

Library groundbreaking due in March

By Gina Parsons
Staff writer

The Scenic Regional Library in Warrenton expects to begin a new chapter in March with the groundbreaking for its new building.

Officials with the Scenic Regional Library District expected to sign a construction contract for the building in mid-February, said Sallie Hancox, district director.

The architects originally designed the building to be 7,500 square feet in size, but were

working on adding 1,500 square feet to the structure, Hancox said.

"Adding 1,500 feet now would be less expensive than expanding at a point in the future," Hancox said. Hancox estimated the total project, including the building, furnishings, architect fees and interest on the loan, will cost about \$1 million.

Construction bids were due from contractors Jan. 20. Maestes Construction of St. Charles submitted the apparent low bid of \$721,000.

As of Journal deadline, the architects on the project were

looking over the contract before it would be signed by district officials.

Construction is expected to take about six months, Hancox said. The library should be ready to move into the new building by the fall if construction begins as planned in March or April.

The architectural firm of Le Pique and Orne of St. Charles has worked on the project since 1998, Hancox said. "We chose them after interviewing several architectural firms," Hancox said. "Le Pique and Orne designed the most recent St. Charles (City-County) library location, the McClay (Road) branch. We liked different things they did with that building, although ours is different."

The new Warrenton library will have a public meeting room separate from the book area. Hancox said that is necessary to provide members of organizations with access to the meeting room directly from the outside when the library is closed. Le Pique and Orne was able to design the library with a separate entrance to the meeting room.

The meeting room will accommodate up to 50 people,

Hancox said. "We have a meeting room at the Union location and several organizations use it each month," Hancox said.

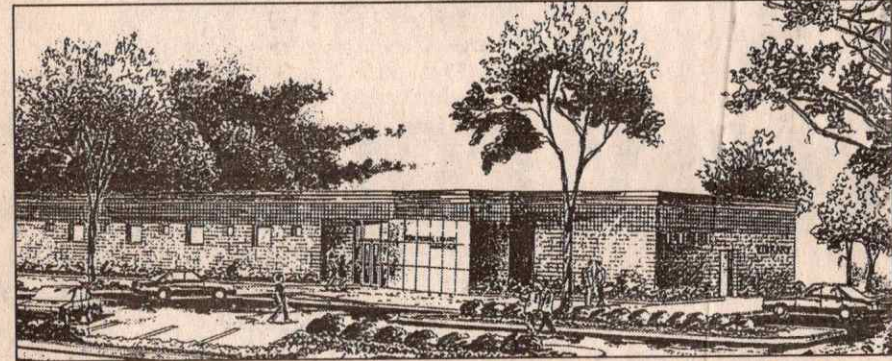
The library district bought the 1.75-acre site for the new building in 1997 for \$59,000. The lot is located at 912 S. Highway 47.

The architects worked with the configuration of the lot when designing the building, Hancox said. The building basically will have a rectangular shape, with the shorter end of the rectangle facing Highway 47.

"The actual front of the building is going to face the north," Hancox said. "The meeting room will actually face out to Highway 47."

The current Warrenton library on East Main Street, which the library leases, is a mere 1,800 square feet in size. It has room for only about 18 people sitting close together. The new location will accommodate 54 people.

"There will be wider open areas for the tables, and the tables will be spread through-



This drawing, prepared by architect Le Pique & Orne of St. Charles, illustrates the Scenic Regional Library's new Warrenton branch planned on

out," Hancox said.

The new location also will have an alcove, which will allow people to get away from the "hustle and bustle" of the main area of the library, Hancox said.

The current library has three Internet work stations; the new library will have eight.

Of course, the library also will have room for books. In fact, it will have a shelving capacity of up to 41,000 books, Hancox said. The current location has the capacity for 23,000 books.

Too many books squeezed into too little space is the main prob-

lem at the current location, Hancox said.

"It has been apparent to us for some time that we needed more space," Hancox said. "Warren County is growing now. If the library is not big enough now, we knew it wasn't going to be big enough later."

A building tax levy of 4 cents per \$100 assessed valuation collected in Warren County will pay for the new building, according to information from the library district. The tax was assessed in 1999 and will continue to be assessed until 2009.



Lee Cavanagh photo

Pictured is Marlys Mertens (right), branch supervisor, and Dolores Robine of the Scenic Regional Library.