

## Books

From A1

but now is in an impressive room is joined with the high school library for grades 9-12 by a short hallway with offices.

McGee was more in need when donated books from all across the nation started pouring in, some from large companies such as Books-a-Million, Scholastic and Barnes and Noble, but others from individual children who wrapped them in Christmas paper and included notes and photos. The two libraries sorted through the books and divided them up between the two facilities.

However, the high school school library still had many needs. McGee said the first need was the space, as she was cramped into a small temporary trailer that didn't do much to encourage student use. However, the opening of the new facility has led to a dramatic upswing in usage, with many students giving rave reviews to McGee and checking out books for both pleasure and research.

"I can already tell such a big difference in kids coming to the library," McGee said. "The kids say the nicest thing about how nice it is and how nice the furniture is."

The reading tables and chairs are more stylish than usual, she said, while two far corners of the room have several comfortable plush chairs for reading. Map stands have pull-out drawers. In one corner there is a TV set for playing educational videos (although many teachers now bring their own TVs and VCR players to class), and students also do homework here.

A listening center with a CD player and headphones

is set up so as many as four at a time can listen to CDs.

"The band director mentioned he could use the listening center for make up tests," she said.

Plans include a station of eight computers that will allow students to view the Internet and look up available books by subject, author and title - and whether they're checked out or not.

"We do everything electronically," McGee said.

McGee showed how the computer system, using a program called Athena, allows her to use a bar code on the book, scanning it quickly. The computer already has a list of students and faculty stored so that the user is quickly registered on check-in. No card is signed, although the book is still stamped with the due date. The book undergoes a similar swipe when the book is checked in.

VHS videos on hand can also come up in a search, although McGee hopes one day to get a DVD player and DVD titles.

Now, McGee is concerned with completing the collection. The day Gov. Bob Riley recently visited, few of the roughly 3,200 volumes at hand - which leave wide gaps even now - were on the shelves. Riley caught McGee off guard by asking how many books she needed.

It's not that simple, said McGee, who is still gauging exactly how many books the shelves will hold. She noted sometimes popular titles also need duplicates.

McGee said it has been easier to come up with a dollar figure of \$50,000, as many books now can cost \$25 or \$30 on the average. At

that rate, the library might gain another 2,000 volumes.

"We'll still need more, but that's a good foundation," she said.

"It's really more a question of quality than quantity," she said. "I'm working on what is called a core collection. We break it down to fiction and non-fiction, including reference books. I'm looking at what we've got and what we need."

Fortunately, Perma-Bound, a company in Jacksonville, Ill., has come up with a list of books throughout the Dewey System which is geared to what McGee said she needs for \$50,000. The thick binder with the suggested list of books arrived last week just as McGee was being interviewed.

"They came up with a compilation of best sellers and highly recommended books. I'm going to do a core collection customized to what our library needs," she said. "This should give me a good foundation of what we need."

She said she now plans to go through the list to look for certain needs, including books that teachers would assign in subjects ranging from biology to English. She will look for books which would be popular, delete what would not be used and order multiple copies when needed. All will be well recommended and would still face final approval by authorities in the school system.

McGee is gearing all immediate financial donations to the book collection. Riley indicated there may be some funds which he can give to help. With the list soon to be finalized, she now

wants to contact Riley to see what's available.

"If someone gave all the money now, I'd buy them in one swipe," she said.

Library enhancement funds, which runs roughly \$3,300 a year, will not help much, as the bulk of that goes to annual technical support and updates for Athena and for office supplies, as well as magazines and videos.

She said a library full of books is still important in the computer age, especially in terms of reliable information.

"Anyone can put things on the Internet. You don't know who's put information out there," she said, adding that books are reviewed and recommended.

"A lot of our kids don't even have a computer," McGee said. "Our kids still use encyclopedias," including a newer World Book set purchased by Alabama Power.

For younger readers, library books are especially useful.

"The illustrations are so important at that age level," she said.

Once the books are taken care of, McGee wants to move on to getting a couple of DVD players and enlarging the CD and DVD collection. She would like to get music of different genres and generations, as well as speeches and historical events.

Anyone wanting to donate to the high school library may write a check out to Carbon Hill High School Library. Anyone wanting more information may contact McGee at 924-8821 or by e-mailing her at mcgee@imail.walkercountyschools.com.

## Dedication

From A1

ic contender for governor next year.

Little said McCrory Building Co., which recently constructed the new 210,000-square-foot school for the Walker County Board of Education, is involved with the event as well.

The new facility was constructed in the wake of a fire that destroyed Carbon Hill High School in June 2002 and a November 2002 tornado that took out Carbon Hill Elementary-Junior High. The two schools joined into one facility that opened earlier this month to house nearly 900

students.

McCrory Building is still on the scene building nearby athletic fields (for football, baseball and softball), and crews have been available to work on small items to finish the school.

The open house will be open to anyone who wants to come, whether or not they have children in the school.

A number of dignitaries and the Carbon Hill High School band are expected to participate at the ceremony, which will be followed by the open house from 2:30-4

p.m. A reception will also be held in the lunchroom, with refreshments furnished by McCrory.

The open house will be staffed throughout the sprawling building by cheerleaders, athletes, club members, school officials and others to direct people. Floor plans and maps will be available.

During the open house, the local PTA also hopes to have a membership booth in place at the school, which was designed by Latham Associates Architects of Homewood.

## Scouts

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