

Decade-long Cambridge library effort closing in on goal

December 25, 2012 2:00 pm • DOUG ERICKSON | Wisconsin State Journal | derickson@madison.com
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After more than a decade of ups and downs, the effort to build a new \$1.8 million library in Cambridge is closing in on its goal.

Financial commitments in the last month have pushed the fundraising total past \$1 million. Library officials expect to break ground in 2014.

"It's been a long trek, but the project finally began to gel in the last few weeks," said Bob Salov, chairman of the capital campaign.

The small existing library is squeezed into a second-floor wing of the village's community center. The new facility would be connected to the center. At 6,800 square feet, it would be three times as big as the current library.

In early December, the Cambridge Village Board signaled its intent to commit \$400,000 to the project. The board of the neighboring town of Christiana recently voted to donate \$54,000.

The library group already has \$612,000 in the bank, for a combined total of just over \$1 million.

Library officials hope the sum — and especially the village contribution — will lead to a large gift from the Cambridge Community Foundation. The library group has asked for \$600,000. While the foundation has made no commitment, discussions and feedback have been positive, Salov said.

Library fundraisers also will be giving presentations in the months ahead to leaders of several other towns whose residents use the library.

The project has required perseverance, particularly for the library's friends group. Its members have spent years raising money through events such as bake sales and raffles.

Early plans called for a stand-alone facility along Koshkonong Creek. That idea fell through due to flood plain issues.

"We've had a couple of false starts where we thought we could do it and the stars just didn't align," said Sharon Erb, president of the friends group. "This time we're going to do it."