

Bids Awarded On Seven Scenic Library Projects

Construction contracts for seven library building projects, including one in New Haven, were awarded by the Scenic Regional Library Board of Trustees at its July 18 meeting.

The board awarded all of the contracts to Wright Construction in St. Peters. The library received bids from 11 general contractors. Contractors could bid on either one, multiple, or all the branch projects. There were at least three bids on each branch.

Wright Construction was the lowest bidder on five of the seven facilities and second-lowest on the other two. Overall, the general contractor provided the lowest bid on all seven facilities combined.

"The library board also thought it would be beneficial to work with a single general contractor," said Steve Campbell, Scenic Regional Library director. Construction on the New Haven and Owensville branches will begin in late August.

Wright Construction is a medium-sized construction firm with approximately \$50 million in annual revenue. They have successfully completed many public works projects, including multiple schools for the Kirkwood and Hazelwood school districts.

The construction bids totaled \$12,555,860, excluding a \$627,000 contingency fund. These figures were \$1.3 million over budget—excluding the contingency fund.

"The overage wasn't due to the building designs being extravagant," Campbell said. "Construction costs in the area have increased more than 20 percent over the past three years and continue to rise rapidly."

The winning bids were New Haven, \$1,665,000; Owensville, \$1,730,000; Wright City, \$1,824,000; Pacific, \$2,029,860; St. Clair, \$1,560,000; Warrenton, \$1,550,000; and Sullivan, \$2,197,000.

Due to the budget overage, the library's administration initially feared that square footage would need to be reduced and features such as the exterior patios removed. However, others measures were used to get the project within budget.

"The library reduced construction costs approximately \$500,000 through value engineering," Campbell said. This process involved substituting materials in the original designs with less expensive materials or those produced by different manufacturers.

The design changes achieved through value engineering will not be

noticeable to the public, he said. The buildings will still appear identical to those displayed on the library's website, at the groundbreaking, and in the branches.

The library board also agreed to stagger construction to reduce costs, Campbell said. Wright Construction will begin work on two branches in August, followed by two branches each subsequent month.

This will allow the general contractor to utilize the same subcontractors for all the facilities. The Library Board eliminated the remaining deficit by temporarily lowering the library's reserve requirement and transferring those funds to the building project fund, Campbell noted.

The construction budget does not include the \$1 million budget for equipment and furniture at the seven locations and \$971,000 for architectural and engineering fees.

The library has been working with Color Art Integrated Interiors in St. Louis on the furniture and equipment selections for the new and expanded branches.

The construction schedule so far includes the New Haven and Owensville branches in late August



MICHELLE ENLOE set up a fifth grade classroom



and the Warrenton and the Wright City branch projects in September. The remaining schedule has not yet been determined.

Wright Construction has stated that while their goal is to complete each facility in eight months, the worst-case scenario would be nine months to complete the new buildings and ten months for the two branches involving additions and renovations.