

Library board sele

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EDITOR

Dave Hempson said he believes in community service and throughout his life he has put that idea into action serving on numerous boards including the Cortland Regional Medical Center, SUNY Cortland and the Spafford historical society to name a few.

Most recently, Hempson decided to give his time to the Skaneateles Library.

"I had already served on a number of boards and had a lot of experience," Hempson said. "I believe it is important to give something back. I have a neighbor who thought I might be a good fit for the library board and I decided to throw my hat in the ring."

With his time on other boards and the experience he brought to the table, Hempson said the other board members approached him about serving as president.

Since joining the board, Hempson has found the trustees and the library staff to be welcoming and he has been impressed to see the dedication of everyone involved with the library.

"Everyone here, these are very dedicated people," Hempson said. "Everyone here is very giving and everyone here is here to support the mission of the library and enrich the lives of this community."

This is a vision Hempson shares.

He said a lot of work has gone into the library in recent years with the introduction of new programming and multiple



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Dave Hempson was recently appointed as president of the Skaneateles Library board of trustees.

events that are designed to engage the entire community, Hempson said the library has been working to fulfill its mission to be a true center for the entire community.

"The other day I saw just how much has changed in the past 10 years," Hempson said.

He said the library went from having just seven programs to more than 350 offerings annually in the past decade.

Being an integral part of the community extends to many areas.

From programming designed for the entire family to events planned to engage young readers to support for adults learning new technology, the library spans the needs of generations.

"The library is a public institute," Hempson said. "It is a place that provides information. It is a place

for a neighbor who doesn't have wi-fi or to teach someone how to use a computer. That is part of the vision we have for the library. We want this to be a place people can go and get information they might not otherwise have or learn something new."

Hempson said the library's ability to meet this vision is even more amazing from his perspective given the limitations of the building itself and the physical space available.

While no plans have been made, Hempson said the board is exploring all options about the future of the library and the best approach to ensure it is a viable institution for years to come.

"Libraries are committed to serving their communities by providing gathering spaces for groups and clubs, as well as comfortable places for people of

Library selects new president

all ages to read, work and play. We're falling short in our ability to serve due to space and site constraints," Hempson said. "This is an involved process and we continue to gather the necessary information to make the best decision."

Libraries by nature are intended to be inclusive spaces, but due to the extremely limited parking and drop off areas, limited interior program, learning and working spaces, and lack of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act standards, many members of the community are unable to enjoy the programs and services available at the library.

Hempson said the library and its board of trustees will continue to work on its strategic plan while exploring options.

The library continues to evaluate the possibility

of renovating the current space and is working with professional library architects Paul Mays and Lisa Hayes on new designs.

Understanding the significant limitations of the current space, the board's site committee, made up of select board members and library staff, is in the process of identifying and evaluating potential new sites for the library.

"We've narrowed down our possibilities to two or three sites in addition to the current site that merit further exploration, but we are still early in the process and are committed to due diligence," said Hempson. "The library is a vital community resource, and we need a space designed to be adaptable for 21st century services that can efficiently respond to changing technologies and user needs well into the future.

Whether that space can be at the library's current location or we could better serve our community at another site - we just don't know yet."

Criteria used for evaluating potential spaces has included accessibility, efficiency, aesthetics and cost. A complete list of criteria is available by visiting the library's website.

A community space is best developed with community input, and the library continues to welcome suggestions for additional sites. Community members can submit their ideas by sending an email to feedback@skanlibrary.org.

Whatever the future may bring, Hempson said the vision will remain the same

"We want the library to be that community resource we believe it can be," he said.

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