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Library to close for improvements

By Lynda J. Hemmerling

Readers and researchers will have to find an alternative to the Lansing library for several days next month.

The Lansing Public Library will be closed from April 5 to 14 for re-carpeting and other improvements, officials said.

New carpeting, new furniture and a new design layout are some of the planned modifications.

"These improvements should make the library a more inviting place," said William Babcock, administrative librarian.

The improvements also will lay the groundwork for a new computerized card catalogue system.

"We should have the computerized catalogue sometime in the near future," said Babcock, adding that the library's Board of Trustees has not yet set a date to purchase the new equipment.

"This is something we really need," he noted.

Meanwhile, the current new carpeting will be laid in early April. The new, neutral colored carpet will replace the 20-year-old pile that has been stained by traffic and a leaky roof, Babcock said. The roof was repaired about two years ago.

Several transformations will be made to the reference department which will

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be moved from the building's entrance.

Moving the reference section away from the front door will make it quieter for researchers, Babcock said. Additionally, new furniture will be placed in the area.

"It'll make the library more comfortable to use," he added.

Employees in the circulation and technical services departments also will get some new furniture for their work stations.

The senior section, containing books with larger print, and new book releases will be positioned closer to the front door, Babcock said.

"This way, people will have much better access," he said.

The total cost of the renovations is \$180,000, Babcock said. Money is available from leftover funds from a two-year-old bond issue for the roof repairs, he noted.

The children's department and the community meeting room in the lower level are being refurbished.

In addition to carpeting, plans for the children's story room include a new ceiling and lighting.

"We want to make it a little more inviting for the little ones," Babcock said.

A new telephone system was installed earlier this month.

"Everything should be completed by April 14," Babcock said. "It takes time. Every (book) stack in the building has to be moved and repositioned."

Lansing Public Library has been at its current location at Indiana Avenue and School Street since the mid-1970s.

Babcock noted that parking is available behind the building to the north and that a rear entrance may be used.

As an entity, the library has been around since 1936.

Currently, the library has 22,612 patrons, which is about 80 percent of Lansing's population. The library has more than 100,000 books, 1,000 videos, 3,000 audio books and 300 periodicals.