

# Stillwater County Library and County Center Project Concept

Planning and groundwork for a new County Library started over four years ago with the Library Board of Trustees and has now developed into a much larger project that could include a County Community Center with space for resource professionals as well as a large learning center. The goal with this public facility would be to create a learning, resource, and banquet/recreational center for Stillwater County residents to benefit from for decades to come.

Stillwater County has consistently grown over the past decades largely because of Stillwater Mining Company (SMC) in Nye with large processing facilities in Columbus. SMC employs over 620 Stillwater County residents at both the Nye and East Boulder Mines. Due to the continual growth of the county throughout the past 50 years, public spaces and facilities are limited and are in imminent need of expanding to accommodate the increased demand. The current County Library is drastically short on space for its collections and programming, just as demand for its computer terminals continues to increase. Likewise, it has to turn down book donations because there's no more room to store items. Being able to provide the communities of Stillwater County a new high tech library and County Center would offer the residents services that we presently cannot. It would enhance our business community by offering meeting spaces, high-tech classrooms, and wireless capabilities with multiple eResources, in addition it would allow for ample employment outreach through Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Job Service. Having a facility like this would also allow the resource professionals to cater to local businesses through satellite offices with the Small Business Administration and the Small Business Development Center not to mention the unlimited training and resources they provide. The proposed project would allow for educational resources dedicated to improving the quality of people's lives by providing research-based information and education to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of families, communities and agriculture enterprises. The goal of Stillwater County Library/County Center Steering Committee is that the synergy between all of these resource professionals in one location would be unmatched.

Due to the rural nature of Stillwater County, it lacks the technological infrastructure needed to stay linked in to the changing world. It is vital to give our communities and their residents the tools to stay connected with the ever-evolving world and we see that being done through technology. It is the Committee's goal to offer all residents a safe and positive communities with the best surroundings to live, work, and raise their families. It's our desire to give residents of Stillwater County a place where their children want to return. Providing a new County Library and County Center would give us the resources and technology needed to keep up with the rest of the nation.

Not only would this new public facility contain a learning center, but could also contain a large banquet and multi-purpose recreation facility for formal banquets as well as giving Stillwater County's youth sports a much needed practice facility.

This proposed project has been presented to the Town of Columbus and the Stillwater County Commissioners. The Commissioners have appointed the Stillwater County Library/County Center Steering Committee to determine the feasibility of a public facility of this nature. The Library and County Center Steering Committee is working hard to complete the terms set forth by the Commissioners.