the Washington Public Library, as well as books and media that can be sent by mail or provided digitally through Scenic Regional Library's website.