

**By C.J. Carnacchio**  
**Leader Editor**

Accomplishments in high school usually take the form of academic honors, varsity letters, trophies and memorable stage performances.

But when Jerome Roberson looks back at his high school years, he'll be able to say he did something truly unique for a teenager — he helped build a house.

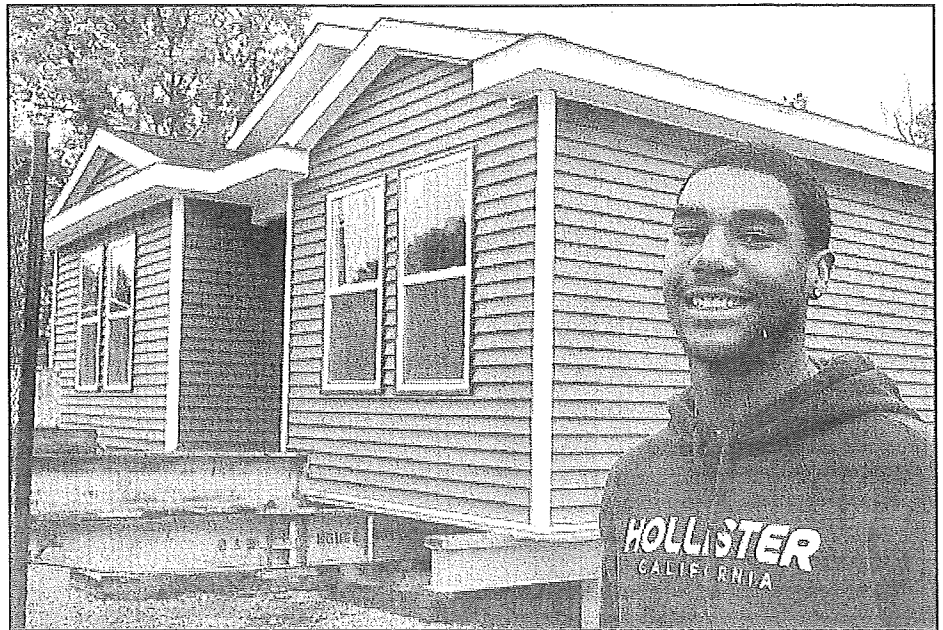
Roberson, a 2019 Oxford High School graduate and Pontiac resident, was one of 19 second-year Construction Technology students at Oakland Schools Technical Campus (OSTC)-Northeast who constructed a single-story, 1,368-square-foot home that will be moved to Stirling St. in Pontiac and made available for purchase to an individual or family with a low-to-moderate income.

"It feels pretty good to actually see it done because we've been working on it for a long time, putting a lot of hours in," said Roberson,

He added that it also feels good to give back to his community because "we need it."

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the house — the asking price for which is \$122,500 — was held at the northeast campus on June 5. It was built through a partnership between Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency's Venture, Inc., Oakland Schools, the Oakland County Treasurer's Office, Onsite Solutions, Community Housing Network and Oakland County Community and Home Improvement.

"This is the first time in our history that



**Jerome Roberson, a 2019 Oxford High School graduate, poses in front of the 1,368-square-foot house he helped build as part of the Construction Technology class at Oakland Schools Technical Campus-Northeast. Photo by C.J. Carnacchio.**

our students and faculty have built a home on a campus," said Oakland Schools Superintendent Dr. Wanda Cook-Robinson.

Construction Technology students from 10 high schools, including Oxford and Lake Orion, worked 7,500 hours on the house and, according to Cook-Robinson, the finished product is definitely up to code.

"The home had six state inspections and passed all six on the very first round," she said.

"I have a lot of pride in the work that we do out here," said Aaron Swett, instructor for the second-year Construction Technology class. "I try to focus on quality craftsmanship."

The house has three bedrooms, two bath-

# Architect presents 4 concepts for new library

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Decisions, decisions, decisions.

There was no shortage of options at the June 3 meeting of the New Building Committee for the Addison Township Public Library.

The Pontiac-based TDG Architects presented four conceptual building plans to the committee.

"This is an unprecedented opportunity. In the history of Addison Township, has a new library ever been built? No... So, let's do it as great as we can," said James Baldiga, president of the library board of trustees. "We get really one shot to do this. That's the way I'm looking at it."

