Scott Pointon, White Oak Library District

White Oak Library District Romeoville Branch

After failed referendum attempts in 2008 and 2009, the White Oak Library District passed a $23 million referendum in February 2010. That funding led to the complete renovation of the Romeoville Branch, completed in June 2012, and will also fund the ongoing renovation/expansion of the Lockport Branch and construction of a completely new Crest Hill Branch, both to be completed by fall 2013.

The new Romeoville Branch design utilizes the building's full basement, previously unused for library services, in essence doubling the size compared to its previous configuration. Two sunken courtyard areas at the far east and far west ends of the building allow natural light to stream into the lower level, something not often found in a basement-level space. The adult and teen areas share the lower level with the district's centralized services of administration, technical services, and information technology (IT).

The main floor houses the children's department, circulation, and the outreach department, as well as public meeting/program rooms. The largest of the public meeting spaces can accommodate up to 250 people, has a state of the art audiovisual package, and can project visual images onto any of three giant screens.

The children's department is a colorful and enticing space with features that appeal to both very young and elementary school-aged children. A dedicated program/storytime room with a giant painter's palette built into the ceiling has corresponding "drips" of paint set into the flooring design below. The many windows in the children's room offer sweeping views of the outside world and serve to beckon visitors from downtown Romeoville.

Technology was modernized and expanded throughout the building, with Internet service upgraded from two T1 lines to a fiber-optic connection. Computers for adult use grew from a previous total of twenty to thirty-two workstations. Twelve of these are located in a lab, where free computer classes are taught; when there is no class in session, the lab simply provides additional public-use computers. Computers in the children's department grew from eight to twenty with this renovation.

The project was not slated to affect the exterior of the building; however, a grant from the Village of Romeoville funded construction of a grand new arched entryway and other architectural embellishments. These additions really transform what looked and felt like a building built in 1973 into a sleek and modern building of 2012.

Fast Facts

Building:	46,000 square feet
Project Costs:	$9 million
Seating:	208 (not including meeting room)
Collections:	100,000 (current); 150,000 capacity
Computers:	52
Hours:	52 per week
Staff:	Full-time: 40
Architect:	Dewberry
Engineers:	Dewberry
Interiors:	Dewberry
Construction:	The Lombard Company
Web site:	www.whiteoaklibrary.org