Carencro library under construction

Project will cost about $2.2 million

Claire Taylor
taylor@theadvertiser.com

By next summer, children could be checking out books and taking part in reading programs at a new branch library in Carencro.

The steel frame of the North Regional Library Branch on University Avenue is being erected, said Sona Dombourian, libraries director.

The Carencro branch of the Lafayette public library system is the first of four regional libraries to be constructed in Lafayette Parish with a $40 million bond program voters approved in 2002. Renovation of the main library in downtown Lafayette also is part of the plan.

Construction on the Carencro branch began in May and is expected to take about a year. Construction will cost about $2.2 million. With furniture, books and other contents, the total cost will be about $3.6 million.

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The city of Carencro donated land for the new library, saving time and money, and pushing the project ahead of construction of a new southside branch.

Bids for construction of the South Regional Branch at the intersection of Johnston Street and Doucet Road will likely be accepted in October or November, said Pat Logan, associate public works director.

The library's building committee meets Wednesday to consider updated cost estimates for the proposed 36,000 square foot south branch, which is expected to include a 100-seat auditorium. A previous cost estimate was prepared a year ago, but construction costs have risen in part because of hurricanes Katrina and Rita and in part because of material price hikes.

The South Regional Branch could be open by summer 2008. Renovations to the main downtown library in Lafayette will not begin until construction is complete on the north and south branches. More than half of the services of the entire library system are performed at the main library, Dombourian said.

Two proposals for land on which to build the East Regional Branch were received in mid-August. The building committee is expected to review those proposals this week.

The board is seeking land within a 1 1/2 mile radius of the intersection of La. 89 (Youngsville Highway) and the future Ambassador Caffery South.

“Our intention is to acquire the land now even though the library is most likely five or six years away,” she said.

The library system budgeted about $382,000 for land for the East Regional Library. A search for land for the West Regional Branch in the Scott/Duson area was delayed by last year’s hurricanes, Dombourian said. The search may begin this fall.