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Spotlight On CONSTRUCTION

Cherokee Regional works on tandem building projects

by Darla Chambliss

Well ... we did want to renovate and expand our libraries as they are bursting at the seams; however, we were not as keen to be working on them in tandem. Thank goodness each project is in a different phase. The Dade County Public Library

located in Trenton, Ga., is the *construction phase* of a long-awaited renovation and expansion that will add about 4,000 square feet to the existing shell. The LaFayette-Walker County Public Library is in the *design development phase* of a much-

needed expansion and renovation. Each library is gaining a community room, a YA department and a larger public computing area as well as what we hope will be an infusion of design and ambiance to the spaces. And ... dare we say it or even think it — perhaps a coffee shop.



Library staff members work with architects to define spaces that will be most useful in the new children's department at the LaFayette-Walker County Public Library. Shown in the photo above (from left to right): Kenny McDade and David Cameron, architects with Killian Clark Partnership; Chelsea Kovalevskiy, children's specialist at LaFayette-Walker County Public Library; and Lecia Eubanks, director. The expanded and redesigned children's department, young adult spaces and tween areas are important to the overall goal of the library building project. The design development phase is a crucial part of this project — each area of the library must be considered in great detail to produce the most useful and well-designed space. (Photo by Darla Chambliss)

The Dade County library project has been in the works for about eight years according to most library staffers and longtime patrons. According to Dade County library board member Donna Street, "This library has been trying to get itself redesigned for about nine years." This small- to medium-sized branch library is the only library serving Dade County, and as such, it is a very busy place. The closing of a local Shaw plant has made the library the place to go for job seekers. Lecia Eubanks and architects from Killian Clark Partnership have been working on the project together for the past six years, and the project is moving quickly through the construction phase. This library and staff should be safely moved into the newly designed and expanded space around May 1, 2010 – just in time for Summer Reading Club.

The LaFayette-Walker County project is another Killian Clark Partnership

design product. This time the architecture and design team was expanded because of the size of the building (with the addition, about 28,000 square feet.) The expansion to the building envelope — housing the Cherokee Regional Library, the LaFayette-Walker County Public Library and The Doris Hetzler Genealogy & History Library — is eagerly anticipated by a community that has outgrown its library space.

According to Lecia Eubanks, library director, “the new space, by community mandate, will need a coffee shop, a more contemporary ‘book-store type’ atmosphere, a community room, study rooms and access to technology in the form of large computing centers. We sought community input through surveys, both electronic and on paper, and we owe it to this community to get it right.”

Lecia and architects Jack Killian, David Cameron and Kenny McDade and many library staffers are working together to refine the spaces before the designs are shown to the volunteer project advisory team (LEAPT — Library Expansion Advisory Project Team). The LEAPT group members will be shown the latest plans in mid-December in order to gain more feedback and input during this planning phase.

Lecia and I and many of our staff members are now beginning the furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E) phase of the project with guidance from David Cameron, architect; Jane Grant, interior designer; and Jamie Rye, sales manager at COS Business Products & Interiors of Chattanooga, Tenn.

David and Jane offer the design guidance that we need, and Jamie advises us on durability, longevity and

quality issues associated with our choices. These folks are helping us put together a package for bid offerings on the FF&E portion of our contracts. We are in the early stages of this process; however, working with a good group is making the process enjoyable.

I do not think that Lecia or I would recommend tandem building projects to any sane person; however, we do

try to keep a sense of humor and a large amount of coffee brewing at all times. USDA Community Facilities grant funds and state and local funds have made each of these projects possible, and we are really excited about the possibilities for these libraries. ►►

Darla Chambliss is community services librarian for the LaFayette-based Cherokee Regional Library System.



Architects Jack Killian and Kenny McDade with Killian Clark Partnership Architects, a Ringgold, Ga., firm, work with Cherokee Regional Library Director Lecia Eubanks on the library renovation and expansion project. During a meeting, the group discusses staff work areas in the new library design. (Photo by Darla Chambliss)



Construction and site work began just a few weeks ago at the Dade County Public Library in Trenton, Ga. This photo was taken five weeks into the project on Nov. 30. (Photo by Jeremy Hobbs)