



City Cuts Ribbon on Rebuilt Sequoia Library

555 S. Midvale Boulevard

The Capital Times
Tuesday, December 9, 2008
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Nearly 100 people braved icy rain Monday night to celebrate the grand opening of the newly rebuilt Sequoia Library on the city's near west side.

The library, which is part of the larger Sequoia Commons project on Midvale and Tokay boulevards, technically has been open to patrons since the end of November. But Mayor Dave Cieslewicz and others involved in the building process officially cut the ribbon Monday in an evening that included refreshments, an architect-led tour of the building and the multigenerational Westmorland Walking Band playing "Marian the Librarian" from "The Music Man" for guests.

"As much as I love poring over budgets and establishing policies, I have to say it's moments like these that make it all worthwhile," said Madison Public Library Board and Madison Public Library Foundation President Tripp Widder.

Cieslewicz said the new library not only represents the city's commitment to libraries and lifelong learning, but also helps the environment, as Sequoia Library has a silver Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) certification.

The process in building the library has not been easy, with more than two years of spirited neighborhood involvement over the look of the project, the mayor acknowledged.

"Growing internally, infill development like this will help us prevent sprawl in the long run. Now, we all agree with that in the abstract. Sometimes doing it can be somewhat more of a challenge," he said with a laugh.

Like Sequoia, all new buildings in the city of Madison will be built according to LEED specifications, the mayor added. Joe Huberty, one of the interior architects for Sequoia Library from Engberg Anderson Design, pointed out some of the environmental aspects of the building on a tour, including a visible gray water system that will use rainwater from the building's roof for toilets and urinals, recycled glass partitions and high-efficiency lighting and heating systems.

Many of the architectural elements, such as the gray water system, are visible to library guests to give them a better sense of what energy use goes into buildings, Huberty said.

"We all have commitments to make in ensuring the long-term well-being of the planet, and construction and the operation of a building have a significant role in how we use energy and generate waste in the modern world," he explained.

According to Widder, the new Sequoia Library nearly doubled in size -- from 11,000 to 20,000 square feet -- from its previous iteration on Midvale Boulevard. The entire project cost \$6 million, with 80 percent of those funds coming from the city and 20 percent from more than 900 individual donors. The Madison Public Library Foundation, the fundraising arm of the city's libraries, also made a donation to keep the new library open on Sundays during the winter from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., beginning Jan. 1.