All four concepts represent a 5,000-square-foot building, but each of them has a different floor plan. They're all shown on Page 8 and can be viewed in greater detail at [letsbuildalibrary.org](http://letsbuildalibrary.org).

Concepts A and B feature a Y-shaped footprint, while concepts C and D depict a rectangular building.

Three of concepts (A, B and C) have

main entrances that face south. Concept D has an eastward-facing main entrance.

Two of the concepts contain patio areas. Concept A's patio is open to the sky, while Concept B has a roof.

The plan is to build the new facility in Lakeville on a parcel of vacant land that's approximately 3.8 acres and was donated to the library in 2008. The property is bordered by Rochester Rd. on the south, Cantley St. on the west and Milmine St. on the east. A sliver of the land has access to Lakeville Lake.

Baldiga said all of the concepts have "strengths and weaknesses," but he finds two of them particularly appealing for different reasons.

He "really liked" the plan containing the covered patio. He believes that would enable the library to host more live musical performances because it would provide a greater amount of seating for guests and the separate area would help ensure the event doesn't interfere with patrons visiting for other reasons.

That being said, Baldiga also "really liked" the concept featuring the east entrance. He

said that layout "might be a better use of space" and offer "more flexibility in the future." He also was a fan of the "reading tree" depicted in the floor plan, a seating area encircling an artificial tree or an artistic representation of a tree.

Library Director Jaema Berman expressed her preference for the two concepts that lacked a patio (C and D) because it was indicated at the meeting that they would most likely be "less costly."

"I really felt those (plans) would probably fit best (within) our budget," she said.

However, Berman noted she did find the plan containing a covered patio to be the "most eye-catching" and the "most interesting."

"That could have so much potential for the community," she said. "If we could afford that (one), that would be ideal."

The one thing Berman found disappointing about the concept plans was the fact that all four lacked a multipurpose room. She said that's something "at the top of my list of priorities for this project."

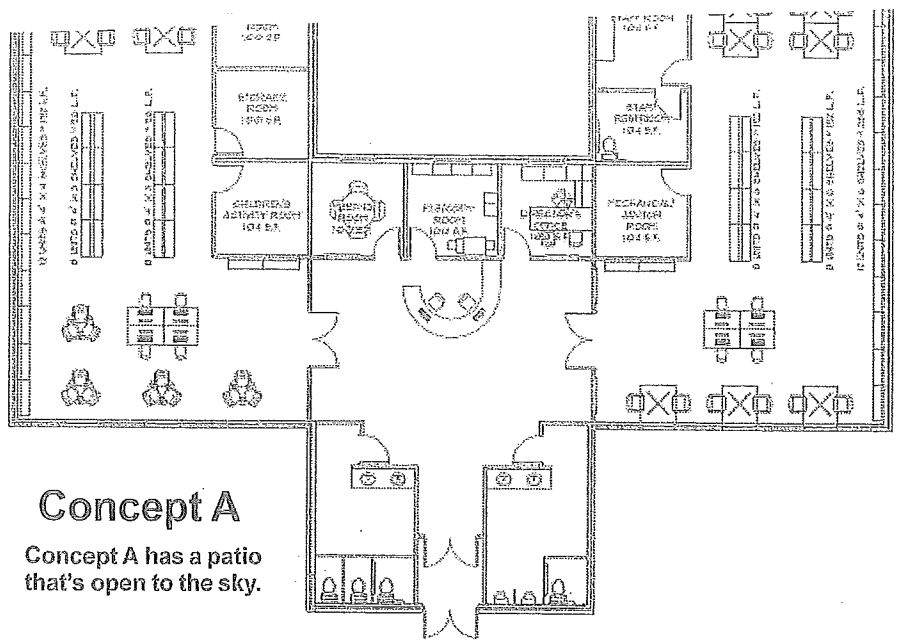
"That's one of the big reasons why we feel we need a larger (library)," Berman said.

A multipurpose room would give the library a versatile space for a wide variety of

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### Concept A

Concept A has a patio that's open to the sky.

## Library

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activities, from community and group meetings to tutoring sessions.

"I don't think the architects appreciated the importance (of a multipurpose room)," Baldiga said.

Berman indicated the issue has been discussed with the architect and it should not be a problem to incorporate such a space into the design going forward because right now, everything is all "very preliminary."

"We can pretty much do what we want with the insides of these buildings when it comes down to it," she said. "We can rearrange a lot of the internal features."

