

## Stack of changes at library

By Patrick Alan Coleman, Editor | Posted: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 12:00 am

Those hoping to use the Norwood Public Library (NPL) computers on Friday may have been surprised to see that the area normally packed with folks sending emails or surfing the web had been completely removed.

The computers themselves were lined-up on a nearby table with a note asking for patience as the library made a very needed change in their technology resources, relocating them to provide users more workspace and importantly, more privacy.

The computer move is just one of several changes in store for the library, all of them based on a survey conducted by library staff nearly a year ago. That survey has been a major driver for the library recently as it looks to the future with an eye towards expansion.

“We had 401 different respondents to our survey,” said NPL Director Carrie Andrew. “We did it online, we surveyed all the school groups that came in starting with first grade, we went out into the community.”

The responses to the queries about what people would like to see from the library in the future were divided into three categories including facility and equipment, the library collection and programs.

“We started prioritizing what we could do now and what we needed a new building in order to do,” Andrew explained. “And a lot of the things that fell under facilities and equipment really pointed towards a new building.”

Seeing that desire for a new facility from community members moved the library board to purchase 12 acres of land located on San Miguel Street adjacent to the Homestead subdivision. However, the construction of a new facility is still a long way off, so NPL has sought to make changes that will address library users needs in the interim.

Addressing the computers is one of the first steps. “We received a grant from the Telluride Foundation which helped us with the purchase of a new computer,” Andrew said. “As well as the hiring of a teacher to teach 12 classes in 2013 on computer usage.”

The new computer, a Hewlett-Packard all-in-one model will join the four existing computers and a laptop in what was once the library’s media room. The films that were once housed there will be relocated to where the computers once were beside the library’s main collection.

The move means that the computers will have a dedicated room with more space, a desk outfitted with dividers between machines for increased privacy and a door that can close to provide more quiet during library programs that may involve children, which are often accompanied by noise.



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The media room gets a makeover in preparation to become the new computer room. [Photo by Patrick Alan Coleman]

The new computer room also provides a space for the upcoming computer classes. The classes themselves serve a kind of dual purpose in not only helping educate individuals on how to use a variety of new technology, but also helping to increase the amount of programs available at NPL, another need that was identified in the survey.

“At this time we have between 20 and 25 people signed up showing interest in those classes,” said Andrew.

The free classes will begin in March and cover everything from how to use a mouse to how to create an email attachment. They will be open for ten people at a time, including room for four individuals with laptop computers.

Andrew notes one of the benefits of taking a computer class at the library means that students can come back after the class and practice on the same computer they were being trained on.

More than computer classes, the library will see more programs focused towards youth, thanks in part to a grant from the Just for Kids foundation that has allowed NPL to hire a new part time employee who will be dedicated to running events like those connected to the summer reading program.

That employee will also be working with the Pinhead Institute to present a new after school science program for children in elementary school which will begin next month.

More changes inspired by survey responses include an increase in magazines related to teen issues as well as an new DVD acquisitions to add to the current collection. Associated with that media increase, the VHS collection will be phased out.

Library officials hope that the survey-related changes will improve NPL user’s experience at least until a new facility can be built.

“It’s a big process,” Andrew said. “You need to have the right pieces in place. We’ll want to get community input on what sort of service they want provided, what kind of space and the types of things they’d like to see. We’re exploring options how to use that land for the best of the community.”