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West Des Moines Public Library Closing for Two Weeks for Pre-Renovation Preparations

The West Des Moines City Council approved a contract with Edge Construction of Grimes, Iowa at their October 7 meeting to complete a renovation of the West Des Moines Library.

The renovation will repurpose the library's former coffee shop, create a dedicated young adult space, update public furnishings, and replace worn carpet and paint throughout the building. The work will also improve existing meeting rooms, add new meeting spaces and upgrade staff work area furniture. The Library was built in 1996 and this project will be the first major renovation of the building since the completion of West Des Moines City Hall in 2003.

In preparation, **the library will close to the public from October 14 – 26, re-opening on Sunday, October 27.** “That’s a long time, we know,” says Library Director Darryl Eschete, “but the amount and type of work that staff will need to do will require complete focus and this place, frankly, will be a mess.”

During the closure, West Des Moines Library staff will:

- Pull from the shelves and prepare to store around 30,000 lesser-used but essential items;
- Change the computer system status of these pulled items to show them as unavailable and in storage;
- Box and label the items in logical storage order;
- Move and/or store furniture that would be in the contractors’ way in the part of the building in which they’re starting. (Note: Contractors will start on the second floor on the southeast side of the building, the side facing the pond.);
- Repurpose the Millie Knee Classroom on the second floor for individuals seeking a quiet study area as the group study rooms on the second floor will be unavailable until summer of 2020;
- Relocate and reconnect as many public computers, printers and copiers as possible; and
- Move service desks to spots in the building that will allow staff to be available and keep patrons from having to walk too far to find help.

When asked why this list of tasks will take so long, Eschete explained that just the computer work alone necessary to change the status of 30,000 items will take 600 labor hours and, to avoid major issues further along in the project, staff will have to handle each one perfectly. Library staff will post pictures on social media of their work so the community can see the behind-the-scenes progress.

Also, staff has avoided having checked-out items come due during the closing, but book drops will be emptied as usual, so if patrons want to bring something back to the library, staff ask that they please do, provided what they return can be left in the book drop. Otherwise, staff asks that patrons just hold onto their checked-out items until the library reopens.

The library project is projected to be completed in the spring of 2021, with contractors pausing during the summer of 2020 to allow for summer reading activities.

“We truly appreciate the support and patience of the community,” says Eschete. “We’re working to write a new chapter at the West Des Moines Public Library.”

Readers should contact Library Director Darryl Eschete at (515) 222-3409 or Darryl.Eschete@wdm.iowa.gov with any questions or concerns.