

Another chapter coming for Scotts Valley library

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SCOTTS VALLEY — The new year is bringing big changes for the little library in Scotts Valley. A \$61,000 donation to the City-County Library System by the City of Scotts Valley has made several immediate upgrades possible, and on the horizon looms the prospect of even more changes.

The library in the Kings Village shopping center just received a new electronic checkpoint system that will enable the branch to add video tapes to its lending collection. The donation has also funded new shelving, some furniture, more books and some desperately-needed staff additions.

"It was like Christmas to me, getting all these new books," said Assistant Librarian Lillian Dobbs. She is in charge of children's services at the Scotts Valley branch, one of three new people funded by the donation. Shipments of books have been arriving for the past two weeks — \$13,000 worth of new children's books to add to the shelves in the young people's section of the library.

"We've got new books like 'If You Give a Mouse a Cookie,' readers for kids in kindergarten through second grade, chapter books for beginning readers — they come in so excited," Dobbs said. She has a bundle of new activities planned for children visiting the library, including the usual tours for classes of youngsters and some new things as well.

"We've had a series of firsts here lately," Dobbs said. "We had our first movie here in December, an evening program with 'The Snowman.'" Another first is a musical program scheduled for Feb. 13 that will feature visits and songs with life-sized Raggedy Ann and Cabbage Patch dolls.

"The space is really too small for kids' programs," Dobbs said, sweeping a hand toward the corner sectioned off for children in the tiny library, jam-packed with books. "If we get more than 25 people we'll really be stretching this area."

There hasn't been much silence in the library lately. The sounds of power drills and electric saws have filled the air as new shelving is installed and space is re-divided to make room for the new staff. A small niche for Dobbs and a "community room" take up one corner, and part-time clerks Caroline Caldwell and Harry Meserve share a desk in another corner. All three positions are part of that \$61,000 city donation to the library system, supplementing the staff consisting of Librarian Donaldine McRae and Michael Ripley, a page. A volunteer storyteller, Kristin Bull, rounds out the library work force, giving story sessions every Friday at 10 a.m. that include flannel-board tales and finger exercises like "Itsy Bitsy Spider," Dobbs said.

"I love this, I love the creativity involved," said Dobbs, who has worked in libraries for eight years now. "I can't tell you how exciting it is to be part of this, because Scotts Valley is really growing and we get the excitement of growing with it."

If all goes according to plan, more changes in store during the decade. The City Council has approved the city's proposal to share the cost in expanding the library to a "Tier II" branch, which means more space, more staff, more books and more services. It also will mean a new location, as part of Scotts Valley's redevelopment project along Scotts Valley



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Scotts Valley librarian Lillian Dobbs enjoys new children's books at the changing library.

Drive. The City-County Library System's Oversight Committee will have a look at the proposal next month, according to Director of Libraries Anne Turner.

The proposal has the city of Scotts Valley sharing the construction costs of the new library, with the city-county system footing the costs of ongoing operations, Turner said, but nothing has been settled yet.

"Scotts Valley has made the proposal now because they're trying to get their whole redevelopment plan together and approved," Turner said. "The details would have to be worked out later, when they get closer to the actual date."

The City-County Library System has plans to create a Tier II branch to serve the ever-growing San Lorenzo-Scotts Valley area, and Scotts Valley's redevelopment plan just meant changing a couple of lines in their long-term plan, Turner said.

The expansion would make the Scotts Valley branch a sort of regional branch for the San Lorenzo Valley, she said, and would cost about \$9 million. As

a Tier I branch, the library is allowed 29,500 books or "book-items," Turner said, about one book per person in Scotts Valley. With the expansion, that total could go to 109,000 books and book-items, she said. It would also expand the service desk, add at least two more professional librarians and a reference desk. Tier II expansion would also increase children's services and the space devoted to young people, she said.

"More room for kids, more things going on, more staff, better book selections and larger book selections," Turner said. "That's what Tier II means in terms of children's programming."

After negotiations are complete, agreements made and votes taken, construction on the new library wouldn't begin until mid-decade, Turner said.

"The Scotts Valley City Council is very interested in expanding library services, as well they might be," Turner said. "Theirs is the fastest-growing community in the county. I'm very grateful for them taking the initiative and including the library in their redevelopment plans."

REFERENCE