

Focus on the new library

New Leesburg library to open in spring

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Staff Writer

LEESBURG — When the long-awaited Leesburg library opens this spring, it will provide economic benefits and opportunities to the community, officials said.

“The library is the cornerstone to our whole democratic way of life,” said Tom Merchant, executive director of the Lake County Library System. “Regardless of social and socioeconomic status, libraries generate open access to everyone and allow them the opportunities to become better citizens. Libraries have a major role in the health of the community.”

Merchant said when people and businesses consider moving to an area, libraries rank high on their agendas.

Libraries help businesses with recruitment strategies, he said.

The Leesburg library will offer free services, such as Internet use, business development, and resume writing tools.

An amphitheater, a butterfly garden and several sculptures depicting family values will also be part of the library.

“(Libraries) provide wonderful econom-

ic benefits to a community,” said Leesburg library director Barbara Morse.

According to the Florida’s Public Libraries Build Strong Economies: A Taxpayer Return On Investment Report, every \$1 invested in libraries provides a \$6.54 in return to the tax base.

The library plans to buy DVDs, audio books, children’s books and online database search programs.

Morse said seniors on fixed incomes who want to keep their minds sharp would benefit from using libraries.

Parents benefit from taking their children to libraries, which help promote reading, she said.

Morse said she expects library construction to be completed by the middle of next month. Tentative opening dates are mid April with a grand opening in May.

Morse said local residents are taking an interest in construction of the library.

“Our business is booming and we haven’t moved yet,” she said. “Typically, when you move into a new library, the business doubles.”



KERI RASMUSSEN Staff Photographer

A construction worker helps build Leesburg’s new library.

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