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## Sneak a Peek at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center

By Cathy Tyson



Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin is pleased to introduce the (not yet dressed for its debut) Lafayette Library and Learning Center Photo Doug Kohen

so many different user groups.

Mayor Don Tatzin said they wanted to make the building inviting for kids coming from nearby Stanley Middle School and Lafayette Elementary and encourage them to loiter and possibly even get their homework done. The outdoor plaza and amphitheater on the corner of Golden Gate Way and First Street are not only inviting places to hang out and wait for car-pool pick up, but a welcoming entrance to the building with lots of greenery and spectacular artwork.

The Historical Society will have a permanent home for the first time. Visitors can take a look at Peter Thompson's anvil from the first blacksmith shop in town, along with photos and organized archives. Also on the lower level will be the Friends of the Library Used Book Room - a clean, well lit place to get best sellers for a pittance.

Old Betsy, the 1926 Model T fire truck that has been relaxing in a garage for quite a few years, will soon boast a fine view of Golden Gate Way and be prominently displayed. "Gleaming in her resplendent red coat," said City Manager Steven Falk on a recent tour.

To solve "a problem that has vexed librarians since the time of Caesar," said Falk, will be the debut of a two-fold organizing system - the first of its kind in Contra Costa County - an automated materials handling mechanism along with an inventory tracking system. When a patron drops off a book, an electronic reader sees a unique chip in each book, will check it in, and do a rough sort. Librarians can use a wand device to search for an individual magnetic tag to see if a particular book has been mis-shelved. "These are designed to deliver faster and better service, and more efficiently use librarian's time," said Cathy Sanford, Deputy County Librarian. This velocity of circulation is expected to eliminate the need for two full time staffers.

The Children's wing on the main Mount Diablo street level is about the size of the current library. Lots of intimate reading nooks and special pint size bookshelves along with a dedicated cozy story corner are included. There's also a shaded outdoor children's activity deck with a very unique built-in art installation at just the right height for little guys. Good news for moms, gold fish and apple juice along with lattes and biscotti are not a problem here and throughout the library.

But wait, there's more - a special Zen inspired Glenn Seaborg garden, a drive-up book return, and the Lafayette Arts and Science Foundation headquarters. Finally there's a separate Community Hall on the corner of Mt. Diablo and First Street that will serve as an emergency center for the city in case of natural disaster, have rotating art

exhibits, and be the new home for public meetings like the City Council and more. The space will be available for rental for special events.

You just have to see it to believe it. Project Architect Killefer Flammang of Santa Monica has designed a landmark building that captures the essence of library banners that adorned Mount Diablo Boulevard, it will truly enable community members to: imagine, learn, explore, create and read. Doors to the Lafayette Library and Learning Center will open to the public at 10:00 a.m. on November 14.



Reduced ceiling height in the children's library, pictured left to right: Don Tatzin, Steven Falk, Mike Zampa Photo Andy Scheck

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