



Photo by Todd Luck

Officials from city and county governments, Forsyth County libraries and Frank L. Blum Construction Company shovel dirt during a groundbreaking last week in front of the Central Library, which will be rebuilt and reopened in 2017.

Officials look to future as ground broken for new Central Library

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Ground was broken on the new Forsyth County Central Library on Thursday, Oct. 1.

The Central Library closed in October 2014, for renovations. Since then, Frank L. Blum Construction Company has been removing asbestos from the building.

The ground breaking symbolized the next step in the project, which will involve demolishing the front of the library, which was built in 1952. It will be replaced with a new four-story section of the library to match the current four-story part of the building, built in 1980, which will be renovated. Only the structural frame and foundation of that old section will remain, everything else will be new. The new library will be 101,000 square feet and is expected to be completed by summer of 2017. The \$28 million project is being paid for by a bond approved by voters in 2010.

County commissioners along with officials from the library, school board and city council spoke before the symbolic shoveling of dirt.

County Commissioner Don Martin, a former school superintendent, quoted Thomas Jefferson, who believed there should be a public library in every county.

"I think you all would agree, libraries have done a lot of extensive good for a small cost," said Martin, referencing a letter Jefferson wrote on the subject.

Martin said libraries remain important, citing statistics from the American Library Association that in 2013 2 billion items were checked out of public libraries, including books, e-books and movies. He



Sprinkle-Hamlin



Martin

also cited Forbes magazine, which said more than half of young people and seniors living in poverty have used a public library for Internet.

Forsyth County Library Director Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin said a lot of input from the community, county management and library staff went into the new library. She said the new library will have a "stunning exterior," a "vibrant interior," an expanded North Carolina room, new teen and children spaces, meeting rooms, large event spaces, a reading room and a book terrace.

"We are now positioned to make the vision a reality," she said. "Every effort has been made to incorporate the ideas and best practices that make up a 21st century

library." Despite its building being closed for construction, the Central Library continues to operate out of the Forsyth County Government Center, with administrative offices, a computer lab that still offers computer classes and a relocated North Carolina room. Staff and some of the Central Library's books have gone to other branches, though some books and other items have gone into storage.

Sprinkle-Hamlin said patrons are finding the relocated services and those who used the Central Library to hold events and meetings are now relying on other branches. She said no one is missing out on books, since Forsyth libraries are part of the NC Cardinal consortium of libraries around the state, so even books not currently on the shelf can be ordered.

Sprinkle-Hamlin said though she's a little sad to see the old Central Library go, she's looking forward to 2017 and for the new, state-of-the-art library that will take its place.

United Way of Forsyth County kicks off 2015 community campaign

SPECIAL TO
THE CHRONICLE

The United Way of Forsyth County publicly announced the kick-off of its 2015 Community Campaign at the fifth annual Moonlight Madness 5K, a fundraising event coordinated by the city of Winston-Salem to benefit the nonprofit. This year's fundraising goal is \$16.7 million.

Payne chairing the community campaign, which is projected to end in December.

"Reynolds has been a great partner of United

examples of the critical issues facing the community," Payne said. "United Way collaborates and invests with partners to tackle the tough challenges

"Together we can make Forsyth County one of the best places in the country for both residents and businesses."

- Cindy Gordineer, president and CEO of United Way of Forsyth County

"It's exciting to see how our community rallies around improving the lives and opportunities available to everyone in Forsyth County," Tommy Payne, president of Niconovum, a Reynolds American Inc. subsidiary, and chair of the 2015 Community Campaign, said last month. "We had over 30,000 donors last year as part of the campaign and hope that we can engage even more residents this year. People in Forsyth County understand the value of investing in education, financial stability and the health of our residents and neighbors. They recognize that when they give through United Way it makes a lasting impact and strengthens our entire community."

Cindy Gordineer, president and CEO of United Way of Forsyth County, says she's pleased to have

Way for many years and has an incredible reputation for generosity and support of the community," she said.

The theme of this year's community campaign is "What Our Community Needs Is You ... Because Great Things Happen When We Live United!"

Beyond raising money, the campaign has goals to educate community members about major issues and encourage involvement.

"Although we've seen a lot of successes over the years, a number of individuals and families in our community continue to struggle on a daily basis. Over 14 percent of our children do not graduate from high school; one in three children and one in four adults live in poverty, and 34 percent of children ages 10-17 are overweight or obese. These are a few

and make a real impact. We've seen some great progress, particularly around the high school graduation rate, which has risen to 85.4 percent from 70.7 percent in just eight years."

Gordineer agrees that it takes the entire community coming together to enact real change.

"Community-wide solutions require community-wide involvement. Thankfully, we have generous donors, great partners, supportive companies and organizations, and wonderful volunteers, like Tommy, who make our work possible," she says. "Together we can make Forsyth County one of the best places in the country for both residents and businesses."

To learn more, go to ForsythUnitedWay.org.



Submitted photo

Community members learn more about United Way's work and Leadership Societies, such as Women's Leadership Council and Young Leaders United.



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