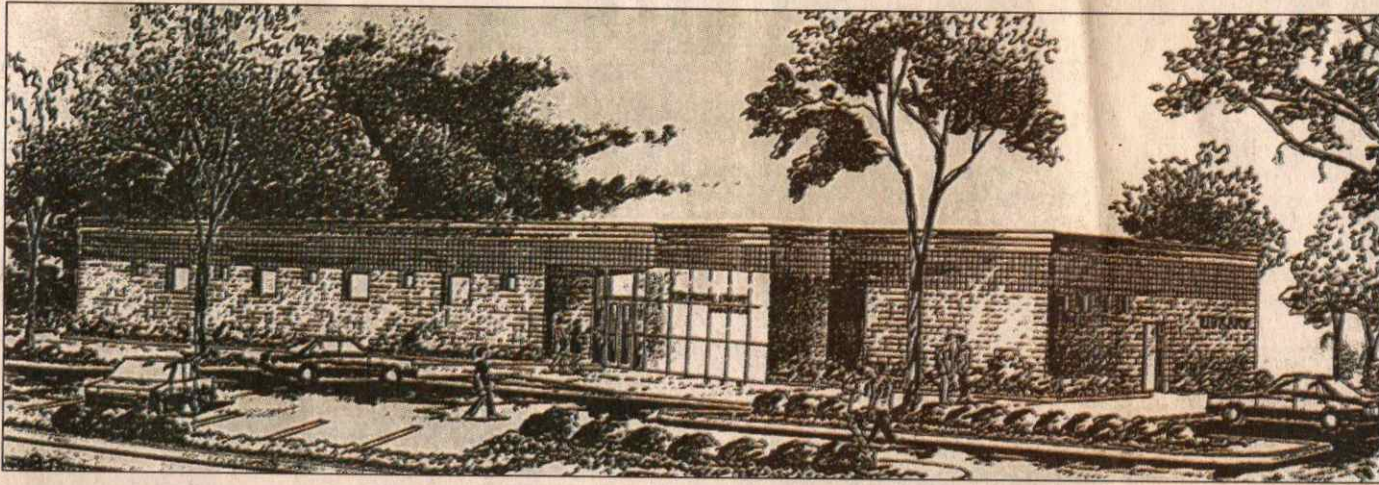


Library construction to begin in spring



This drawing, prepared by architect LePique & Orne of St. Charles, illustrates the Scenic Regional Library's new home planned on Highway 47 south of Warrenton.

New building to hold nearly twice as many books

By Lee Cavanagh
Correspondent

Coming to Warren County this year is a development of major potential benefit to every resident, young and old.

It's a treasure trove of books, magazines and newspapers, of videotapes and books-on-tape, a center for investigating the Internet, a source of information and learning.

In short, it is the new Warren County home of the Scenic Regional Library. Its construction is scheduled for completion this year on a Highway 47 site south of Warrenton near St. John's Lutheran Church.

The new facility was the subject of a recent interview with library Director Sallie Hancox at the Scenic Regional Library headquarters in Union. With her was Ken Rohrbach, Scenic's second-in-command. Both graduated from the University of Missouri, and both have

master's degrees in library science; Hancox earned hers at Rutgers University in New Jersey, and Rohrbach's is from the University of Wisconsin.

"Final construction bids on the new library are due by Jan. 20," Hancox said. "We expect building to start in the spring, and, by fall, Warren County should take a giant step forward in library service in a spacious new home.

"How different this building will be from our current leased space, which we have obviously outgrown," Hancox said. "We will be expanding from 1,800 to 7,500 square feet. We will almost double the total number of books immediately available to our patrons."

Rohrbach described some other major improvements in the new library.

"We now have in Warrenton three Internet computer work stations; the new building will have eight. The study space and the seating capacity of 18 we

have now will be vastly increased. We especially look forward to having a meeting room, big enough for gatherings of up to 50 persons, which will be available for use by community groups; it will have a separate entrance, so it can be used even when the library is not open.

"In addition, everything in the new building is designed to be fully accessible to the handicapped."

Anyone who has tried to find a parking space near the present library, across from the busy County Courthouse, will welcome Hancox's next comment.

"For some folks, perhaps the best news of all is that the new library will have adjacent parking space for 30 vehicles."

The current library, on South Market Street in space that has been leased for about the past 38 years, has a staff of four. Marlys Mertens is the branch



Lee Cavanagh photo

Marlys Mertens (right) is branch supervisor at the present Scenic Regional Library branch on South Market Street in Warrenton. With her is Dolores Robine who, with Alice O'Donnell and Janice Walters, complete the local librarian staff.

supervisor. She has three part-time librarians working with her, Alice O'Donnell, Dolores Robine and Janice Walters.

"We are fortunate in having an excellent staff in Warrenton," Rohrbach said. "They are cooperative, and they know how to find needed information. Two of them, Alice O'Donnell and Dolores Robine, were former full-time librarians who chose to reduce their working hours."

For some years, library patrons have more and more recognized the shortcomings of the present library in Warrenton and have offered frequent comments, complaints and suggestions, all leading to the question: "When are

we going to get a new library?"

Finally, the question was submitted to Warren County voters in the election last April. They approved a property tax increase of 4 cents per \$100 assessed valuation to finance a new library.

The Warren County library is part of an organization formed in 1959, when the library districts of Warren, Gasconade and Franklin counties decided to merge into a unit named the Scenic Regional Library.

A board of trustees, appointed by the court in each of the three operating counties, supervises the libraries' operation. The Warren County trustees include John Barry, Carla Robertson, Joy DuFrain and Karen Holtmeyer.