A NEW BEGINNING
FOR LEWIS & CLARK LIBRARY
AUGUST 2021
Independent Record  helenaTi.com
Congratulations
Thanks for letting us participate!

FrontLine Glass
Commercial & Residential Glass, Windows & Doors
1107 Elm St. • (406)449-7275
www.frontlineglass.com
WELCOME BACK
to your new and improved library

The last 16 months have been tough for everyone. Here at Lewis & Clark Library we had double the devastation with the COVID pandemic and a major construction project. Through all the confusion, questions, dust, noise, and despair of 2020 and early 2021, we always saw a chance for creation. We always had a vision of making something great again from the wreckage.

I believe our community and visitors will be able to embrace the newborn Library building as the Community’s Living Room and a real showplace for many, many years to come. The changes made to the structure and the interior spaces are tremendous. Without enlarging the Library’s footprint, new spaces were created to sit and read and converse.

There are quiet places to think, work, and collaborate. There are meeting spaces and spaces to share ideas, to be enlightened, and entertained. The new spaces for children and teens are modern and comfortable and usable in ways this Library has not known before.

Construction began in late fall 2019 and dramatically transformed the first floor of the Library. The two main community meeting rooms were improved and expanded; bathrooms were relocated and modernized; Children and Teen spaces were enlarged and relocated; collections were redistributed with careful consideration; the lobby and coffee kiosk were expanded and brightened; four new quiet study rooms were created and finally the Circulation and Information desks were consolidated into a single service point.

One of the goals of the new design was to bring the outdoors into the Library and to allow those outside to see just how full of life the Library really is. New windows on all sides of the building and at both levels have provided that opportunity.

To ensure service to the community for many years to come, construction greatly improved the structural integrity of the Library. The building’s seismic capabilities were modernized, making it much safer in the event of an earthquake. The renovation also improved the Library’s accessibility by making all public areas – inside and out – accessible according to ADA guidelines. The parking lot and the entryways were also reconfigured for better ADA access and safety. The elevator was enclosed and its safety features upgraded as well.

As we move into the next phase of growth and creativity, the Library looks forward to greeting our patrons with open arms. The Library team is working hard on making the building in Helena comfortable for everyone’s use. Safety and usability for the Library community are always our first priority.

While the construction caused upheaval here in Helena, the other four branches of the Lewis & Clark Library in Augusta, East Helena, Lincoln and the Bookmobile, continued to provide many great services to their communities. The Lewis & Clark Library family is a strong one and we are proud of all the services and gathering spaces we provide.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped make this year of growth and opportunity possible. First, thank you to our design and construction teams – Mosaic Architecture and Dick Anderson Construction.

They worked so hard to ensure the safety of staff and patrons during this lengthy and complicated project. And of course I wish to thank the Lewis & Clark Library Foundation for their never-ending support for this Library team and the community. The moral and financial support they provide is immense. The Library staff feel loved and appreciated every day.

John Finn
Lewis & Clark Library Director

Grand reopening slated for Aug. 12

After 16 months of construction, Lewis & Clark Library’s main branch in Helena will welcome patrons back to its newly renovated space during a grand reopening celebration on Aug. 12.

A ribbon cutting is scheduled for 1 p.m. Throughout the afternoon, enjoy library tours and other activities along with free hot dogs and Big Dipper ice cream. The Director’s Cut Movie is scheduled for dusk at Anchor Park.

The library is located at 120 S. Last Chance Gulch and can be reached at 406-447-1690 or lclibrary.org.
On August 12, 2021 the Library will have a Grand Opening and ribbon cutting for the newly remodeled Library. A person might ask: “Why did the Library need remodeling? What benefit does the community get from the Library?” Two good questions.

Our current Library was built in 1976. I remember as a new resident of Helena both using the old Library then housed in what is now Grand Street Theater on Park Avenue and also seeing the new Library emerge from the ground at its present location. The Library was a part of the revival of downtown after Urban Renewal cleared many of the old, abandoned buildings along the gulch. That was about 50 years ago and time was starting to show on the existing structure.

