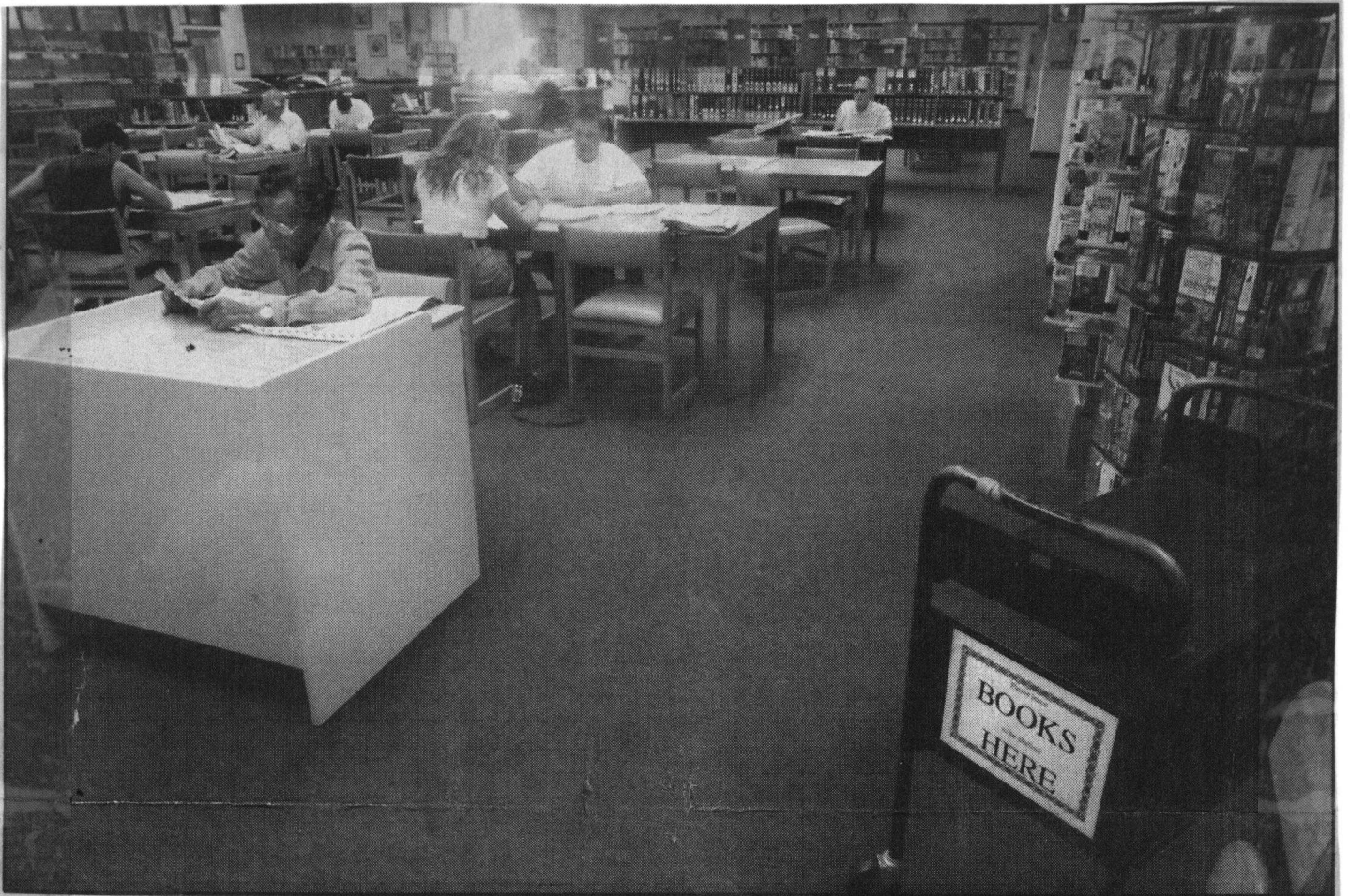


Planning
1990-2000



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

There's hardly a place for the patrons to sit at Watsonville's library. That will soon change.

Big plans for Watsonville library

By TRACY L. BARNETT
Sentinel staff writer

WATSONVILLE — Big plans are brewing inside the serene stuccoed walls of Watsonville Public Library.

Voters approved Measure B last year, which provides sales tax revenue to libraries. Watsonville Library will be raking in more than \$2 million a year — a 150-percent increase over current funding.

The increase isn't a moment too soon, according to Library Director Deborah Barrow.

Clients have increasingly jockeyed for the sparse seating and outdated collection in recent years, and even with the dedicated staff and volunteers, service has suffered.

"If you've been in there lately, there's hardly a place where you can sit," Barrow told the City Council Tuesday night. "We need places where you can sit and work quietly."

Barrow presented the council with an aggressive list of goals for the two-year period ahead, and she's hoping it will be approved during the upcoming budget process.

For starters, the library would double its size in the next two years, and will launch its first bona fide branch library when the newly acquired Freedom Library moves and expands.

Currently, the library has less than a fourth of the space that's needed for the 45,000-person service area, according to library standards. And the newly ac-

The library could double its size in the next two years, and will launch its first bona fide branch library in Freedom.

quired Freedom Library is a mobile home on the grounds of Freedom School — a nice start, but hardly a full-service library. Barrow has in mind a new, 4,000-foot facility on Freedom Boulevard and increase the hours from the current 17 hours a week.

Hours would also increase at the main library, which would open at 10 a.m. instead of 11. And that's just the beginning.

Barrow envisions creating a "one-stop project shop" that would have spaces for students and others to gather and plan their projects; online services and a better collection of reference books for research; and a bank of perhaps seven or eight computers to write reports.

"Not everyone in Watsonville has a computer of their own, or the funds to buy materials at a bookstore or services on the internet," she said. "We want to be a place where people can go to do the whole project — from research and planning it to writing it to producing it."

About \$200,000 a year would go to expand the library's collection, from books and periodicals to videos and compact starting up a loanable cd-rom computer

collection.

The library's budget will mushroom over the next two years from \$810,000 to \$2.03 million.

Other goals for the next two years include:

- More comfortable chairs and spaces for quiet reading.
- A larger children's area to serve the community's increasing population of youngsters.
- Meeting space for community use.
- Increased staffing, to include a slot for interns who would receive meaningful job training and perhaps long-term employment in some cases.
- Space for special programs, such as literacy programming and a homework center, and perhaps a historical display in conjunction with other local groups.
- A language laboratory with tapes and equipment for learning English and other languages.

"The library needs to be at the forefront in promoting literacy," said Barrow. "We want a friendly place, a place that's open, a place where they will not feel threatened to come and learn."