

# Press Coverage of Recent Library and School Restructuring Plans in Regina

## **New library option for city**

<http://www.leaderpost.com/technology/library+option+city/1271682/story.html>

Director Jeff Barber and chairwoman Darlene Hincks are excited about the future of the Regina Public Library.

Photograph by: Don Healy, The Leader-Post

*By Anne Kyle, The Leader-Post*

*February 10, 2009*

The Regina Public Library is looking for proposals to either replace or expand and renovate its aging downtown library.

"In our (2006) strategic plan, we identified (library) branches that needed different things done to have them brought up to required standards and so we went to work on that. Another thing we identified in our strategic plan was taking a look at the Central Library," said Darlene Hincks, chairwoman of the Regina Public Library Board. "Central was built in 1962 and hasn't been upgraded since then and needs a lot of work done to it."

The existing facility is expensive to operate, energy inefficient and is in need of costly upgrades, she said, adding the library has outgrown its ability to meet the increasing demand for the services it currently provides.

"Our space has always been about books but now it is also about technology and public space. Libraries are the only place where both are freely available to all. We house many types of media for which we don't have appropriate space or facilities," Hincks said, noting a growing amount of space is devoted to public computer workstations.

Previous studies indicate that the library must grow from its current 75,000 square feet to about 150,000 square feet to operate efficiently and meet the service demands.

"But the biggest problem is the aging building. We have to ensure we have a safe building for the public," Hincks said.

On Saturday the library ran an ad in the Leader-Post inviting expressions of interest from design development teams to prepare options for a new downtown library or refurbishment of the existing facility. The competition closes Feb. 27. Submissions will be reviewed to determine which design proposal will meet the library's needs.

"Our Central Library is a cultural centre for our community and contributes to downtown revitalization," Hincks said, adding that the board wants to keep the main library in the downtown core.

As part of its strategic plan, the library launched a \$10-million fundraising campaign to help pay for the capital costs of refurbishing its branch libraries and either replacing or renovating the Central Library. The library's home lottery, which is expected to raise \$600,000 to \$700,000 if it sells out this year, is part of that fundraising effort, Hincks said, adding the library will be announcing other initiatives shortly.

"What we are wanting to do right now is to get some ideas and to see what is required because we really don't know or even have a ballpark figure as to what it will cost," she said.

"We have been working on the planning stage for a few years and we want to move forward on this as soon as possible."

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## **Library plans: this time we're all in on the plot**

<http://www.leaderpost.com/Entertainment/Library+plans+this+time+plot/1276336/story.html>

*Editorial - The Leader-Post, February 11, 2009*

The current Regina Public Library board has learned the hard lessons of the public outcry that greeted plans to reorganize the system five years ago by being open about future changes.

The fact the Regina Public Library wants a new or renovated central branch is less important than the fact this news did not arrive as a bombshell that rocked the city.

Only five years ago, Regina was caught up in a furious controversy over the future of the RPL's central branch, its older branches and some special services.

The fury was palpable: activists mobilized and the city's chief librarian eventually left town, leaving behind a lawsuit (for wrongful dismissal) claiming he'd been slandered and vilified, and even his family badgered by opponents of proposed closures.

The suit was settled out of court and the library board put off the closures. Relative peace has prevailed since then as a new library board and management were installed, fundraising started and a comprehensive service plan written for the system.

But the library system's problems have not gone away. As the RPL's website notes, several of its older branches need major repairs and the 47-year-old central branch is not much better off. Its electrical and mechanical systems still need upgrades.

Against this background, there appeared amid the construction firms' tenders in Saturday's Leader-Post a little notice from the Regina Public Library: it's looking for a new or refurbished central branch.

But unlike the surprise 2003 announcement that branches and programs were to close, this announcement caught few off-guard. Clearly, the library and its board have learned a lot about communication with the public -- which, of course, pays for the library system.

Particularly interesting is the open-ended nature of the library's "request for expressions of interest": it seeks ideas for either a new central branch or renovations to the existing one. It does not seem to choose between new construction, major renovations or even unorthodox solutions like leasing space in a building owned by somebody else -- a cost-saving idea rumoured when the controversy was at its height in early 2004.

The timing of this announcement makes us wonder if the library hopes to access federal infrastructure funding in the next few years.

It also makes one wonder something else: if the growing use of the Internet as a source of reference material, films and even novels might soon make a large central library building obsolete.

Clearly, whatever is adopted should have flexibility built into it so it can adapt to changing tastes, technology and trends.

