

## Narrative Description of the Construction Project

**How the building will function in a currently established multicounty, county, or municipal library. This includes, but is not limited to programs, services and governance.**

### Mission Statement

*The LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System enriches the community by inspiring a love of reading, providing a dynamic resource for creative and intellectual pursuits, and enabling residents to live a life of learning.*

The LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System (the Library) functions as a Division of local government under the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida. In Leon County's governance, Library Services is under the supervision of the Deputy County Administrator. The Library consists of a main library, five branch libraries, a bookmobile serving rural areas, and an outreach services bookhauler serving primarily senior residential centers. Each branch is fully supported in the Library's budget and a branch manager is on staff at each facility for supervision, operations, and administration. The branch managers report to the Extension Services Manager, who reports to the Library Director.

The Library has expanded since 1991 in accordance with the LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library Branch Library Development Plan, originally adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 1988 and updated in 1996. The busy branch libraries have contributed to the success of the library system.

The first branch of the library system opened in the Bond Community in 1975. In 2001, this branch, having been renamed the Dr. B.L. Perry., Jr., Branch Library, moved to a 10,000 square-foot building.

Three storefront branches opened in the 1990s. The Lake Jackson Branch Library opened in 1991; the Northeast Branch Library opened in 1994, the Parkway Branch Library opened in 1997, replacing a stationary bookmobile that had been used as a tiny branch library since 1982. The Northeast Branch Library moved to a 14,000 square-foot building in 2000. Expansions to larger storefronts nearly doubled the size of both the Parkway Branch Library (1999) and the Lake Jackson Branch Library (2000). In 2004, the 5,600 square-foot Ft. Braden Branch Library was opened in a unique vernacular style building.

The library system offers up-to-date services to users at the main library and all branches. Direct services to the public include:

- Checking out materials in all formats for adults and children
- Popular and current materials, including books, DVDs, CDs, downloadable audiobooks and e-books, periodicals

- Information and reference service, remote access databases
- Reserves
- Computers with Internet access and printers; as well as photocopiers
- Wireless Internet access
- Programs for all ages, especially for young children
- Program rooms for library and community use

Library materials are available in all formats—books, DVDs, CDs, and most recently, downloadable audiobooks and electronic books. A twice-daily courier service speeds materials from location to location, ensuring that library users receive requested materials at their convenience. Information Professionals are available to all library users at all locations for assistance in finding materials and information. Online help is available through the Ask-A-Librarian online reference service as well as through the library website. The library website and many online databases provide a wide variety of up-to-date information. The Library is committed to making remote access to the library website and remote databases available for its users so that the library is available around the clock.

Library users also use the main library and branches as community centers and places to gather. Free wireless access draws in library users with their laptops. Programs for children, especially the award-winning Story Time and BabyTime programs, draw parents and young children to the library. Many stay after the programs to mingle, visit, and enjoy using the library. Teens come to the library to use the computers, ask for homework help, check out the latest graphic novels, participate in teen gaming activities and the Library's Teen Library Council, and be part of the library scene. Families enjoy coming to the library together to select books and movies. Adults and seniors find familiar materials to enjoy as well as new and thought-provoking items. There are book discussion groups for all ages. There truly is something for everyone at the library.

The Leon County Board of County Commissioners made the establishment of a branch library in Woodville, in southern Leon County, a priority in 2006. This community is served by the library Bookmobile service, with a stop every other week. The proposed project is an expansion of the Woodville Community Center to make a complete library facility. The new library facility will be the sixth branch library in the library system.

**How the construction project will contribute to new or improved services in the area it will serve.**

Residents of the Woodville area will have a much broader array of library services with the opening of the Woodville Branch Library. They will have access to all of the services offered at the library system's branch libraries.

The Bookmobile has long had a regular stop in Woodville, one afternoon every other week. The Bookmobile stop was at the Woodville Elementary School; the stop was then moved to the Woodville IGA, a few hundred yards north of the school on the Woodville Highway. Recently, the Bookmobile moved its regular stop to the Woodville Community Center in anticipation of the new branch library. Bookmobile staff also open the Community Center computer room during stops, to offer Bookmobile users Internet access. This computer room previously has not been available to the public on a regular basis.

