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LIBRARY ANNOUNCES BUILDING EXPANSION

The East Bonner County Library District announced today that an architect has been selected and plans are moving forward on a \$3 million project to expand the Sandpoint Branch Library building. The contract with Architects West Incorporated (AWI) was signed earlier this month.

The existing Sandpoint Branch Library building, completed in 2000, was funded by a \$3,500,000 bond passed by Bonner County tax payers in 1998. The proposed expansion is expected to be funded by grassroots efforts including the sale of the two buildings owned by the Library District, grants, fund raising initiatives and existing funds earmarked for the building project. The Sandpoint Friends of the Library, a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization, has sponsored a matching donations initiative for the last two years in anticipation of the future project.

“We do not foresee, nor do we desire to float another bond to fund this project,” said Library Director Ann Nichols.

According to Nichols, national trends in library services are changing rapidly. Libraries are being charged with keeping up with and even setting innovations in technology, as well as providing makerspaces (places to create, invent and learn, using electronics, hardware and craft supplies) and offering programs that impact local economies in positive and measurable ways.

“These trends were just beginning to emerge 16 years ago when this building was constructed,” She said. “Today, our makerspace programs and community development initiatives have reached capacity in the physical space we have. Our social spaces are encroaching on our quiet spaces and our professional meeting rooms are being shared with our makerspace programs.”

The Library intends to add 10,000 SF, in two sections onto the existing 30,000 SF building. A 2-story addition on the southeast end and a 1-story piece on the northwest end of the building, plus a reorganization of the building’s floor plan will allow for a centralized technology center, additional book stack space, a Young Adult section and expanded community rooms and makerspace areas.

The adjoining lot on Cedar Street that was purchased in 2014 will most likely be used to expand the parking lot and add green space. Project Architect Marcus Valentine said that plans will begin to be drawn up once the review by the City of Sandpoint is completed in early April. AWI will develop a project timeline and the design process will begin.



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“We have already scheduled focus groups to steer the project design in the direction that will be most beneficial for Bonner County residents,” said Nichols. “This will be an ongoing process during the design phase.”

Valentine expects the plans to be finalized and the construction bidding process to begin in early 2017 with groundbreaking taking place as early as next spring. The Library intends to remain open during construction with the goal of creating as little disruption as possible.

“This project is so exciting for the community. We want people to know that we will be involving and informing the public every step of the way. The proposed expansion is a response to what people are telling us they need and we look forward to hearing more ideas,” said Marcy Timblin, Public Relations Specialist for the East Bonner County Library District.

Regular status updates, via press releases, community presentations and The Library District’s website and social media platforms will continue throughout the duration of the project.

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