

Patrons of 23-year-old branch would see improvements

The sun's glare Monday afternoon made it difficult for patrons at the downtown Farmington branch of the Farmington Community Library to see what was on their computer screen.

"Light comes in and washes away images on the computer screen," said Marilyn Smith, head librarian of the Liberty

Street branch. "That can be tough on the eyes."

It happens to customers of the 23-year-old facility all the time, an example of how 1975 does not mesh well with 1998 when it comes to computers. Glare pours through large ceiling windows and down into the so-called computer lab, really a bank of termi-

nals surrounded by tables and book shelves.

"What can you say?" Smith said. "This library was built before computers."

The glare on computer screens is only one problem; Smith hopes the solution will be made possible at the Tuesday, Aug. 4, primary election. Among items on

the proposal is mirrored glass, to replace the old, clerestory windows.

Voters in both Farmington and Farmington Hills will vote on a \$11.7 million tax proposal that would allow for renovation of the Farmington branch and expansion and renovation of the larger Hills branch on 12 Mile Road. It is the third such attempt since 1989.

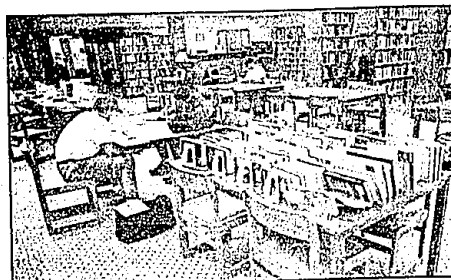
Smith said the proposal is essential to the library's future because the building is tiring out at the same time people demand more from libraries. She pointed toward a bird nest in warped soffits on the north overhang of the roof.

"You have to keep up to date," said Smith, who has worked with the Farmington Community Library since 1978, the past eight years in downtown Farmington. "... Our community is very well-educated and values the resources we have."

So much so that monthly records for customer use continue to be set at both branches. At the Farmington branch, usage has increased 134 percent since it opened, Smith said.

Smith said it is important for residents to understand that approving the proposal will not just benefit the main branch. If the millage is approved, a 0.6-mill tax for each of 15 years would help library officials address a myriad of needs at both branches.

"People don't need to think this library is being overlooked just because the (proposed) new addition is at the 12 Mile Road branch," Smith said. "We share so much. And there are wonderful things in store for this library" if the proposal is



Cramped: Materials are busting out all over at the Farmington branch, which is up for improvements if the tax proposal passes Aug. 4.

approved.

Besides the new windows, patrons would be able to log into 15 new libraries.

Other changes to the branch would include the following:

■ Implement a new floor plan, including reconfigured shelving units.

■ Consolidate audio-visual media (such as compact discs and videos) into one area.

■ Convert smaller staff work areas on the lower level to a group study room.

■ Add new public desks for the adult and children's departments to accommodate two staff members and handle wire management.

■ Replace carpeting and drapes and re-upholster existing chairs, all dating back to the 1970s.

■ Replace two furnaces, two air-conditioning units and the multi-zone heating, ventilation and air conditioning unit that handles the lower level.

■ Double the number of new books bought every year; add to the number of magazines and newspapers for casual browsing.

■ Add resources and computers to the heavily-used Children's Department.

Also, as endorsed by the Farmington Historical Society, the Michigan History Collection will be moved from the basement of the Farmington branch to the Hills branch. Farmington branch staffers will use that space.

The improvements are needed, if only to adequately meet the needs of customers, Smith said.

"We're not only talking about fixing up an aging building," she said, "but increasing services. And that's what's most exciting. We should be able to increase our book budget, buy more audio-visual things."

"This will simply enable us to do our jobs a whole lot better because people are happier when they have new things to check out."

LIBRARY NEWS

Three thousand children are reading this summer in the Farmington/Farmington Hills area. All are participants in the "Reading is Din-o-mite" Summer Reading Club at the Farmington Community Library - and all are invited to a celebration 7-8:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 3, at the William Costick Activities Center, 28600 11 Mile in Farmington Hills.

The program will be sponsored by the Farmington Community Library, Farmington Hills Special Services and the Farmington YMCA. Participants in the Summer Reading Club have been reading their favorite books all summer and will receive rewards.

The event will feature side-

walk art, face painting, book swaps, exotic pets, inline skating safety tips and hayrides. San of the music group Gemini will perform at 7:15 p.m. Free swimming is available. Tickets may be obtained at the pool door starting at 7 p.m. For more information, call the Farmington Community Library at 248-848-4315.

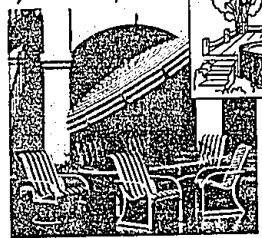
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July 28	7:00-9:00 p.m.	YMCA	28100 Farmington Rd.
July 30	10:00-12:00 p.m.	Farmington Hills Library	12 Mile & Farmington Rd.
	1:30-3:30 p.m.		
August 11	7:00-9:00 p.m.	St. Alexander's	27840 Independence in Farmington Hills
August 18	7:00-9:00 p.m.	St. Alexander's	27840 Independence in Farmington Hills
August 25	7:00-9:00 p.m.	St. Alexander's	27840 Independence in Farmington Hills

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