

Next chapter turning for new LJ library - Public input on facility to be taken tonight

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- Author/Byline: MALLORY BILGER, Staff Writer
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LEBANON JUNCTION — For two years, the Lebanon Junction branch of the Bullitt County Public Library system has been forced to host a children's summer reading program in the community center instead of at the library because of overcrowding.

To BCPL Director Randy Matlow, the program's popularity was encouraging, but counterproductive when the children couldn't fit into Lebanon Junction's small library for the event.

"The whole point of the summer reading program is to encourage children to check out books," Matlow said.

But soon overcrowding and many other obstacles facing the Lebanon Junction branch will be alleviated with the construction of a new building more than three-times the size of its current location at 276 E. Main Street.

Right now the branch's book shelves, meeting, reading, office, and technology areas all share the same space — a problem that Lebanon Junction library Branch Supervisor Mary Yocum said often causes overcrowding and confusion.

She said some patrons often decline to stay in the library because it's too crowded.

"We have a lot of elderly that come in. A lot of women middle aged and lots of school children for homework," Yocum said. "It's the only place the teens have to go in Lebanon Junction."

Matlow said plans to build an approximately 7,400 square-foot facility on Highway 61 across from Ferrellgas company are in the final design phase.

The new library will be located between Lebanon Junction Elementary School and the main part of town, still within walking distance from many locations.

The building is being designed by Greg White of Studio Kremer Architects, who designed the Mount Washington and Ridgway Memorial branches.

The project is estimated to \$1.5 million, which is a combination of grant and tax dollars, Matlow said.

The new Lebanon Junction branch will be one level with parking located in the front. The building will have a community meeting room and separate children and teen areas. The community meeting room will be available after library hours for civic organizations.

The property will also feature an outdoor reading area, more computers and — of course — more books.

Yocum said new library's features versus the current one are almost too numerous to mention.

When asked about which feature she was most excited about, Yocum said, "Definitely the extra space we're going to have."

Matlow said Lebanon Junction's branch will be special because it will integrate the best features of the county's two newest library buildings — Mount Washington and Ridgway Memorial in Shepherdsville.

The new location will also highlight Lebanon Junction's important railroad history into its architecture and decor.

"The building has very large overhangs like a train station. That same theme will carry inside," Matlow said.

Yocum said although the office staff will enjoy having more space, the community will get the most benefit from the project.

"I really feel like it's going to help the community in a lot of ways. It's much needed there. I just feel like it will be a big boost for the community," she said.

Matlow said that although the project is in its final design phase the plans are still subject to change.

The Lebanon Junction branch will be hosting a community meeting April 14 at 5 p.m. to discuss its plan for the library's new building. Matlow said he wants public input on the building design, programs to be offered at the new location and more.

