

Indian Trails Public Library District

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Library renovation will add study rooms, computer lab, ESL classroom, creative space

Private study rooms, a computer lab, dedicated English as a Second Language classroom and expanded seating for programs are just four amenities planned for the Indian Trails Public Library, 355 Schoenbeck, Wheeling, when it begins renovations in early 2016. Nearly 15,000-square feet will be added for public use, increasing the size of the building to 61,000 square feet.

“This renovation has been many years in the planning,” says Wally Salganik, president of the library board of trustees. “Through building and mechanical studies conducted in 2010 and 2013, we know the library is facing several maintenance issues that must be resolved. In 2012 we held several community focus groups to learn what our members wanted, and overwhelmingly, they wanted study rooms and spaces to work and create. Through sound conservative fiscal management, we are in a great position for this renovation.”

The library’s renovation is expected to take between 8-16 months depending on whether the library remains open at its present location or temporarily relocates during construction. The estimated cost for the expansion and renovation is \$14.4 million, which includes replacement of the HVAC system, roofing repairs, extensive remodeling inside, new furnishings, addition to the front of the building and parking lot redesign to increase parking spaces.

Asked about the relevance of public libraries in today’s online world, Library Director Brian Shepard, says, “Literacy and putting books in people’s hands are still the core of library services, but today’s library is more like a community center, where people can learn new skills, discover the latest technology, attend a program and meet others with similar interests.

“We know that 91 percent of people believe libraries are important to their communities,” says Shepard, quoting a research study undertaken by the Pew Research Center on the changing nature of libraries. “For libraries today it is about being relevant to the communities they serve. For Indian Trails, that means ESL classes and lifelong learning opportunities, as well as a strong early literacy program.”

In 2014, 375,000 people visited the Indian Trails Library and 1.3 million items were loaned. The library also hosted 1,689 programs that were attended by over 44,000 people.

To keep informed about the renovation process, residents are encouraged to visit www.itpld.org/renovation/ for photos and updates. Information will also be shared via the library's social media and in the newsletter.

“Our tagline for this project is ‘Building New Beginnings,’” Shepard says, “and that is what we believe this will be – a chance to build new services and programs in a vibrant and welcoming space. The library has a rich history of support from its communities and has continually redefined itself as the communities around it grew. We see this renovation as another step on the path.”

The Indian Trails Public Library District offers programs, materials and services to 67,000 residents in the communities of Wheeling, Buffalo Grove and Prospect Heights.

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