

PRESS RELEASE
ORCAS ISLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
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LIBRARY EXPANSION PROGRESSING AND LEVY LID LIFT PLACED ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT.

Construction of the Orcas Island Public Library Expansion began on July 12, 2016. Detailed information regarding the expansion and still photographs are on the Library's website. A continuous construction camera feed will also soon be available.

As previously reported, the Library Trustees have placed a Library District Levy Lid Lift on the November ballot. The current levy is 30.3 cents per \$1000 of assessed property value. Under the District proposal, the levy would be raised to 45 cents per \$1000. Current levy amounts for Lopez Island and San Juan Island are 40 cents and 50 cents, respectively.

The Library began accumulating funds for an expansion project in 2014. To date, \$3.5 million has been raised through private donations totaling nearly \$2 million, a State appropriation of \$1.4 million secured by Senator Kevin Ranker and a \$100,000 grant from the Friends of the Library. To meet the community's demand for expanded Library facilities and services, the Board determined that the Library expansion should begin this summer, and to proceed with a levy lid lift on the November ballot. Approval of the levy helps to ensure that the State appropriation will be accessible in the current biennium. The additional revenue generated will allow the District to borrow funds sufficient to cover the approximately \$700,000 remaining to be raised. The additional levy revenue will fund the increased operations and maintenance costs of the expanded facility, estimated at approximately \$130,000 a year. When expansion-related debt is repaid, the increase in levy revenue will rebuild adequate operating reserves, which recent operations funding shortfalls have eroded.

Even without the expansion, the Board would pursue a levy lift within the next year or two. Because of State Initiative 747, the gap between levy revenues and the cost of Library services and building operations grows every year. Some basic functions of the Library are now funded by gifts from the Friends of the Library. The increased levy revenue will insure that basic functions of the Library, such as Sunday hours and technology improvements, will be more reliably funded.

A detailed history of the project, facts and figures related to the expansion's impact on Library programs and services and Frequently Asked Questions and Answers are available on the Library website: www.orcaslibrary.org. Additionally, the Library Trustees and Library Director, Phil Heikkinen, are available to speak to any group or organization regarding the expansion and the levy proposal. Please contact Phil at 376-4985 or pheikkinen@orcaslibrary.org for additional information or to schedule a meeting with Phil or a Trustee.