

Posted on: August 20, 2019

West Memphis breaks ground on new library



By [WMCActionNews5.com Staff](#) and [Brandon Richard](#) | August 19, 2019 at 5:44 AM CDT - Updated August 20 at 9:04 AM

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (WMC) - West Memphis leaders broke ground a new multi-million dollar public library Monday morning.

The new library, which is being built at North 4th and East Broadway Boulevard, will be the first civic building in the city in decades.

Like many people in West Memphis, Rebecca Bledsoe remembers trips to the library as a kid.

“I remember back in the mid-'70s when the newest part opened. I was about 8 years old. So excited to go to the library,” said Bledsoe.

Her love for the library never wavered. In fact, she came library director. But she says the current building has had its day.

"Libraries are no longer just houses for books. They are places where the community can gather," said Bledsoe.

Soon, they will have a new place to gather.

Bledsoe joined other West Memphis leaders Monday to break ground on a new library. Michel Lebel, the project manager with Allen and Hoshall, says at 14,000 square feet the new library will be twice as big as the current building and will offer much more.

"I would say only about half of the square footage is dedicated to books. The other half is dedicated to meeting rooms," said Lebel.

There will also be a cafe, outdoor event space, teen gaming area and reading spaces.

The library is one of several projects for which the city council approved \$12 million. Other projects include a new courthouse, police substation and two new fire stations.

West Memphis Mayor Marco McClendon calls it progress and a sign of things to come.

"I think just having a building that looks this well on Broadway will start to create hope in our city and more citizens will start to buy into what we're doing. I think that would definitely be great for West Memphis," said McClendon.

He said if all goes according to plan, construction should be finished in about one year.

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