

Flat River District Library
Greenville, MI
April 21st, 2008
<http://www.flatriverlibrary.org>

Visiting Library Sub-Committee
Summaries

Marlies Manning:

- Library usage has increased since plant closures

Computers:

- 7 internet computers. Limit 1 hr. / day.
- Children's computers not hooked up to internet
- Space not available for computer lab. Patrons directed to college
- Teen area has special computer with testing software

Great features:

- Different light levels available (natural light, sconces, table lamps, etc.)
- Lots of natural light from all directions
- Table lamps at reading tables
- Nice outdoor space. Used for children's programming. Nice view from soft seating areas.
- A lot of soft seating areas near windows.
- Dedicated local history room.
- Dedicated Friends of the Library book sale room near circulation desk.
- Central corridor/view line nice when entering library.
- Design to allow for expansion
- Rooms sponsored by donors. Discretely recognized on glass windows with painted names.
- "Teen" designation on books had increased circulation (as opposed to Young Adult designation).
- Special displays that features National (Poetry) Month.
- "New Children's Book" display has increased circulation dramatically.

Recommendations:

- Make sure floor is gridded with electricity
- Put in a P.A. system
- Don't put computer towers in cabinets below work stations (difficult to access)
- Don't put on a flat roof
- Separate interior design from architecture contracts
- Hire a project manager (owner's rep.)
- Don't use a flat textured paint. Hard to repair and match (especially the dark color).
- Have a maintenance manual put together for all systems in the building (including roof maintenance).
- Hire a good maintenance company
- Include a drive up book drop, and a drive-up book pick up window.

- Have an elevator to basement (where books and supplies are stored)
- Don't use under-counter computer screens.
- Need more study rooms (they have 2). Often filled for tutoring. Need more for general public use.
- Have librarian desks in circulation area, but also give them a work area away from public space.
- Card catalogs need to be closer to the circulation desk.
- Consider fire extinguisher placement (don't put in the middle of a usable wall).
- Consider parking requirements if multiple programs are scheduled simultaneously

Dale Hobart:

The trip to Greenville was very productive. There were several things that made positive impressions. First and foremost was the welcoming feel of the building that was enhanced by plenty of outside light into the building and the use of blond wood throughout the building. These made one very comfortable inside the library.

There were some features that we will want to try to make sure that they are included within the building. Many of the public work spaces (desks, tables, carrels etc.) had power outlets for use by patrons. They had a few quiet study rooms, and wished that they had more for tutoring services. I'm not sure how large the need for this would be in Big Rapids as we have not seen the problem that their community has with the closing of the Electrolux plant. One nice feature was a computer in the teen space that had software to aid students in studying for the SAT or ACT tests. They had also just installed Rosetta stone software for Spanish on that computer.

There were some other things that we learned in the tour. One was that the library staff need space out of the public reach to enable them to work on cataloging and programming free from interruption. The director there indicated that she wished that they had installed a PA system within the building to announce closing, special events, and to assist in locating someone in the building. She also strongly encouraged us to create a maintenance document for the facility that includes all of the maintenance work that must be done to keep any warranties current.

Overall a very nice usable facility designed by an architect that we know.

Mary Ryan:

It was informative to learn about some of the do's and don'ts after a library project is completed.

- Do use a construction manager to carry through the architect's plans for a variety of reasons
- Include a maintenance budget
- Have separate areas for young children, children from 5-12, teens from 13-18 and adult areas
- Literacy center in the building to provide tutoring services
- The history room for local history and genealogy was pretty impressive
- Circulation and information desks were separate
- Self check-out computer
- The lower shelf of the bookshelves are tilted to be able to see the titles
- Tables are available through the aisles, although the chairs did not look comfortable

- Public access computers are behind the information desk. They do not offer computer courses since they are available through Montcalm Community College
- Small study rooms – they could use more
- A small Friends book store to the back of the circulation desk is displayed with individually priced books. Money can be left at the desk, so the bookstore does not have to be staffed
- Large window to the back looks down the street of the neighborhood
- Nice green area and grounds around the Library

The community room has a separate entrance. When it is utilized by other groups, parking becomes a problem. They are across the street from the high school football field and on game days, it makes parking almost impossible. They have between 44 and 50 spaces.

Direct Conaway didn't like the flat roof portions of the building. They are 10 years old and need to be replaced. Don't use textured paint because it marks up easily. The cabinets with doors under the computer tables to hide all the wiring are a nuisance because they are constantly being kicked. She would have preferred the librarian's office behind the circulation desk with a two way mirror and a table for conferences. A PA system for communication with other staff people would have been great.

No matter how much you plan, things come up that need to be changed or arranged better.

Overall I liked the emphasis on books and the quiet demeanor of the library. It has been well maintained. On the last page of the books that I looked at, they had sticky notes attached for reader comments about the book.

Gaylynn Rorabaugh:

- District library formed with the City and three townships. 1.25 mils in perpetuity however, have never levied more than 1. Additionally, the Library is included in the county millage at .5 mils. The Headley amendment has rolled back both of those mils.
- New building is on the sight of the old high school building which was demolished. Renovating old structure was not an option.
- Single level that is managed with 5 full-time and 6 part-time employees.
- Single level with open spaces allows library to re-organize and re-define spaces easily.
- Natural light fills the library and light wood tones enhance the feeling of space.
- Friends have a book shop area next to the circulation desk – revenue for the Friends is collected by the Library Staff. Last year the Friends earned about \$4500 in revenue from project.
- Friends hold three book sales each year and net about \$1200-1500 at each. Friends provide most of the funding for their summer reading program.
- Literacy Council of Montcalm County is housed there. This is a very busy agency and makes use of the quiet meeting rooms throughout most of the day.
- Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber were their architects and they were extremely pleased with their professionalism and the extra miles that they went to design a structure to meet the community's need. Future growth space was planned by the architects as part of the design.
- Alyce Riemenschneider was the interior design architect.
- The Breton Group laid the funding campaign out through a feasibility study and they had their funding less than one year later.