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Wednesday, August 09, 2006 — Time: 12:34:50 AM EST

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Leetonia voters back new library

By **ELIZABETH EWING/Salem News staff writer**

LEETONIA - A special election gamble appears to have paid off for the Leetonia Library Board, as voters Tuesday approved a 1.59 mill levy to go toward construction of a new facility.

Votes counted in five Columbiana County precincts and two Mahoning County precincts, including absentee ballots, totaled 486 for the levy and 468 against, putting the issue ahead by 18 votes.

This total does not include approximately 25 provisional ballots, which cannot be counted until ten days after the election. These are ballots which may be in question due to problems with a voter's address, or perhaps a lack of proper identification. The provisionals will be tallied by the Columbiana County Board of Elections at a meeting on Aug. 25, at which time the total results will be certified.

With the margin of victory at 18 votes, and the 25 provisional votes yet to be counted, theoretically the issue could still fail. However, this would mean that the 25 provisionals broke down at an irregularly high percentage against the levy, which is fairly unlikely.

Library Director Andy Smith isn't celebrating just yet. "We're cautiously optimistic," he said, adding that he will wait until all the provisionals are taken into account before he gets really excited.

Regardless of the final outcome, "We want to thank all our supporters, both those that came and voted and those that gave their vocal support. We had a lot of vocal support from patrons outside the district," Smith remarked.



a friend



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Should the outcome of the election remain in favor of the levy, he explained that the library will begin the process of setting up a schedule for bids and construction. He commented that the earliest possible start time for building to get underway on the project would be in the spring of 2007.

The construction of the facility will be funded by the \$1,450,000 raised by the levy, and Smith noted that money for furnishings and expanded collections will come from the library board's savings. He went on to say that once the election results are certified, the library can begin applying for grants and other funding to help supplement their existing resources.

As for the fate of the current library facility, Smith said no final plans are in place, although it is likely that the library board will sell it. "It's still a good office space, that's what the building was built for, and it would work more efficiently for that use."

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