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## **Regina Public Library hopes to build new Prince of Wales branch**

<http://www.leaderpost.com/News/Regina+Public+Library+hopes+build+Prince+Wales+branch/1385612/story.html>

*By Anne Kyle, Leader-Post March 13, 2009*

*Story Photos ( 1 )*

*In this file photo from 2004, children show their support of keeping the Prince of Wales Branch Library open. Now, the Regina Public Library has revealed plans to build a new Prince of Wales branch. Photograph by: Roy Antal, Leader-Post files*

REGINA — The Regina Public Library hopes to build a new Prince of Wales Branch library attached to the Core Ritchie Neighbourhood Centre.

Prince of Wales was one of the branch libraries identified in the public library's five-year strategic plan as being in need of replacement. The current facility located at 2188 Broder St. — two blocks west of the proposed new location — was renovated and re-opened in October of 1979 after fire destroyed the original building which opened in 1913.

“We are pleased to see plans moving ahead for a new Prince of Wales Branch,” said library board chairwoman Darlene Hincks Joehnck.

“Prince of Wales is a branch that really needed some work. It is one of our older branches and certainly needed a lot of upgrades for regular use and safety.”

The most economical option for the library was partnering with the city which owns the land, she said,

noting the library has submitted an application for discretionary use as part of the city's evaluation and consultation process.

This is a good working model, she said. Rather than building a stand-alone library it made better sense to create efficiencies by partnering with the city and building onto the existing facility, she added, pointing to the success of the library's partnership with the city where the Sunrise Library Branch is located at the Sandra Schmirler Leisure Centre.

"There will be no taxpayers dollars going into the building of the new library at all. It will all be done through the library's fundraising efforts, things such as the library's home lottery," Hincks Joehnck said.

The library has held a home lottery for the past four years with the 2009 home lottery, which is currently underway, expected to raise as much as \$700,000 if it sells out. This major fundraising initiative generates a significant amount of revenue that is specifically allocated to help rejuvenate library branches, she said.

"The new branch library will be at least double the size of the existing building and will provide a broader range of services and programs," said Hincks Joehnck.

"Utilization of the library in the Core Ritchie neighbourhood is quite high. So I am sure the community will be very grateful for this new project."

Meanwhile competition for design concepts for a new or refurbished central library in downtown Regina has closed. Hincks Joehnck said a number of proposals were received and are currently being reviewed.

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## **New Scott Collegiate will help revitalize North Central**

<http://www.canada.com/reginaleaderpost/story.html?id=7d23c037-cd54-46a1-a928-3fd49e233b58>

A new Scott Collegiate Integrated Facility in North Central Regina got the green light to proceed in Wednesday's provincial budget.

*By The Leader-Post (Regina) March 20, 2008*

A new Scott Collegiate Integrated Facility in North Central Regina got the green light to proceed in Wednesday's provincial budget.

The province budgeted \$117.6 million in capital spending in the K-to-12 school system, with \$100 million in one-time funding earmarked to build Scott and four other schools in Oxbow, Porcupine Plain, Prince Albert and Humboldt.

Some of that money will also be used for major school renovation projects in Maple Creek, Balcarres, Duck Lake, La Ronge and Saskatoon, as well as projects that were approved under the NDP government and are now being completed.

"The Regina Board of Education is thrilled that Scott has been recognized as a priority facility in the province," said Don Hoium, Regina Public Schools director of education.

Hoium said the board, which is part of a broad partnership with 10 other community organizations, is pleased that after months and years of planning, the new integrated school facility will move forward.

The building of the Scott facility will help with the revitalization of the North Central community, he added.

"We are currently in a design phase and will be looking within our 10-year (public school renewal) plan to have the new Scott facility built in 2010 or 2011. Now we want to co-ordinate that with our other partners as well so that we have a very integrated facility there," Hoium said.

The North Central shared facility will be a new home for Scott Collegiate and is expected to house several other organizations including the Four Directions Community Health centre, a satellite police station and a branch of the Regina Public Library.

Michael Redenbach, vice-president of primary health care for the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and chairman of the facility's planning commission, said Wednesday's announcement was a critical step on the road to the development of the shared facility.

"It is one part of a grander vision that we have for what that can accomplish. We are really quite pleased to see that (government) commitment formalized now and allow us to continue on the road to making that a reality," Redenbach said.

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## **Scott Collegiate: no changes without a fight**

<http://www2.canada.com/reginaleaderpost/news/minus20/story.html?id=e0367bcb-7573-4ba7-bb37-c6ccadb5bd27>

*Cassidy Mcfadzean, The Leader-Post  
Published: Monday, November 24, 2008*

Facebook.com is a social networking Web site useful in catching up with old classmates, and sharing photos with family and friends.

Web sites like Facebook also allow individuals to spout political viewpoints and stand atop a virtual soapbox, debating issues of social relevance while wearing their opinions on their digital sleeves.

In light of recent controversy concerning the proposed demolition of Scott Collegiate in order to make way for the North Central Shared Facility, I turned to Facebook to aid me with a certain experiment.

