

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



Harris County Public Library

Smart Library Storage Design Energizes Georgia Community

CHALLENGE

Relocating from a 5,000 square foot facility into one three times that size presented a welcome challenge for the Harris County Library, part of the Troup-Harris County Library System, in Georgia. While the additional room was a terrific upgrade, outfitting the space to create

a destination for county residents was just as critical. Located next to a brand new community center, the new library's footprint was in an ideal spot; its interior design and layout needed to be equally adept at presenting a desirable place to be – for readers, community groups, and more.

SOLUTION

Given that the way libraries are used – and viewed – is changing so much, flexibility is one of the key attributes any design must consider. Keith Schuermann, regional director of the library system, worked with an architect, furniture company and Patterson Pope to help bring his vision of a fun, functional “destination” to fruition.

“We are unique in that we, as libraries, offer a lifetime of learning for our community,” he said. *“If I’m going to do anything in my role as a director of the library system to have a lasting and positive impact on library services in the future, these building projects are the greatest way to do that.”*

Patterson Pope provided 14 repositionable library carts, in six-foot and nine-foot lengths. Affixed with casters, these highly moveable shelving sections allows library staff to easily rearrange the shelving when design inspiration strikes, or simply move them out of the way when the

library space holds large group gatherings – be they banquets or reading groups.

In addition to the repositionable shelving, the space includes fixed shelving runs as well as shorter, serpentine shelving in the children’s area. The serpentine design – just a drawing and an idea at the project’s beginning – required ingenuity and imagination to make the space real. Sizing it properly to work seamlessly with the furniture and the other shelving was an exciting challenge well worth the effort by Patterson Pope.

High-pressure laminate end panels from Wilson Art, colored to match the rest of the library’s look, created a clean, unified look.

“From the beginning, Patterson Pope was very hands-on,” said Schuermann. *“We had extensive meetings, and they really listened. It’s obviously a very large asset for us. We appreciate them as a learned resource. This is a library that the community wanted and needed.”*



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“One of the things we thought about in terms of design was that we wanted to create a space that was flexible. Using shelving that can be temporarily moved around was of course very important for usage design today and in the future.”

Keith Schuermann
Regional Director
Troup-Harris County Library System

ACHIEVEMENT

The Harris County Library’s new home has already reaped rewards, both in terms of numbers and internal satisfaction.

“Much to our pleasure, we’ve seen circulation increase by 20 percent, door count increase by 10 percent and we’ve also significantly increased the number of patrons we can accommodate for special events,” said Schuermann. *“All of those things prove that this is a library that the community wanted and needed. They are throwing as much love back at us as we poured into the project.”*

For Branch Manager Stephanie Green, it’s the little things that have made her smile.

“We’ve seen a big increase in the number of people who are coming to the library for the first time in years,” she said. *“A lot of new patrons are coming from the south of us who before wouldn’t have driven all the way into town, so that’s been nice. It’s bigger, it’s warmer, and it’s lighter. I just think that because of all of that people are more attracted to it. They want to see what it’s all about; they want to be involved. In general, it’s been a great addition to the community.”*

A new café, a fireplace, and even a sewing machine are extra features that continue to bring in both traditional readers and the tech-savvy crowd.

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