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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **Grant, Yearend Giving Opportunity & New Energy Boost Library Campaign**

The group raising funds to build the new Ferndale library is confident that they can attract the remaining \$2 million in funds for the \$6 million project in 2012. The campaign recently got a boost when a \$250,000 grant from the Norcliffe Foundation, contingent on starting the construction by the end of 2011, was extended allowing for more time to fundraise. In addition, through the end of the calendar year people 70 ½ and over may contribute all or a portion of their mandatory IRA distribution to the library project, or any other nonprofit organization tax-free. “This is a wonderful opportunity for people to make meaningful gifts toward the new library and enjoy a true tax holiday,” said Mauri Ingram, CEO of the Whatcom Community Foundation which serves as the fiscal sponsor for the capital campaign. Checks must be issued directly to the recipient organization. That allows them to bypass the donor’s annual income, making it tax-free. Unless the provision is extended by Congress (which will not be considered until 2012), the provision will expire on December 31, 2011.”

Two new members have joined the library effort, longtime library volunteer and former Friends of the Ferndale Library president Nina Cox, and newly elected City Council person Cathy Watson, who will serve as a liaison to the Council. Both bring a passion for libraries and a vision for a library that serves the whole community.

The community has consistently supported the much needed larger facility. The project was identified as a priority during a series of unprecedented public meetings held in 2006 as part of a coordinated community vision for civic revitalization. Additionally, in the fall of 2008 a survey of residents revealed that nearly 60% had visited the library at least once in the past three months, and 43% had visited within the previous month. Results also showed strong demand for a larger collection of resources (59%), more room to sit and meet (50%) and additional parking (49%).

Despite the economic setback, over 65% of the necessary funds have been secured. A prime Main Street site was acquired. Architectural design work is nearing completion. Permitting and preliminary site preparation will begin as the fundraising wraps up at the end of 2012. Construction is planned to commence in the summer of 2013.

According to Ingram, “The library provides essential services to the community. There are few places where people and families can gather, explore, job search, find reliable Internet services, learn, have fun, and build community. The staff at the Ferndale Library sees up to 1,000 patrons daily, a door count that surpasses many local retailers. The library provides a safe, stimulating and caring haven for children who are often left without parental or other adult supervision. Designing the new library has given the community an opportunity to examine how to design a space to satisfy all of the community’s library needs. The new building will provide an intimate place where people will have free access to books, new technologies, activities, highly trained professionals, comfortable furnishings, and state-of-the-art infrastructure.”

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The library is temporarily housed in Pioneer Pavilion as its former location is being converted to a new police station. According to Norine Amend, President of the Friends of Ferndale Library, "Pioneer Pavilion is beautiful as a community center but is not designed to meet the diverse needs of a public library. A major drawback to the Pavilion is its inability to deal with noise and climate control needs of a library. Library technology needs are not adequately served with essential computer connections running along the floor and ceiling. Meeting room space, which must serve library programs as well as public groups, is very inadequate. Large numbers of children come to events and need to be split into two groups and repeated, summer programs overflow the rooms, some community groups find the meeting space inadequate including some activities of the Friends of the Ferndale Library."

While the recession has had countless negative effects on our communities, costs for capital projects are reduced which creates significant advantages.

According to Ingram, the project will continue to raise money, seeking individual and corporate donors and pursuing opportunities for additional grants. She said she hoped individuals will donate through the end of the year as they assess their budgets during the holidays. All gifts are tax deductible.

For more information or to make a contribution, visit www.newferndalelibrary.org or call the Whatcom Community Foundation at 360-671-6463.