

Redmond Library is getting an upgrade

Building to close for renovations January 2023 through fall 2024

BY LEO BAUDHUIN
Redmond Spokesman

From updated meeting rooms and book displays to collaborative work spaces, the Redmond Library is up for an upgrade.

With construction set to run from January 2023 through the fall of 2024, Deschutes Public Library staff is hoping to transform the Redmond location into a “much more dynamic community center,” according to communications and development manager Chantal Strobel.

Although the library will close for construction, it will open a temporary location at 2127 South Highway 97 from January 2023 to September 2024, Strobel said. This means patrons will still be able to access materials and work in a smaller space while renovations are in progress.

The project will be funded by the \$195 million bond that Deschutes County voters approved in 2020. Strobel said the Redmond branch construction will draw on 20% of the library system’s bond funds, with other portions going toward revamping libraries in Sisters and La Pine and building a new central library in Bend.



Leo Baudhuin/Spokesman

The Redmond Library is set to undergo construction beginning January 2023. The Deschutes County Library hopes to expand the building and provide more community spaces.

Strobel said controversy surrounding the central library location — in which the city of Bend declined an exemption for the initial site — prompted a divided library board to select a new space. It did not impact

the timeline for the Redmond project. The library sits just off downtown’s main arteries, 827 SW Deschutes Ave.

“We have experienced wonderful support and partnership from the city of Redmond,

Redmond City Council and the Downtown Urban Renewal Advisory Committee,” she said.

Urban renewal program manager Chuck Arnold said the project ties into the committee’s goal of increasing community

use of the downtown area — especially as Redmond continues to grow.

“We really wanted to make sure that the library remains a central gathering point for our community and a central part of

our community,” he said.

For Strobel, that means renovations extend beyond simply expanding the Redmond Library’s book collection. She said many people in Redmond need a space to do work, but that the town doesn’t have many spots that people can access for free.

The new plan features study rooms, collaborative spaces, two meeting rooms that can remain open beyond the library’s hours of operation and creative spaces where community members can engage in crafts like painting, quilting or 3-D printing.

The first floor will also give room to a children’s discovery center, where kids can play with materials that foster learning and development, Strobel said. Youth will be able to access a dedicated teen space on the library’s new second floor.

The library redesign also includes a patio outdoor gathering space, a drive-up window for holds and drop-offs, solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations.

Samantha Korich, a library patron who recently moved to Redmond from Bend, said she enjoys the resources and events the library offers. She said it’s a great space within walking distance of her home for kids to hang out and to access movies and the internet.

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Nick Rosenberger/Spokesman

An employee at Oregon’s Wild Harvest in Redmond inspects bottles on Sept. 2 to be used for herbal supplements.

Wild Harvest

Continued from A1
CONTAMINATION

Records indicated that, in some cases, if the raw ingredients came to the Wild Harvests facility in multiple bags of the same lot, the quality control team would reject the bags with visible foreign materials, yet approve other bags. In other cases, the FDA wrote, the company appeared to approve bags after quality control used visual confirmation that foreign material was removed.

“Removing the visible foreign material may not ensure the absence of contaminants,” noted the FDA.

They highlighted one of Wild Harvest’s lots which was contaminated with wheat grains and how, even after removing the visible allergen from it, the material still tested positive for gluten.

The company, which manufactures dietary supplements like milk thistle, ginger and ginkgo capsules, uses whole agricultural crops in their products rather than powders — unlike most of their competitors.

Because of this, and like in the food processing industry, contaminants are common. “The FDA acknowledges that this is unavoidable,” Vieceli said.

For example, peanut butter is allowed to contain an average of one rodent hair or 30 insect fragments per 3.5 ounces. Even the US pharmacopeia, an independent organization that sets quality standards for medicines

and dietary supplements, allows up to 2 percent of foreign organic matter, Blumenthal said.

“Yes, we do find things,” Buresh said. “We do not send it out to our customers. We do not put it in our end product. We absolutely do not.”

According to Buresh, products at Oregon’s Wild Harvest get tested every step of the way. First when it arrives on the premises, then when it is sorted, milled, processed and packed into capsules. All machines used are disassembled, cleaned, sanitized and inspected. If at any point during the process a product does not meet their specifications, it is rejected.

Oregon’s Wild Harvest has been inspected three times by the FDA, but only found problems in its most recent inspection. In 2019, Wild Harvest was ranked as the Portland Business Journal’s Manufacturer of the year for an organization of 51-100 employees.

OTHER ISSUES

The company has responded six times since the first inspection, but the FDA said the responses have been insufficient and that Wild Harvest has failed to address a laundry list of issues outlined in the last year.

One such issue was an over-reliance on FTIR testing — a form of testing that analyzes the composition of their products on a molecular level. While FTIR is widely used, it cannot detect individual dietary ingredients in the company’s bulk blends.

Since then, the company says it has purchased and integrated a more powerful testing process that separates components in a liquid mixture and can better identify the composition of products.

Other violations included failure to use appropriate testing for microbial contamination and growth, placing “best buy” and “use by” dates on their products without data to back up these dates and failing to give specifications on the identity, purity, strength and composition of their products.

Oregon’s Wild Harvest mentioned that while the FDA was misleading with their quality control practices, the company acknowledged that paperwork was a stumbling block and something they needed to work on.

“It was really around our documentation that we had to be more clear on,” Vieceli said.

“Our paperwork was a failure,” Buresh said. “It really sums up the whole majority of it. It was our paperwork.”

Buresh and Vieceli added that they are working on fixing their documentation processes to meet the FDA requests.

According to Blumenthal, dietary supplements require an extremely detailed amount of paperwork with very technical documentation required for every piece of the process.

“Small businesses have a difficult time with this,” he said. “It’s extremely taxing from an overhead and time perspective.”

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Parking

Continued from A1

Yet while the city council argues, the problems of homelessness is only increasing in Redmond.

In spring, Redmond Police Department counted 17 vehicles in the sage east of 17th Street and north of Highway 126, near some of the largest employers in the city. By summer, that number had grown to 26. And just in the last few weeks, three RVs have ap-

peared near the Redmond Athletic Club.

Law forbids law enforcement and city crews from towing or removing homes though once they set up shop on public property, so there are few options once homeless camps are set up. That’s why Witcosky encouraged city council to take a proactive approach and set their own rules on how the camps would operate.

— The city also approved adding two questions to the

November ballot.

The first question is whether or not place a permanent ban on the manufacture of psilocybin products. The second question would put a two-year ban in place against psilocybin service centers.

— Council also made proclamations to recognize POW-MIA Awareness Day, Suicide Prevention Month and the 21st anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001.

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