



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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MAYOR

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Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney and other dignitaries broke ground today on the new \$95 million Main Library. As part of The Better Jacksonville Plan, the City is building a 300,000 square foot Main Library just east of Hemming Plaza. It is expected to be complete in 2004.

“Today we mark the start of construction on what promises to be a signature building for downtown Jacksonville,” said Mayor Delaney. “Soon we will have a wonderful library that will serve to inspire, educate, entertain and inform our citizens for decades.”

The Mayor was joined at today’s groundbreaking ceremony by Joy Korman, Chair of the Library Board of Trustees, and Robert A.M. Stern, the architect for the new Main Library.

Stern's classical design will complement City Hall at the historic St. James Building, the Jacksonville Museum of Modern Art and the historic Snyder Memorial Church. Along with the JMOMA building, the new library will encompass the entire block bordered by Laura, Monroe, Main and Duval Streets. The new facility will be nearly three times the size of the current Main Library. Library customers will enjoy the convenience of a 600-space parking garage with ground level retail shops, to be built directly across Duval Street.

The new library is a five-story building, with the main entrance off Laura Street and a court level entrance off Main Street. The court level features a 400-seat auditorium, a 5,000 square foot multi-purpose meeting room, a catering kitchen and a pre-function gallery. The first floor features a café and bookstore, the popular library collection with bestsellers, and a Teen Area with a cyber café, music stations and an extensive book

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collection. Visitors can choose the grand staircase or elevators to move through the

building. The Children's Area with a nature theme is the focus of the second floor. It includes an indoor theater that looks like a screened porch and a craft room. The Children's Area will open to an outdoor courtyard with a reflecting pool. The third floor will house the library's extensive collection of non-fiction books. Finally, the grand reading room, with a 42-foot tall ceiling, will be the focus of the fourth floor. The library's specialty collections, including African-American, Genealogy and Florida studies, will also be located on this floor. The new library will also incorporate state-of-the-art technology including 250 public computers, a wireless Internet zone, satellite and video conferencing capabilities as well as the infrastructure to support future technologies. Because the new library will be nearly triple the size of the current library, it will have space for one million books.

The new Main Library will also be a cultural center. Three-fourths of one percent of the design and construction costs will go toward public art for the facility. The Art in Public Places Commission will decide how the approximately \$300,000 will be spent on artwork.

During today's groundbreaking ceremony, the Mayor announced plans for the Jacksonville Public Library Foundation fundraising campaign. The non-profit organization, chaired by Blue Cross/Blue Shield executive Mike Hightower, is hoping to raise a total of \$16 million for library enhancements, maintenance on those enhancements and an endowment for ongoing library programs.

The main architect, Robert A.M. Stern Architects, is working with several local subcontractors including the architectural firm of Rolland, Del Valle & Bradley, and the engineering firms of Prosser Hallock, Blue Heron Consultants, and Tilden Lobnitz Cooper. The construction manager is a local joint venture of Auchter-Elkins-Lodestar-Paris.

The Downtown Development Authority is currently reviewing proposals from developers to re-use the current Main Library, located at 122 Ocean Street. The City will vacate that facility in late 2004 and is looking for creative ways to re-use the 110,000 square foot building.

For more information on The Better Jacksonville Plan, visit www.betterjax.com. Members of the media with questions can call Press Secretary Sharon Ashton at (904) 630-7377.