



Director's Annual Report FY 2018

Fiscal year 2018 brought some big changes to the library. These changes were important because they changed the library's interactions with the public.

The first, and most impactful, change was the completion of the East Building renovation project. Although the project was started in previous years, setbacks delayed the completion until October 2017. Work on the project accelerated at the end of 2017 resulting in improvements to the building that will affect all users of the library for years to come. Through the use of funds accumulated from previous years and the money obtained from a grant from the State Library the library was able to:

- Build an ADA compliant entrance making it easier for patrons with disabilities to enter the library
- Construct two new male and female multi-stall bathrooms providing a more comfortable environment for all users as well as providing ADA accessible bathrooms
- Lengthen and widen the ramp leading to the Young Adult Room also making it ADA compatible
- Provide a staff lounge for employees thereby improving staff morale and freeing up space in the Adult Room for public use and
- Construct a Meeting Room capable of hosting over 142 persons and providing features such as a projector and loudspeaker system

The project provided other benefits to the library as well. For example, part of the project required that the storage space be cleaned out to make room for the improvements. Now the library has disposed of unusable items that were taking up space and has a clean, organized, compact area to meet current and future storage needs.

More importantly, the project required the installation of a fire alarm system in the East Building and that led to the installation of a new fire alarm panel and more current and energy efficient safety devices throughout the entire library. It also led to coordination between the fire department, city, panel manufacturer and library to initiate annual inspections to ensure that the library remains safe in the future.

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Additionally, although not part of the library project, the city repaved the parking lot, improving the patron experience when visiting the library.

Additional building improvements and repairs were identified. During the inspection of the East Building, the city inspector stated that the exit out of the storage area at the north side of the building does not meet code with respect to the step down. New concrete steps must be built at the exit.

The interior entrance to the East Building's Meeting Room from the ADA entrance was expanded which caused settling of the building and resulted in a crack in the wall which needs to be patched and painted. Water leakage by the picture window in the Meeting Room also needs to be addressed, possibly requiring the replacement and reinstallation of the window, and repair of the water damaged walls.

Even more importantly, the outside wall and roof of the East Building are badly in need of tuck pointing and other major repairs. These repairs are in addition to the planned repair of the Adult Room air conditioner unit.

The Director created a long term capital projects plan and requested bids for the various repairs. All repairs are slated to begin in FY19. The Director got permission to use FY17 per capita grant funds to put towards the completion of these projects. The library will draw from the bank loan to pay for the remaining costs.

The second big change at the library took place in the area of technology. The library finally migrated away from the outdated Follett ILS to the web –based Apollo ILS from Biblionix. Apollo offers many useful features for both the staff and the public including: more options for notifications of upcoming due dates and available reserve items; a more user-friendly catalog; integration of electronic resources into the catalog; and easier staff access to reports and modules for cataloging and updating items.

In addition to the new ILS, the library's technology "department" saw another big change as well. Near the end of the fiscal year the library's IT consultant announced that he will be moving to New Mexico. Since the year 2000 he has been dedicated to ensuring that the library stays competitive with its computing offerings while remaining within a tight budget. He has also helped the library by acting as a handyman, which also helped the library control costs.

Despite all the changes, the staff have been able to continue to offer consistent, quality customer service to library patrons. The Children's Department continued to offer its excellent variety of programming and even added some programs as well. During the year the department offered its usual holiday and special programs such as:

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- Easter egg decoration
- An Easter bunny and magic show
- A visit from Santa
- A Halloween Fest
- The Mad Hatters
- Movie Nights
- The Summer Reading Program
- Story times Teen crafts

The department was able to add some additional programs as well, including an adult crafts program on Saturdays for the mothers of the children attending the story times and children's craft programs. An additional bimonthly handcrafts program sponsored by the Together for Childhood Network was also started.

The Adult Department has kept up with its program offerings as well. The library continued to host its two book clubs as well as the Sherlock Holmes and Current Events discussion groups. The K9 Reading Buddies continued to offer sessions during the school year and Family Network was able to offer tutoring sessions to children during the first half of the year. The department did start to offer computer training programs during the last part of the year which attracted a small number of students.

The department also worked with other organizations to provide additional programming. Some of the offerings included:

- The Wine and Beer Walk sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce
- The City Halloween Walk sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce
- An online tax program from United Way of Lake County
- The Recycle Sight Program from the Lions International
- Voter registration through the Concerned Citizens Action Network

The library also joined with the city in the HELP program to promote workplace safety and started participating in the safety meetings through that program.

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The most exciting change in the area of programming however, is the completion of the Meeting Room. The first use of the room was for the Grand Opening party which was a huge success with hundreds of library patrons, community leaders and representatives from local organizations attending. Since then the room has been used by a variety of groups such as:

- The Highwood Historical Society
- K9 Reading Buddies
- Family Network
- Family Services
- The Lubavitch Mesivta of Chicago
- The Girl Scouts
- The library staff and board

The library also made some additions to its collection through participation in the Illinois Reads program, a donation of books from the Great Books series. The library was awarded a \$2,500 grant to purchase computer and technology books from the State library.

All these changes have not only helped the library improve the services it offers to its patrons, they have set the stage for new and better changes to come.

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