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HUNTLEY

Huntley Area Public Library expansion work underway

By DREW ZIMMERMAN
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Construction of the Huntley Area Public Library's 17,000-square-foot expansion is underway.

A ceremonial groundbreaking to mark the occasion took place Wednesday. Huntley Area Public Library Director Frank Novak thanked the volunteers, groups and community feedback that helped to make the project possible.

"After many months of finalizing building schematics and floorplans, working with architects and the construction management team, receiving bids from the trades and performing pre-construction tasks, the work can finally begin," Novak said in a statement.

A referendum to issue \$12.9 million in bonds to complete the expansion, and total renovation of the existing building was approved by voters in McHenry and Kane counties by an estimated

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2-to-1 margin. The bond would be payable at 20 years and is not to exceed \$12.9 million.

For an average home in the library district, which is valued at \$231,100, the estimated annual property tax increase from the bond issuance would be about \$57.32.

The library's expansion is expected to create a larger children's library, larger areas for fiction and nonfiction works, new program rooms and additional office space. The existing space will be converted into a community hub featuring tutoring tables, teen areas, a music studio and conference space.

To offset a potential decline in overall library use, Novak had said the library hopes to offer job training and digital creations projects using augmented reality, virtual reality, green-screen technology, podcasting, Adobe Creative Cloud, music production and other services.

Project milestones include the completion of the addition to the east side of the building by April 2021, whereupon all library materials and staff will be moved to that area. Phase 2 construction will include the renovation of the current library, which will conclude about December 2021. A grand opening celebration is estimated for January 2022.