

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT – October, 2013

Library Milestone

Construction is finished and we officially opened to the public on Monday, October 21, 2013.

There is an amazing new space waiting for customers, who visited in the thousands last week, to see the Library's self-funded addition and remodel of existing space. The new 24,000 sf library boasts automatic entry doors, bold colors, unique lighting, tons of natural light, 6 private study rooms, 24 public computers, a quiet reading room with fireplace and study tables, a family activity room and sunroom - both adjacent to the youth area, a copy center, more seating, additional parking, family restrooms, a teen room and specific junior area, and more!

We have created several community areas – and noted to visitors to, “enjoy a conversation in the table area looking out onto 151st Street. Read a magazine or newspaper in the library's "living room". Sit with your children in the diner booth areas. Appreciate the quiet in the Heroes quiet reading room. Enjoy working next to your child at the family computer area. Watch the sports activity from the sunroom. Work with friends in a private study room.” We listened to our community and brought forward what residents asked for along with some special areas that we know they will love.

Outside covered benches and seating anchor a lovely garden bed. More plantings and flower beds will continue to be placed around the building as the site work continues, along with a ring road and staff parking on the east side of the building. More than ever before @ Homer Library!

Site

Site work continues which will be detailed at the board meeting from our construction advisors, ICS and architect. The expansion project is in the final stages. Carpet and cabinetry has been installed, lighting is in place and finishes completed. We continue to coordinate the process of moving the collections and installing additional book stacks and furnishings during the period that we must temporarily close to the public.

Homer Glen Lands Day Tree Planting

Homer Twp. Library was chosen by the Village of Homer Glen Environment Committee (Chair Margaret Sabo) to be the recipient of a 5-1/2 inch Celebration Maple tree. This donation of tree and planting cost approximately \$2,000. As a celebration of the 11th annual Homer Glen Lands Day the Tree Planting Ceremony was held on Friday, Oct. 25, at the Library. The tree, from Teerling Nursery, was planted near the front entrance and west of the library building by Rick Gomez owner of Instant Shade Tree Transplanting Inc. A brief program was held. Mayor Daley, Village Manager Davis, Environment Committee members, and residents were very complimentary about the expanded library and the addition of a lovely new tree on our site. We extend our appreciation to the Village for this honor and to Mr. Teerling and Rick Gomez for their support of Lands Day and for the Homer Library.

In General

1. We have scheduled School District 33C field trips to showcase our youth and library areas.
2. Sunday hours will begin in January 2014.
3. The Library Calendar that lists all of our programs is accessible from the Web page.
4. Both fall school visits and registration have begun to promote the library's collections, services and support of teachers and students.
5. The Library Web page highlights a “quick click” homework/assignment alert form on the site at www.homerlibrary.org. Teachers use this as a means of sending our staff messages, questions, or comments.
6. Distribution of monthly calendars to local schools is ongoing via a parent information log-in portal.
7. We have scheduled a full slate of quality fall and winter programming.
8. The Open House Celebration Committee has many ideas for the November 24th event.

Levy

The draft levy is within your packets. There will be a 7 p.m. special meeting preceding the regular board meeting this month for a public truth in taxation hearing before adoption of the 2012-13 levy.

The levy defines the categories in which tax dollars are being allocated to. The recent legal notice simply does not allow us to provide the detail necessary or the reasons that adequately describe levy intentions. Homer Township Library operates in a fiscally conservative manner. We proactively pursue grants, sponsorships, special event fundraisers, and awards that benefit our community. The library board and administration are proactive in trying to maintain our tax rate so we can operate effectively. Over the long term, the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law ("tax cap") has reduced the library's tax rate from the .15 rate that was originally established in 1982. Due to the tax cap our rate has eroded down to .1268. This creates a significant loss of funds for library services and in providing for the operation of the library. The library levies a higher amount than we actually will receive in part to ensure we do not lose further ground. The levy notice cites a 12.9% increase. We anticipate an actual gain of approximately 2-3%, and that will be dependent on actual "new growth" monies. Last year the levy notice was essentially the same and we saw a 4% increase, again due to new growth monies. The levy request helps the library to:

1. Retain the maximum dollars that as a taxing district we are allowed by statute.
2. Insure that we capture both the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and New Growth monies. If there is new growth in the community and we are serving more people, our rate is adjusted so the library has proper funds to operate to serve residents adequately and meet State Standards. If there is limited or no new growth we see narrow or no gain.

