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Spotlight on Construction: Forsyth County Public Library Unveils Expansion, Renovation

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As part of its renovation, the Forsyth County Public Library's information desk was relocated to a central location that provides a welcoming view for patrons entering through the main doors.

Forsyth County Public Library unveils expansion, renovation

by Carla Beasley

The Forsyth County Public Library has completed an addition and renovation project. A 15,000-square-foot Administrative Office facility was added to the Cumming Library building. These offices provide space for headquarters staff, including public services managers, children's programming staff, business services, collection development and technical services, facilities staff and information technology staff. A conference room, training lab, server room and storage areas complete the functional requirements.

Administrative staff had been located in various offices, hallways and closets in the Cumming Library facility. They moved into the new headquarters building in January 2007. Once this was completed, a major renovation project was undertaken in the public area. About 3,500 square feet of space was reclaimed from former offices. A 1,000-square-foot reading room,



Large murals decorate two walls in the children's area of the library.

housing the magazines and newspapers, was added to the back.

The new design scheme was crafted to appeal to future users. Existing mahogany furnishings, traditionally styled, such as end panels and the circulation desk, were blended with a contemporary color scheme and carpet design. The carpet was laid in large chevrons, with seven colors ranging from dark blue at the entrance to light blue and light green in the center to dark green at the back of the building. Columns and soffits were trimmed in silver. Decorative lighting was added several places. The Friends contributed funds for a focal piece — a bronze statue of a child reading.

The children's area doubled in size with additional space formerly the materials workroom. Large murals were painted on two walls. Support columns that were original to the building were retained, with a colorful carpet pattern setting this area apart for comfortable seating. Four children's computers with "Little Tykes" housing units were installed for young users. These computers are in use most of the time. A little 5-year-old girl said, "Thank you for the

new big kids' computers. They are awesome!"

The information desk moved into a central location, easily in view of patrons walking in the front doors.

Six more sit-down patron computers were added, with several additional stand-up terminals located near the stacks. Tables for laptop users to access power and data filled two walls. Shelving increased by 10 percent for expansion of the print and media collections.



The Forsyth County Friends group helped purchase this bronze statue of a reading child.

The biggest challenge of the renovation was moving the collection and shelving to lay new carpet. The library contracted with a firm to move the shelving with pneumatic shelf-movers — without removing the books. The shelf-movers were fascinating pieces of equipment that certainly made the move faster. Instead of the traditional rolled goods, the library chose carpet tiles, which have proved to be easier to maintain — soiled squares can be replaced within a matter of minutes.

Patrons have been complimentary of the new look. Staff report that patrons often say, "This place looks great!" Comments like these make all the work worthwhile. ▶▶