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Library Breaks Ground for Expansion of Whiteford Branch

With close to 100 library staff, government officials, Library and Foundation Board members and community residents, the Whiteford Branch of Harford County Public Library broke ground ceremonially on December 3, 2008 for an expansion that will double the size of the branch. Serving the northern communities of the county, this branch when completed will feature new children and teen areas, over a 1,000 sq. ft. meeting room, 24 public access computers and the capacity to hold 70,000 items in the collection.

"We are very pleased to be able to give the North Harford community a brand new expanded, state-of-the-art library," explained Audra Caplan, Library Director. "This community, and particularly the North Harford Friends of the Library, has been active in advocating for excellent library facilities from the 1980s when the only library service was given out of a trailer."

The North Harford Friends of the Library President, Sara Robinson, has played a key role in ensuring that the community in and around Whiteford has had access to library services. "I had a dream more than 40 years ago which took 25 years to fulfill – a library for north Harford County. Then I had a second dream – an expansion of that library. And here we are today seeing this expansion come true," stated Mrs. Robinson.

Features of the new building will include a dedicated children's area. It will be decorated with bright, vibrant colors and shapes and constructed to simulate a small village under a canopy of leaves and have a play area space for puppet shows and

dress up performances. Parents and caregivers will be encouraged to interact with their children in ways that enhance skill development and emergent literacy skills. The teen area will have age-appropriate furniture, computer stations and a flat screen television. Designed to appeal to middle and high school aged students, this area will serve both as a social and learning center.

“In the design of the library, we have integrated the existing building and new addition into a unified whole,” stated Paul Edmeades, President, Edmeades & Stromdahl, Ltd., the architectural firm responsible for the building design. “We have introduced natural light into all the spaces by increasing the size of the north-facing windows and using high clerestory windows to bring light into the interior library spaces.”

During construction library services will continue in a modular unit located in the branch parking lot. “We have structured customized safety procedures and systems to protect the interests of Harford County residents,” stated Joseph Rode, Executive Vice President, Mullan Contracting Company, the contractor managing the construction of the building. “We encourage the library’s full and continued use and it will be operating under normal hours.”

The collection in the modular unit will include popular materials and DVDs and a down-sized collection of other genres. Customers will be able to request and return materials and have access to six public use computers. Story times will be held on Wednesday morning and teens will continue to have their Friday night after-hours gathering once a month.

Branch construction is projected to be completed by late 2009. For more information call 410 638 3608.

Harford County Public Library operates eleven branches located throughout Harford County, Maryland. The library serves over 180,000 registered borrowers of all ages and has an annual circulation of over 4,000,000. The mission of Harford County Public Library is to provide access, service and information to the citizens of Harford County anytime, anywhere and to create an environment that encourages the acquisition of knowledge and the love of reading.

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Photo caption #1: Groundbreaking for the expansion of the Whiteford Branch of Harford County Public Library on December 3, 2008. Pictured (left to right): Heidi Richardson, Whiteford Branch Manager; Terri Schell, Claudia Sumler, Steve Kirchner, Senior

Library Administrators; Mary Hastler, Library Associate Director; Terry Hanley, Library Foundation Board President; Nancy Hume, Foundation Board member; Chad Shrodes, County Council; Linda Van Deusen, Terry Troy, Library Foundation Board members; Billy Boniface, County Council President; David Craig, County Executive; Jesse Bane, Sheriff; Audra Caplan, Library Director; Bill Nicodemus, Library Board President; Irene Padilla, State Librarian; Barry Glassman, State Senator; Wayne Norman, Delegate; Sara Robinson, President, North Harford Friends of Harford County Public Library; Paul Edmeades, President, Edmeades & Stromdahl Architectural Firm; Joseph Rode, Executive Vice-President, Mullan Contracting Company.