I had attended the Shared Facility community consultations (all of which were rather ill attended) and felt frustrated that when concerns were voiced to keep the existing Scott Collegiate structure (the dominant response at one such meeting), it seemed as though these protests were not being heard.

I also felt community members and Regina citizens were not sufficiently informed of the proposed destruction of the school; many former students and current community members had heard little, if anything, of it.

Enter Facebook -- I started a group called "Save Scott Collegiate from Demolition" wherein I outlined the three proposed designs of the Shared Facility, and offered three reasons why the physical structure of Scott Collegiate is significant and should not be demolished.

Culturally, Scott contributes to Regina's heritage, is the oldest standing high school in Regina and has hosted many community events and sacred ceremonies by respected elders.

Aesthetically, the architecture's brick-and-window design is unique and the building offers a scenscape from many streets.

Sentimentally, students, community members and alumni are attached to the memories and experiences of Scott Collegiate and feel the old brick building symbolically represents values of perseverance and strength.

A few weeks after creating the group, it had reached 384 members, some of whom commented on the proposed designs:

One group member wrote on the group page, "the decision to incorporate the original building in the construction of this new shared facility would be the ideal. Regina has fewer and fewer historic buildings still standing and it seems there is genuine community support for wanting the heritage of Scott Collegiate preserved."

A current student of Scott Collegiate who has attended the school for a number of years echoed a similar sentiment. "As a student of Scott Collegiate, I think this is very sad. It's such a wonderful building full of so much history. Just going there, you can feel it. I really hope it doesn't get demolished," she said.

A former classmate of mine suggested, "they should just add on! Scott was our home for four years, and we do have a lot of memories there ... I know that the west side of the building is in need of repairs, but do they have to tear down the whole building? The building itself means a lot to many people."

Another of my classmates, who was previously unaware of the proposed demolition said, "In class, we had to look at the designs and I admit I didn't get to look at them, but they asked which ones we like the most and I would rather they just stick to design one ... Some of our parents went to Scott when they were our age and would like to have that building remain standing. Well, that's what my mom wants." -

Indeed, it is not just young people who are concerned about demolishing Scott. One parent commented in a message, "3 of my children, a niece I raised, and two nephews graduated from Scott. I was an active member of the Parent Circle and this is near and dear to my heart."

A former staff member wrote, "I worked at Scott for a few years, around 2000. I have many wonderful memories of my time there, and the people I worked with and the students whom I got to know -- many just like my own family. The summer I started at Scott was right after the 80th reunion. Hundreds of former staff and students gathered and reminisced in the old building; they noted the changes that shaped a now-inner-city high school, but saw reflected beyond that their memories spanned back many decades!"

A Regina citizen who had not attended Scott wrote, "As an example of wonderful adaptive reuse, think of Scarth Street downtown. An older version of city hall now houses the Globe Theatre and many wonderful shops, while the walking mall has restaurants, cafes, comic stores, clothing boutiques and the Plains museum ... all housed in lovely historic structures. I would argue that these buildings and this type of development is the cornerstone of Regina's downtown."

And a former teaching intern at the school summarized my thoughts better than I could have: "The history of that building is important, not just to Regina, but absolutely to North Central."

McFadzean is a member of Minus 20, a group of Saskatchewan young people under 20 whose views appear periodically on these pages..

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## **Inner City School Demolished**

<http://www.actupinsask.org/content/view/607/2>

*Written by Trish Elliott*

*Tuesday, 04 November 2008*

Herchmer Community School, once home to a community of nearly 200 North Central kids and their families, was brought down with a back-hoe this past weekend. It is the first of several historic inner city schools on the demolition list. Meanwhile, a number of North Central residents and Scott Collegiate alumni are banding together to ensure 85-year-old Scott Collegiate remains standing. Participants in consultations regarding the new Shared Facility that will replace Scott report that the idea of using the existing building as a design centrepiece was never presented as a serious option, despite the surrounding community's desire to keep its heritage buildings in use.

For information and an email link to provide feedback, visit <http://www.northcentralsharedfacility.ca>

## **Save Scott**

<http://www.leaderpost.com/news/Save+Scott/1071023/story.html>

*The Leader-Post December 13, 2008*

This is a comment on the Minus 20 article "Scott Collegiate: no changes without a fight" (Leader-Post,

Nov. 24) by Cassidy McFadzean, who is trying to save Scott Collegiate from demolition.

Many people have tried to make the case for reuse of the building over the last two years. The school board has operated with the forgone conclusion it would not. The American consultant has biased its findings in favour of the wishes of its main funder throughout this process. When will this city begin to defend its built history and culture for future generations?

David Phillips  
Regina