

FARMINGTON

Library

NEW EDITION

PHOTOS BY BILL BRESLER
STORY BY TIM SMITH

It won't be completely done when doors re-open Monday at the refurbished downtown Farmington's branch of the Farmington Community Library.

But patrons will walk into an environment that is cleaner, more comfortable and more efficient, said Marilyn Smith, librarian.

"I'm very happy with it, and very tired getting it all together," said Smith last week. "I'm excited."

Substitute children's librarian Barb Yoder is also looking forward to Monday's unveiling. She will help out while a "Little Me" children's program takes place at 10 a.m.

"There's going to be a (new) tree house, a hooting owl," said Yoder, citing some of the changes in the children's library. "It's wonderful and exciting. I'm glad to be a part of it."

Smith said the yellow owl will hoot when kids pass by, thanks to a motion detector. But, she promised, the children won't be frightened by the hooting.

Finishing touches being done late last week included the installation of that owl and tree house downstairs by Farmington Hills-based Illuminations. The company also created a mural in the entrance.

"It's a very nice place that kids can go into, with a book, and read," said Smith of the tree house. "Little kids just love to go into little places."

Shelves were being cleaned and tagged, while Gerald Furi, assistant director of the Farmington Community Library, oversaw installation of computers. At least some of the machines should be ready for use on Monday, Furi said.

According to Smith, the \$1.1 million renovation - which began at the beginning of August - enables "better utilization of the space available."

Improvements should make the facility more user friendly. Smith said reorganization of books, videos and other materials will help patrons find what they need more quickly.

"A lot has to happen between today and Monday," Smith said, watching library staffers take magazines and books out of boxes and prepare to put them back on shelves. "But it will."

Even though the branch is set to open, finishing touches will continue to take place between now and the official re-dedication at 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 7, Smith emphasized.

"It's for their benefit," Smith said. "They (patrons) have waited a long time for this renovation."

Through the makeover, led by architect Luckenbach Ziegelman and construction manager Barton Malow, the look and logistics of the library are expected to be greatly improved, the librarian said. Money for the renovation (and that of the Farmington Hills branch) were secured when voters, in August 1998, approved a \$11.7 million tax proposal.

Some of the more obvious enhancements include:

■ Brand now double-pane windows encircle the facility. The windows are made of a material that will reduce glare from sunlight. That will make it easier to see what's on computer screens. And with the former quiet study room turned into a computer lab, reducing glare is not an insignificant consideration, Smith said.

■ Upstairs, where the adult reading, study and computer areas are located, patrons will walk up a retrooled corridor, turn and see a semi-circular new circulation desk. The corridor wall regularly will feature paintings and drawings from the Farmington Artists Club.

Staffers will face the entrance and be easily visible. The former set-up tended to disguise where the desk was located, Smith said.

"The only way this is possible is because of the new windows overhead," Smith explained. "We couldn't fix this way before."

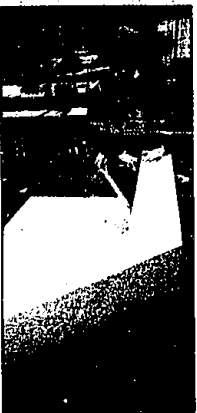
■ Another big improvement is the Intelligent Library System, which enables faster processing of books and materials coming into and out of the branch.

Employees simply wave a hand-held wand over a stack of books and won't have to deal with each book or video individually.

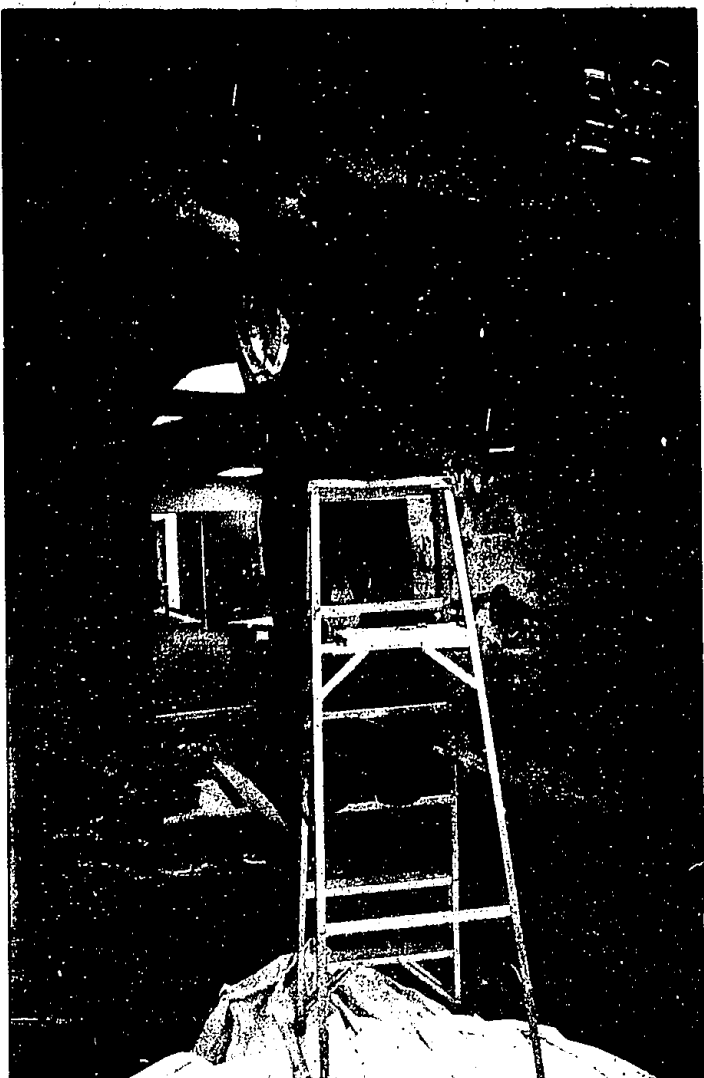
The procedure is also expected to minimize loss or theft, which is characterized as being only a minor problem at both the Farmington and Farmington Hills branches.

One change that residents might not immediately notice is that the library's extensive historical collection was moved to the Hills branch on 12 Mile Road. In its place will be a work room for employees.

The downtown Farmington branch of the Farmington Community Library will be open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mondays-Fridays; 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays; noon to 6 p.m. Sundays.



Brand new: Farmington branch head librarian Marilyn Smith likes the new reference desk area.



Kids world: Above, an area for children features murals and trees. Pat Barrie assembles an oak tree. Top left, Susan Tackett shelves magazines.



Sharp edge: Mary Shenk stretches high to scrape the library book shelf, using a razor blade and a cloth. The renovation won't be entirely done when the library re-opens Monday, but patrons will walk into a cleaner, more efficient library.

Computer age: At right, brand new computers are loaded by Dave Wronikowski of Triangle Computer. Far right, the new security system will read magnetic strips in the books.