What was needed was what you can now see, a remodel designed around how patrons use the current structure. First, given the new earthquake standards, the building now offers the public a safer structure with seismic support against the potential of a devastating earthquake.

Second, now there is a greater focus upon how the community has used this public space for the past 50 years. There is now a larger and more user friendly children’s section, to encourage our youngest readers to be comfortable and enjoy the library. Learning to love reading early is a gift any community can give its youngest patrons, since this love will return a lifetime of joy to the patron. And for the youngest of users there are separate bathrooms.

There is a dedicated area for teens, who can come to relax and enjoy the teen collection in its multiple media formats.

Also there are larger community meeting rooms for both large and small gatherings and small private rooms for quiet study and small meetings. Plus, there are new bathrooms. Brighter lights and more colorful walls make the library a welcoming location.

And what benefit does the community get from this remodeling? The community receives a friendlier, open and much more usable space in the center of Helena, indeed close to the original city center of Helena in the 1860s. Helena is home to the oldest community library in Montana; we have had a library in this city almost from its beginnings and have had a library here continuously since then. Libraries have changed in their mission, from being merely a depository for books, to a place for learning and a gathering location for the whole community. Obviously the Library still houses books but now they are “housed” in a variety of presentations, from hard copy to electronic, digital and items you can pull from the cloud.

Libraries, schools, post offices. These three public services are the core of a community, and Helena can celebrate this remodeling, moving the building and its users well into the remainder of the 21st century.

Ron Waterman
Library Board of Trustees
ALWAYS AN HONOR TO SERVE.

Congratulations
Lewis & Clark Library.

silvercitysct.com

406-495-7117
This summer’s grand re-opening of the Lewis & Clark Library in Helena marked the end of a years-long remodel of the entire building for the modern age.

The inception of the project dates back to February 2017. After the initial planning was done, construction started in November 2019 and finished in February 2021.

According to library officials, the $6 million renovation of the building was funded with $4 million from the library’s depreciation reserve fund and $2 million from the Montana Board of Investments Intercap loan program.

The project brought significant changes to the building including seismic upgrades, a fire suppression system, a new fire and security system, and better accessibility for people with disabilities. Among the design upgrades are new windows throughout the building, new bathrooms, new seating areas, a new cafe area, new furniture, an expanded and improved children’s area, an expanded and improved teen area, expanded community rooms and an all-new HVAC system.
According to library Director John Finn, the library had “good bones” to begin with, and the goal of the project was to strengthen those bones. The library, which was built in 1976, has been upgraded to be a community-oriented space.

“I believe our community and visitors will be able to embrace the newborn library building as the community’s living room and a real showplace for many, many years to come,” Finn said, in a letter. “The changes made to the structure and the interior spaces are tremendous. Without enlarging the library’s footprint, new spaces were created to sit and read and converse. There are quiet places to think, work and collaborate. There are meeting spaces and spaces to share ideas, be enlightened and entertained.”

Library board chair Ron Waterman said he remembers being a new resident of Helena and using the old library housed in what is now Grandstreet Theater on Park Avenue as the Lewis & Clark Library was being built at its current location. It was part of the revival of downtown after urban renewal cleared many of the old, abandoned buildings along Last Chance Gulch. “That was about 50 years ago and time was starting to show on the existing structure,” Waterman said.

While new standards for safety and stability are among the main reasons for the project, Waterman said the remodel also took into account the way the community has used the space for the last 50 years. As a result, he said the community now has a friendlier, open and much more usable space in the middle of town.

“Helena is home to the oldest community library in Montana; we have had a library in this city almost from its beginnings and have had a library here continuously since then,” Waterman said. “Libraries have changed in their mission, from being merely a depository for books, to a place for learning and a gathering location for the whole community.”
Library welcomes new teen librarian

The Lewis & Clark Library is pleased to welcome Sherry Schlundt as the new Teen Services Librarian. Sherry moved from Ankeny, Iowa where she had served as the Teen Librarian at the Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library.

With 19 years of library experience, Sherry believes that libraries are an integral part of the community. Prior to becoming a librarian, she was a social worker and that background was a nice transition for her into the library community.

