

Lansing raises money for library growth

Three-year-old resource quickly outgrows its shelf and office space

By JENNIE DALEY
Journal Staff

LANSING — In the three years since its opening, the Lansing Community Library Center has grown beyond many expectations. It has grown so much that its board of directors is now looking to expand.

"We've already run out of space and we have to have better handicap accessibility," Marlaine Darfler, president of the board of directors, said.

But that hasn't dimmed community interest.

"It is small, but I was impressed by the people who work here. They're very helpful and friendly," Kathi Berga said as she helped her daughters Rachel, 6, and Rebecca, 8, fill out their summer reading tallies.

Rachel Findley, 11, agreed. "It's a really good library with lots of books," she said.

Three years ago, when the library first opened, it was little more than the vision of a few Lansing residents.

"Now we hardly have room for more books. When we started we were spreading them out, putting plants between A and B," Darfler said.

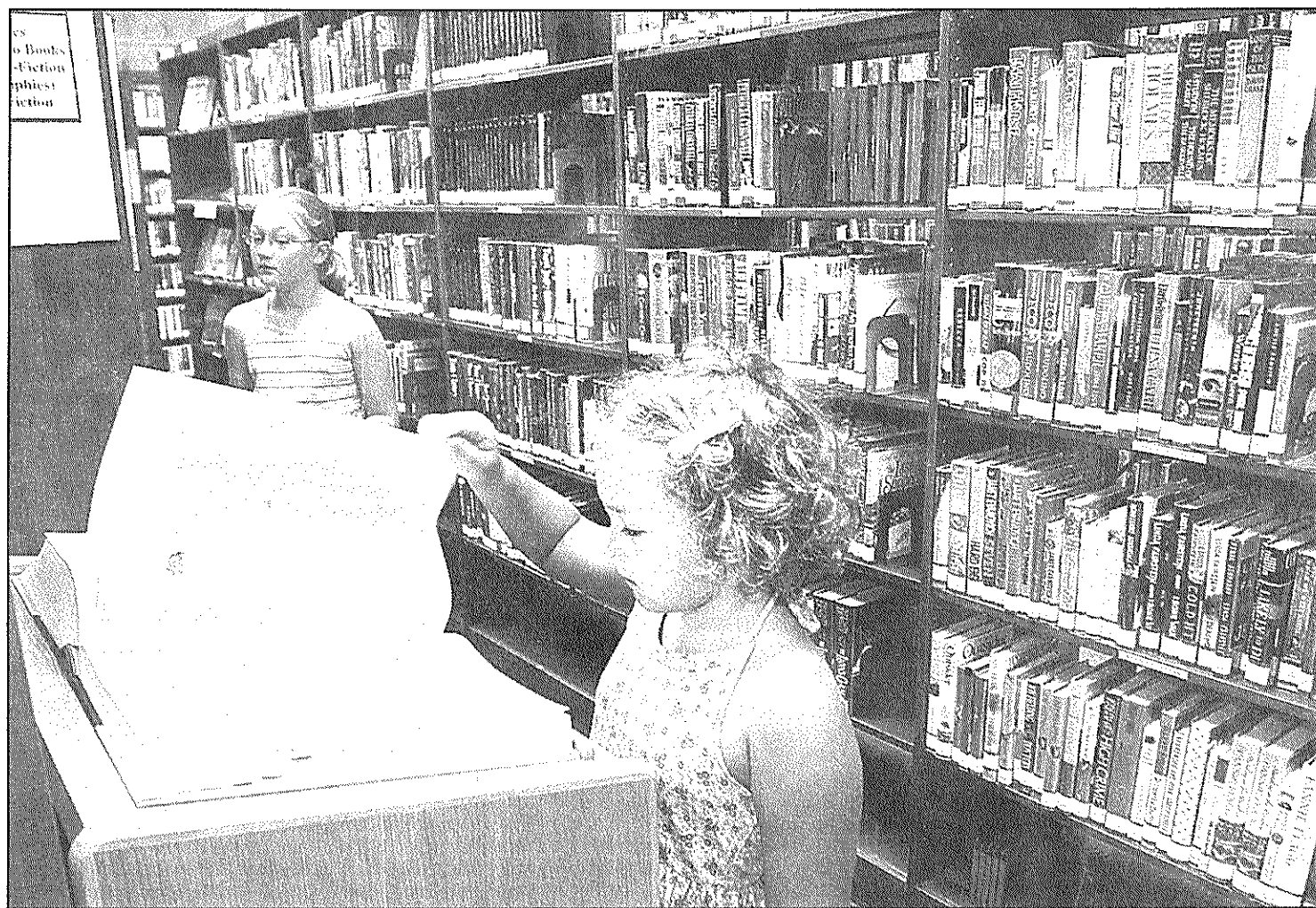
She attributed the site's success to the breadth of services offered at a convenient location.

"Because we can stay connected to the county library, this became a very attractive way to have services locally," Darfler said.

Steve Farkas, Lansing Town Supervisor, had just taken over the job of supervisor when the issue of offering a local library came up in 2000.

Town officials moved from the old town hall building to the newly-built facility in December of 1999, leaving the fate of the old building up in the air.

"The group came to the board and proposed using the old town hall building for a library," said Steve Farkas, Town of Lansing supervisor whose wife, Alice, was involved in getting the initiative started. "That building was going to be demolished so we asked a committee to do a survey and there was



IRINA PERESS/Journal Staff

Sydney Fraboni, 6, leafs through a dictionary at Lansing's Community Library Center Wednesday as her sister Jordan Fraboni, 9, looks for

books in the background. The sisters were at the library with their babysitter for the "Read, White & Blue" summer reading program.

overwhelming interest in using it for a library."

From there it snowballed, according to Farkas, with numerous people putting in long hours to get the project off the ground.

The blow up of a boiler jump-started renovations while volunteers spruced up rooms and others started fundraising.

"Now the library is highly used. It's an integral part of the community," Farkas said.

And so another fund-raising campaign is on the horizon. To accommodate increasing interest and update the facility the board of directors has commissioned plans for an expansion.

Bert Fortner of Ernie Bayles Architects designed the plans, which are on display at the library.

Currently a two-room facility with staff space downstairs, the new plan

adds rooms and makes the lower floor handicap accessible.

A large reading room, expanded computer area and a community meeting room would comprise the majority of the first floor.

The main floor, where books are now housed, would grow to house two larger rooms of bookshelves, a separate children's book room and more work space for librarians.

Darfler estimated the project will cost about \$200,000, for which fundraising is scheduled to begin in late September or early October.

"I don't think people realize what a good library this is," Judy Scott, a volunteer, said on a break from checking out books. "But it's hot. We're running out of shelf space and we need better handicap access."

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IRINA PERESS/Journal Staff

The Lansing Community Library Center on Auburn Road has been open for three years and has grown so much that the board of directors is looking to expand.