The increase on the corporate and special purpose levies was "ballooned" to capture any new property in addition to the CPI increase. This 1/3 of the levy increase was to capture tax revenue for new property and, to the extent that all the new property does not materialize, then it will not be extended and collected. The other 2/3rds of the increase is for a back-up levy put into place for a new bond issue. However, the District plans to pay the bond payments from operating revenues and does not anticipate using this back-up levy. Accordingly, the District will abate the bond levy before the County extends and collects the tax.

At one time the library accounted for approximately 3% of a homeowner's tax bill. We now account for approximately 1.8% of a person's tax bill. Our Library mission is to make available to all people (from birth through senior citizenship) the materials and resources they need to participate in lifelong learning, enjoy a good quality of life, and to remain civically engaged. As a community center we take great pride in serving our community with excellence. Usage continues to increase and we have approximately 600 visitors daily. Long range budget planning continues to allow us to serve our Homer Glen and Homer Township communities well.

Special Events

1. The Goodings Grove Lions Club has changed to become the Gleaners Club, which is based on Gleaner Life Insurance Society. Our new Oak Street Chapter will be undertaking community service projects. The Club has chosen the library as the recipient of community support for its' initial year, which will kick off in November with the 2013 Fall Harvest for area seniors. In the past we have had more than 90 seniors visit over a two-hour period to receive free fruits and vegetables, courtesy of a partnership the Lions Club initiated with Fairplay Foods. We also serve coffee and had a snack table so seniors are able to socialize together.

This is one illustration of the library serving in many ways as the social center place in the community. This year the venue has been changed to the Old Town Hall due to our library construction and will return to the library next year.

2. Fall Field Trips have been scheduled as an outreach endeavor to school classrooms in November to encourage all students to get a library card and feel comfortable visiting the library.
3. October is Illinois Arts Month. We are displaying local photographer/artist Bill Uznanski's many artistic photos in our display case this fall.

Staffing

As we acclimate in the expanded space we will be reviewing staffing levels and budget to ensure adequate coverage.

Programs + Events

Upcoming library events and programs include:

- ◆ October 21 OPEN OPEN OPEN
- ◆ October Illinois Arts Month
- ◆ October StoryWalk book changed to *The Lonely Scarecrow*
- ◆ October 13-19 Teen Read Week
- ◆ October 28-Nov. 2 Kids Drop in Crafts
- ◆ October 31 Trick or Treat @ the Library
- ◆ November 1- Dec 13 American Girl Fundraiser / Raffle
- ◆ November 4 – 21 Simply Stories + Polish Simply Stories
- ◆ November 5 Teen Book Club
- ◆ November 8 Arm Chair Traveler program
- ◆ November 13 Chess & Checkers Night
- ◆ November 14 TAB Teen Advisory Board Meeting
- ◆ November 16 Babysitting Class by American Heart Association
- ◆ November 18 Mystery Book Club Discussion
- ◆ November 18-30 Drop in Crafts
- ◆ November 19 Kids Crafternoons (ages 8-12)
- ◆ November 20 Adult Book Discussion
- ◆ November 21 Family Reading Pajama Party
- ◆ November 24 **GRAND OPENING 1pm**
- ◆ November 24 SANTA VISIT 2-4pm
- ◆ November 26 Thanksgiving BINGO & LEGOS
- ◆ November 26 Chick Lit Book Discussion
- ◆ November (TBA) Senior Harvest with Gleaners Oak Chapter

Conclusion

This monthly report is intended to give you a detailed overview and provide pertinent information on local, regional and state issues.

- Upcoming priorities include working budget portions of the budget.
- A Grand Opening Committee is working on the event planning
- Fire District Personnel have been scheduled to tour the library over three days in November. We also plan outreach to the Will County Sheriff to do the same.
- Mokena Library was our first official tour. They brought 25 staff members and three trustees for a complete tour and much discussion of how our new space was developed. It was very interesting.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need any item in my report detailed more fully.

Sheree Kozel-La Ha

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Library Director

10/21/13