“Before I was a librarian I didn’t realize how much I would feel a part of the community by being in a library,” she said.

Sherry’s favorite thing about being a librarian is sharing the library with the community.

“Libraries are unique and special places,” she said. “There is no place like a library where you can just be, where you have resources in front of you and it is free. It is very unique.”

Since beginning in July, Sherry has been busy getting to know the new teen space and preparing for fall programs and events.

“My goal is to have the new teen space come alive, be a hopping space where kids can come and enjoy that area which is just for them,” she said.

You can find Sherry in the new teen space working to make it welcoming and a reflection of what the teen community wants. She is looking forward to welcoming teens in for in-person programming soon.

“I am always interested in ideas and input from young people on what they want to see in programs, subject matter and collection ideas,” she said. “... It is their space and I want to hear from them so I can try to meet the needs of teens in our community. It is a lovely space and I hope people come to see it and that teens begin using it.”

Sherry can be reached at sshulndt@lclibrary.org (schlundt) or 406-447-6683.
Since 2012, the Lewis & Clark Library Bookmobile has been bringing library services to the community to better serve our patrons. Visiting the bookmobile is like stepping into any of the library buildings with books, DVDs, puppets, free WiFi and Public Services desk. The bookmobile provides stops all year long and is designed for all ages. Please visit www.LCLibrary.org for a schedule of stop locations and times.

In 2019 we added the Words On Wheels Library to our library team! The library bike provides free WiFi, a small collection available for checkout, Take and Make crafts and can issue library cards.
The Lewis & Clark Library has been selected for a $20,000 National Endowment for the Arts Big Read grant. This marks the 15th NEA Big Read grant that the Library has received in 13 years.

“It is an honor to be selected by the NEA and we are excited to continue the Library’s tradition of bringing the community together with the Big Read,” stated Lewis & Clark Library Director John Finn.

The Library has selected “An American Sunrise,” a collection of poetry by Joy Harjo, for this year’s Big Read. Harjo is the current U.S. Poet Laureate and a member of the Muskogee (Creek) Nation. “An American Sunrise” revisits the homeland from which Harjo’s ancestors were uprooted from in 1830 as a result of the Indian Removal Act.

The 2021 Big Read will take place during November and will feature the following events: a virtual program with author Joy Harjo; a Poetry Workshop with Montana Poet Laureate Melissa Kwansy; an opening reception with poet Jennifer Elise Foerster and Montana poets Heather Cahoon and Mandy Smoker Broad dus, one of Montana’s two Poet Laureates; the Lewis & Clark Library Foundation Community Leaders Poetry Reading; and much more.

Events will be a combination of in person, hybrid, and virtual. The Library’s website will be updated with all events, locations, and times. For more information on the Big Read, visit www.arts.gov/initiatives/nea-big-read.

The NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.
THANK YOU TO THE LEWIS & CLARK LIBRARY FOR LETTING DAC BE A PART OF YOUR CONSTRUCTION/RENOVATION PROJECT!

ALWAYS PART OF THE SOLUTION

WWW.DACONSTRUCTION.COM
HONOR.
LEGACY.
EMBRACING THE FUTURE
Congratulations!

Independent Record
CONGRATULATIONS!
Lewis & Clark Library

Residential & Commercial

- Boiler - service and installation
- Water heater replacements
- Fixture & leak repair
- Water & sewer service repairs
- Video camera sewer inspections
- Drain cleaning
- Air conditioning
- Air duct cleaning

GUARANTEED SATISFACTION
Call the “Big Sky Guys”
406 443-0336

24 Hour Service
Serving Montana Since 1987
www.bigskyguys.com
1923 Dodge Avenue
Helena MT 59601
Proud to be included in the Lewis & Clark Library project!
1220 Euclid Ave Helena | 406.443.4770 | www.homebeautifiers.com
lclibrary.org

Visit us often to get updates, see upcoming events, find information on the services we offer, see all our digital materials, and so much more!

YOUR LIBRARY YOUR WAY