Area residents in Woodville enjoy the use of an extensive recreation complex on Old Woodville Road, the J. Lewis Hall, Sr., Woodville Park and Recreation Complex. Leon County Division of Parks and Recreation built and maintains this complex. There are baseball and softball fields, basketball courts, a multipurpose field, a children's playground, concession stand and restroom facilities. The popular Tallahassee-St. Marks Historic Railroad State Trail goes through the recreation complex and passes immediately behind the Woodville Community Center.

In October 2007, a new 6,049 square-foot community center opened just down the road, at 8000 Old Woodville Road. This community center is an attractive building. It is used for Senior Days, a variety of community meetings, and public and private events.

During the election cycle of 2008, the Leon County Supervisor of Elections, the Leon County Division of Parks and Recreation, and the LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library System cooperated in offering early voting and a community library center at the Woodville Community Center. This included a computer room with free public Internet access.

There was a high level of interest in the 2008 elections, which included important state contests, proposed revisions to the Florida constitution, and the presidential election cycle. Consequently, early voting was popular and voters frequently had to wait in line to vote. This gave residents the opportunity to become more familiar with the new Community Center, take advantage of the computer room, and receive library services from materials to information. There was lively interest in the library and other services at the Community Center.

This successful collaboration led to the proposal to establish a branch library for Woodville by adding a 2,020 square foot addition to the 6,049 square-foot community center. The computer room, meeting rooms and lobby area of the Community Center—will become part of the library facility. Leon County owns the land and has already built the Community Center. The County purchased 3.05 acres at \$10,000/acre adjacent to the Community Center. This additional lot will accommodate the new addition for the library and 20 additional parking spaces.

Although Woodville is in southern Leon County, and the county population is growing, the community in Woodville can feel isolated between the rapid growth in eastern and

southeastern Leon County, the rapid growth in Wakulla County, immediately south of Woodville, and the national forests in western Leon County and beyond. The community has an elementary school but students travel by bus to middle and high school in Tallahassee.

A full-service branch library will bring information, library materials and programs within easy driving and biking distance for Woodville residents. The branch library will follow the schedule of the other five branch libraries in the system. Library users will be able to visit the library often. Requested materials will be available very quickly. Assistance in using the wide variety of material and information will help area residents find the most useful and pertinent books, articles, and other information. The materials in the collection will be selected by professional staff who are familiar with community interests and needs. Professional staff will be available to assist all library users with their information needs. People using the library will find that the staff will be able to help them use effectively the rich and varied resources available to them through the library system, the library's website and databases, the Florida Electronic Library and the vast array of information on the Internet.

People of all ages will find useful, entertaining and appropriate materials and programming. Toddlers and young children will have a separate area in which to discover the joys of reading and information. They and their parents will be able to attend the award-winning Story Time and BabyTime programs that are so popular at the main library and other branches. School-age children will find information and materials that will help them with their homework, and library books, DVDs and programs will help them grow and become better students and readers. Teens will also find information and help with their homework. They will be able to use library computers, books and DVDs selected especially for their age group, and enjoy being part of the community at the library. Adults will be able to pursue varied interests and find materials and information they will enjoy. They will also be able to search for jobs, educational opportunities, business information and use the Internet computers to stay connected with these endeavors.

**The effects of staffing, maintaining, and costs of operating the proposed facility.**

Leon County has a strong history of funding its libraries with adequate staff, equipment and collections, and maintaining them in good condition. Each library facility that has been opened is well-stocked with appropriate materials and a strong opening collection, nicely furnished with new furnishings and fixtures, and with a sufficient number of public computers and printers. Staffing levels that ensure excellent customer service, outstanding programming and continuing strong collections are also maintained by the County budget.

Technology throughout the library system is kept up to date and maintained by the Division of Management Information Systems (MIS). This has become increasingly

important to library users. Information is available around the clock through the library website. The library has been able to upgrade the library management system, add databases and downloadable audiobooks and e-books to its collection and make a wide variety of information available on the library website thanks to the support of MIS.

The County has demonstrated its commitment to maintaining library facilities. Repairs are made promptly, carpet and paint are refreshed regularly, the facilities are clean, the HVAC and electrical systems are kept in excellent order, and the grounds are beautifully maintained. It is a pleasure to visit and use these fine facilities.

As each new facility has opened, use by the public increases fourfold in the first year and then continues to grow. The libraries are a point of pride in this community.