City close to unveiling new library designs

Eugene has long-awaited the new public library, which has been in the works for more than a decade

By Darren Freeman

Planning is near completion for the new Eugene Public Li-brary, which will be located downtown on West 10th Avenue between Charnelton and Olive streets. Library planners recently finished conforming designs to their \$31 million budget and hope to unveil finalized schematics and eccept feedback from the computation during a Nov. 16 vi

Library officials "can't wait to cut that ribbon" on the steps of the new site, said Julie Aspinwall-Lamberts, chair of the New Library Advisory Committee. Aspinwall-Lamberts feels the new library, scheduled to open early in 2002, will better serve Eugene than does the current library, located on West 13th Avenue also between Charnelton and Olive Streets.

The library has outgrown its 37,000-square-foot building, built in 1959, and organizers have been striving to find more space since 1986. After two failed levy initiatives, the library finally procured city funding in 1998 when the city council devoted \$18.2 million in urban renewal funds to the new library.

Other funding collected thus far includes \$1.8 million in tax dollars from the 1998 general election levy 20-02, \$1.4 million in donations and a \$1 million matching pledge from an anonymous donor.

A \$100,000 pledge from Friends of the Library as well as the proceeds from the sales of the downtown Sears building and the current library building will also go toward the new library. Library officials continue fundraising and hope to amass another \$4.5 million in community do-

Library planners say the new four-story, 90,000-square-foot location will offer more shelf space and reading/study rooms, which could be especially convenient for University students living off campus. Library officials plan to purchase new books and periodicals, and computers will be scattered throughout the library with some clustered together for group activities.

Citizens at community workshops with library officials and architects have requested a "Northwest flavor" for the aesthetic theme of the library, Aspinwall-Lamberts said. Library builders will use Northwest building materials and commission original artwork from seven Oregon artists.

"[The new floor plan] was designed to be comfortable and easy to use," Library Project Manager Carol Hildebrand said. "And there will be open space and quiet, both of which are commodities we don't have

Beyond an entryway containing gardens of Northwest plants, trees and a coffee shop, the first floor will include children's books and popular books; the second floor will

Library construction progress

The Eugene Public Library will move from its cramped 1959 building on 13th Avenue to a new, custom built downtown fa-

August 1987 Library submits report to City Council requesting a new larger facility.

1988-1993

May 1994 Levy for library, fire department and general building improvements falls to pass by less than 1% of wets.

November 1994 Levy for new library fails to pass, also by less than 1% of vote.

1996

1995

1997-1998 Mayor's Library Improvement Committee re-commends City Council dedi-cate funds to a new library.

June 1998 City Council dedi-cates Urban Renewal funds and the new site to the library.

November 1998 General election levy 20-02 passes dedicating tax dollars to the library.

February 1999 Conceptual designs, including vague floor plans, are finalized.

September 17, 1999 Preliminary schematics made public at downtown "kick off" cele-

November 16, 1999 Finalized schematics to be made public at a work session.

November 1999-2000 Land clearing and preparation, per-mitting and bidding.

Summer-Fall 2000 Construction to begin.

Early 2002 Grand opening.

SOURCE: Eugene Public Library

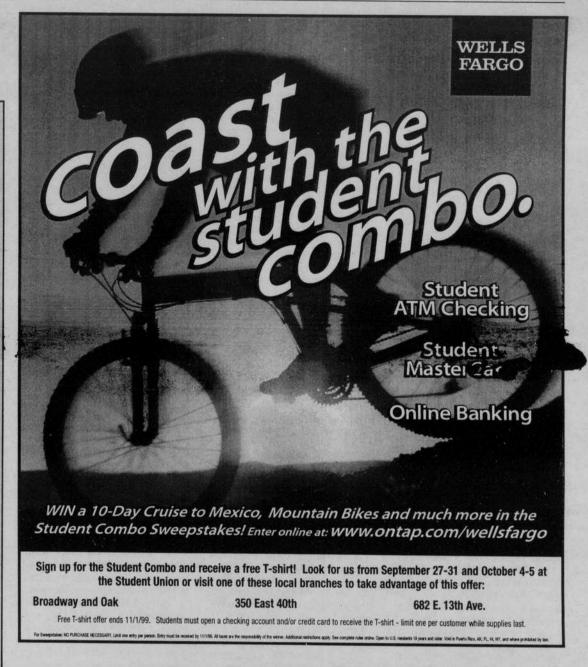
contain nonfiction, periodicals, reference materials and a business center; the third floor will house an adult fiction section; and the fourth floor will host business space leased by city work divisions. All proceeds from the leases will be funneled into the library's budget.

"We've designed a library that will last - that won't be dated — that will be placed on the historic register in 100 years," said Aspinwall-Lamberts. "It will complement our city and provide a public focal point."

But before construction can begin, the new site has to be cleared and prepared. The city needs to contract companies to demolish the Rice 'N' Spice Oriental Foods building and adjacent parking lot, decontaminate the soil and conduct an archeological survey of the lot, as required by city law.

Also, the city is in the process of rerouting sewer lines. Library planners hope to begin construction next summer or fall.

Finalized schematic designs are scheduled to be made public at a community workshop Nov. 16 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church at 1376 Olive St.





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