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VBH BOT FYI Planning

3 messages

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Wed, Mar 30, 2011 at 8:30 AM

Dundee library looks to expand
By KATIE ANDERSON - kanderson@nwherald.com
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[PHOTO] Bryan Husser, 8, gives "Valiant," a German shepherd therapy dog, a treat before reading to him Tuesday at the Dundee Township Public Library. Husser and several other children took part in the "Read to a Dog" program at the library. (Amanda Schwengel – aschwengel@nwherald.com)

EAST DUNDEE – Public libraries in Algonquin, East Dundee and a handful of other area communities share resources, an online catalog, and checkout services.

Recently, however, reciprocal borrowing between Algonquin and the Dundees has become lopsided.

About 35 percent of materials checked out in the Algonquin Area Public Library District are used by patrons who live outside the district's boundaries, said Lynn Elam, administrative librarian for the Algonquin Area Public Library.

In January, for example, 50 percent of the DVDs checked out from Algonquin were borrowed by people from outside the district's service area, the majority of those out-of-district users were from the western portion of the Dundee Township Public Library District.

"A reasonable amount of reciprocal borrowing is about 15 percent," Elam said.

An expansion plan approved last week by the Dundee Township Public Library District looks to meet some of that demand.

On March 14, the Dundee library board unanimously voted to open a western branch. The district plans to lease about 5,000 square feet in the lower level of the new Dundee Township Park District recreation center being built this spring on Randall Road just north of Route 72.

"It's a matter of equity in service," said Roxane Bennett, library director in the Dundee district. "We haven't been serving those on the west side of the river, and that is something that the board has been aware of."

A change in the population center of the Dundee district gradually has created the imbalance. The Dundee district includes Dundee Township, nearly one-third of Rutland Township, and the village of Gilberts. Over the past several years, the population in the western areas has

grown significantly.

"We think about one-third of our users find the Algonquin library more convenient than our main library, and that is the big reason for trying to have a branch on the west side," Bennett said.

Construction is scheduled to start in May on the Dundee recreation center. The new library is set to open by fall 2012.

The final cost to expand isn't clear, Bennett said. It is estimated to cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000 to equip the new facility with fixtures and furnishings, and between \$200,000 and \$400,000 to buy books and other materials, she said.

The branch will focus on providing popular materials, including recent DVD releases, hot topics in nonfiction, and lots of children's books. When the district performed a survey last year, it discovered that residents in the western area most wanted access to children's materials, Bennett said.

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Library expansion options

The Dundee Township Public Library District has yet to finalize a lease agreement with the Dundee Township Park District. It is considering two options. Roxane Bennett, Dundee library director, said the district would use a combination of savings and state grants to pay for the expansion.

Option one

- A 10-year term at a cost of \$774,450. The library district would be required to pay \$387,225 before occupancy. Annual rent after the first five years would be \$38,722.50 due biannually.

Option two

- A five-year term with an option to extend for an additional five years. The library district would make an initial payment to the park district of \$450,000. After five years, the district would have the option to renew the lease annually at a rate of \$64,890 a year.

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Software ready for County Board
By KEVIN P. CRAVER - kcraver@nwherald.com
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WOODSTOCK – McHenry County staff are being trained on newly installed software to help the County Board redistrict following the 2010 Census.

Board members next month could put it to the test.

Facing a July 1 deadline to redraw its districts to reflect new population data, the County Board is holding a special Committee of the Whole next month to examine its options.

The software, an upgrade to the county's geographic information system, will make presenting those options easier, GIS Director Nicole Gattuso said. The software, called Autobound, cost the county \$5,100.

"It provides a means to have better analysis and make better decisions with new technology," Gattuso said.

Illinois governments must redraw their legislative boundaries after each census to ensure that each district contains an equal number of people. State law mandates that county districts cannot cut across township or municipal boundaries for any other reason than to maintain that equilibrium.

McHenry County grew by 48,683 new residents to a population of 308,760, or an 18.7 percent increase, according to census data. If the County Board keeps six districts, each must be as close to 51,460, one-sixth of the new population, as possible.

But one of the reasons behind the special meeting is for the 24 County Board members to explore changing the board's traditional structure. Some members have proposed reducing the board's size, or going from four-member districts to districts with one or two members each.

Unlike previous remappings, the new software will allow staff to present maps requested by board members quickly, Deputy County Administrator John Labaj said.

"Once the software is up and running and working, it's real simple – put the parameters in and boom, you can generate maps all day long," Labaj said.

Some of those maps, in turn, could help steer County Board members to other options, Labaj said.

"There are a lot of decisions that have to happen, and on both sides of it – the maps are going to give you information that's going to guide your decisions," Labaj said.

Gattuso said her office has been asked to create maps showing how disproportionate the populations of the present six districts have become over the past decade. County Administrator Peter Austin had told the board's Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee that District 5, consisting of Dorr and eastern Grafton townships, is by far the most "out of whack."

Huntley, most of which lies in District 5, grew 324 percent from 5,730 to 24,291. Woodstock, also located in District 5, grew by 4,619 residents to 24,770, or a 23 percent increase.

Grafton Township caused county mapmakers a few headaches after the 2000 Census. The County Board ended up splitting it down the middle, keeping the western half in rural District 6, and the eastern half minus three precincts in District 5.

The County Board last toyed with downsizing itself after the 1990 Census, when it went from three districts to six, but voted against reducing its size by 25 percent to 18 members.

If the county misses the July 1 redistricting deadline, state law puts the power into the hands of a five-member commission made up of the county clerk, state's attorney, attorney general and the chairmen of the county Republican and Democratic central committees.

The county boards of neighboring Kane and DeKalb counties have discussed reducing their size during the redistricting process. Of the Chicago area, Cook, Lake and Kane counties have single-member districts. DuPage and Will counties have three districts each – DuPage with six members per district, and Will nine.

If you go

The McHenry County Board is holding a Committee of the Whole meeting prior to its regular April 19 meeting to discuss redistricting following the 2010 U.S. Census.

The discussion starts at 6 p.m. at the county Administration Building, 667 Ware Road, Woodstock.

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