

Support for Library/Cultural Arts Center Positive

By Drew Brookhart

Over the Columbus Days weekend members of the Library Board and Columbus Library Foundation Board were available in Frankfort Square to answer questions about the Library/Cultural Arts Center project. It was inspiring to hear people offer their heartfelt support for the project. All of the feedback was positive and people of all ages expressed excitement for the new facility. There were a lot of great questions about future programs and services, the design of the building, and the future of libraries. I will address the two most asked questions of the weekend here for those of you who may be wondering.

Where will the Library/Cultural Arts Center be located?

The Library/Cultural Arts Center will be on 14th street between 23rd and 24th Avenues, two blocks east of Columbus Public Library's current location. The Library/Cultural Arts Center will be located on the north side of 14th street and parking for the facility will be just across the street to the south.

When will we build the Library/Cultural Arts Center?

Construction on the Library/Cultural Arts Center could begin as early as spring 2017 but there is still a lot of work to be done. A construction company was hired on August 15th to provide our community with a guaranteed maximum price for the Library/Cultural Arts Center project. The current project timeline calls for the project price to be identified soon after the first of the year. With a guaranteed maximum price established, voters will be asked to give final authorization on the public funds for the project. Construction could begin soon after a successful vote. Everyone involved is taking a cautious and thoughtful approach to ensure the Library/Cultural Arts Center meets the community's needs and expectations.

For the project to move forward it is also very important for individuals, families, and businesses to continue to contribute financially. There are still matching grant dollars available for the Library/Cultural Arts Center. While available, matching grant funds add 50% more impact and recognition to every gift. This is an unprecedented opportunity to reinvest in the community, receive prominent recognition, and make a lasting difference. Columbus and Platte County have been enormous library supporters. In the last four years over 1,000 individuals, families, and businesses have given generously to the Columbus Public Library. Beyond financial gifts, many thousands of hours of thoughtful volunteer work have been contributed to the library. Most recently volunteers have helped make the library book sale, the Columbus Days parade, and the Columbus Day's information booth a success.

While the future of the Library/Cultural Arts Center project is exciting; there are also a lot of great things happening at Columbus Public Library now. With school starting and a touch of fall in the air Columbus Public Library is refocusing on story time, weekend and evening children's programming, after school events for middle and high school students, and adult programming. Columbus Public Library also offers programs for the whole family; on Saturday September 10th Charlotte Endorf with Nebraska Humanities will be performing as Annie Oakley. The program will be held in the library's auditorium at 2pm and is completely free. This coming year will bring new and exciting opportunities as the Columbus Public Library develops a Maker Space. The Maker Space will be a place to experiment with robotics, 3D printing, software, virtual reality technology, drones and more. Columbus Public Library continues to move forward with information services, programming, and opportunities to connect with new ideas. Thank you to the community for continuing to support all of the great things happening at your library.