History

The Lake Oswego Public Library began as two libraries: The Oswego Woman's Club opened its library in 1914, followed by the Oswego Library Association, in 1924. Both libraries were operated by volunteers and both collections were comprised of donated books.

In 1930, the City of Oswego agreed to publicly fund a city library. The two volunteer libraries were merged and Lucia Bliss became the city's first librarian. This combined library held 1,486 books and was located in City Hall, sharing space with the City Council.

In 1953, the Friends of the Library group was organized.

By 1959, the library's collection of books and magazines had grown to 13,000 items, and a larger space became necessary. A parcel of land donated by John Gray (former chairman of Omark) and a bond issue led to a new 7,400 square foot library at the corner of Fourth & D Streets. This new library was dedicated in May 1962. Dr. John R. Howard, president of Lewis & Clark College, gave the dedication address.

More books, phonograph records, storytimes, activities and many more library patrons led to another crisis of space during the 1970s. In 1974, a bond issue to expand the library was passed by citizens but construction was delayed until 1982, due to disagreements about the site location and building plans.

A new 27,000 square foot library opened in August 1983 with Oregon's Poet Laureate, William Stafford, reciting a poem: "…the nudge of a book and all of history crystallizes for a dazzled reader again and again…" By this time the collection contained more than 75,000 items: books, magazines, LPs, cassettes, pamphlets, jigsaw puzzles, Polaroid cameras, and 8mm movies.

A mere 3 years later, in 1986, the Library Board was predicting that the new building and its limited parking would become a problem in the near future.

Studies in the 1980s and 1990s recommended a 46,000 square foot Library and a branch. In 2006, *The Independent Study of the Clackamas County Library System Facilities Assessment* recommended the replacement of the current building with a 64,854 square foot facility because of the high level of use. That same year BOORA Architects recommended a 65,581 square foot library.

Today, in 2012, the library collection has grown to over 239,000 items and it is one of the busiest libraries in Oregon. There are over 171,000 books to choose from, as well as magazines, music, audiobooks, eBooks, and many online resources/databases.

Over 1,000 people per day visit the Lake Oswego Public Library. The Lake Oswego Public Library is rated by HAPLR rating system of American public libraries as the best library in Oregon.

On July 25th, 2012 the City Council passed a resolution 7-0 to place a $14 million general obligation bond on the November 2012 ballot for a new library. The bond would fund a portion of the overall library building project.

A new library of approximately 60,000 square feet was proposed as part of the Lake Oswego Redevelopment Agency's North Anchor project at First Street and B Avenue in downtown Lake Oswego. On November 5, 2012 bond measure 3-405 failed.

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