

Stayton Public Library to celebrate new digs

Groundbreaking set for tomorrow begins construction

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Even when Stayton constructed a new library in the late 1980s, the people involved knew the 5,000 square foot building wouldn't serve the community's needs for long.

In response to the issue, the Stayton Public Library Foundation began to work toward the ultimate goal of expanding the building. On Sept. 7, the Foundation plans to break ground on a 7,500-square-foot expansion that was in the works since the 1980s building.

According to Stayton Public Library Foundation President David Karr, the new addition, contracted by Slayden Construction, will cost \$2.36 million and will add on to the north and west of the existing building.

Currently, the Foundation has raised \$1.8 million from community and business donations, which, according to Karr, is enough to finish construction on the first phase of the building.

"We're asking everyone in the community to help in a variety of ways," Karr said. "We've requested grants and are hoping to receive awards from different foundations. We're also asking businesses and individuals to give whatever they can."

The construction plans include an expansion in nearly every aspect of the library.

"Right now [the building] is too small to serve the community adequately," Stayton Public Library Foundation Campaign Director Tass Morrison said. "There is limited space for children and youth, for people with disabilities and there is always a line to use the computers."

She said that after the library construction is complete, there will be more space for the community's youth and the reading programs – which now take place in the community center due to lack of room in the library – more space for people with disabilities, an expanded computer area for both youth and adults and an activities center for people from the community to gather.

While the Foundation hopes for the construction to be complete by July 1, 2007, the current facility will still be accessible to the community construction occurs.

After the expansion work is completed, Karr said, the building will be gifted to the city along with an endowment fund that will offset the additional cost of operating the larger space.

“I believe a library is an integral part of our community,” he said. “It supplements schools, especially since their budgets are all under pressure. Kids file in the library after school until there’s no more room. The library is a wonderful asset and resource for the community.”

Morrison also explained the dire need for more proficient library services.

“I think libraries are important for all communities,” she said. “They’re the center for democracy in the United States, and everyone is welcome and can participate and use the library and get all sorts of information that will improve their lives and their children’s lives.”

“The library needs to be adequate,” Morrison continued. “Parents want their children to participate and not be crammed into a corner.”

The groundbreaking ceremony, in turn, will be a milestone in the library’s history as it will begin to fulfill the building’s original intent: to provide knowledge and services efficiently to all who seek them.

“We’ve waited a long time for this,” Morrison said. “We want everyone in the community to get behind us now so we can really complete the plans as they have been indicated.”