Baldiga said ultimately, the new library's features and appearance are "going to come down to funding."

No cost estimates were provided with the four concepts. Figures for each are expected to be presented at the Tuesday, June 18 meeting of the library board. Meeting time is 7 p.m.

The library is looking to spend approximately \$900,000 on site development, construction, equipment and furnishings for a new building.

To James Elsarelli, chairman of the New Building Committee, the most important thing

right now is to pick the concept that best fits the project budget.

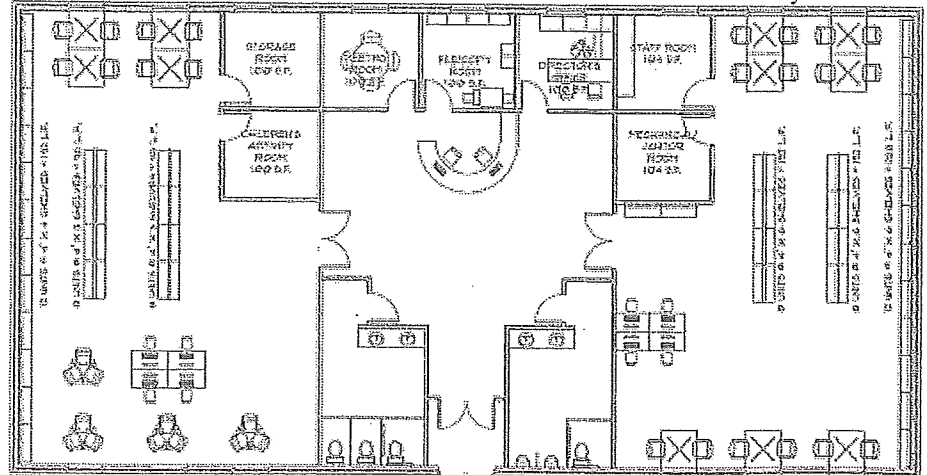
"I'm not making the decision for me," he explained. "I'm trying to make the best decision (I can) for the community. And I feel that's what the community would want - something that's very conservative. If I pick something that's outside of the budget, it's almost like you're (asking for) challenges right from the get-go. But, if I pick something that's (within) the budget . . . there's that larger chance of success and being respectful to all sides."

If at some point "later on" additional funds become available for the project, Elsarelli said, "we can add to it" in terms of, for example, making the interior "a little bit more visually appealing."

But for now, he believes it's important to "start with something we know is going to fit our budget" because ultimately, the goal is to build a new library.

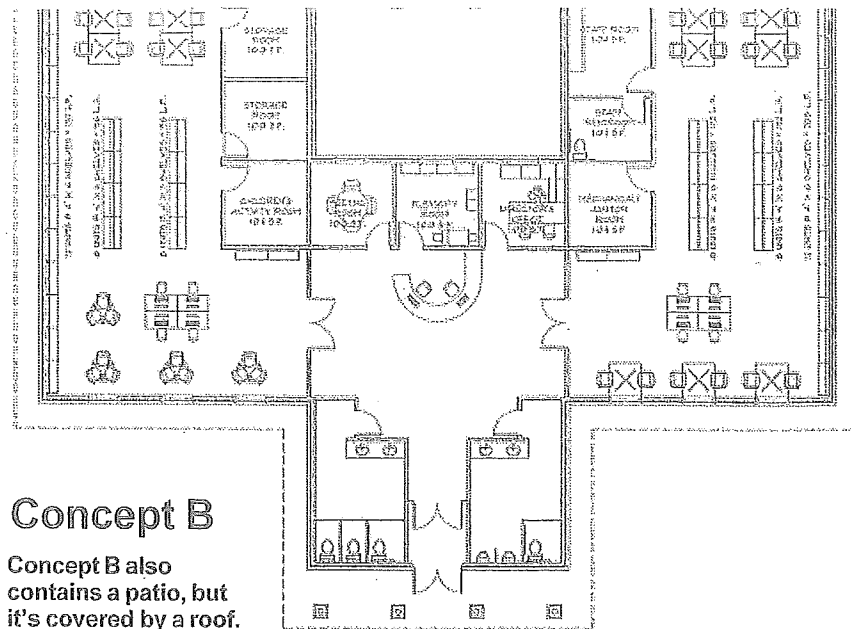
Elsarelli noted the elements depicted in the conceptual floor plans are simply "food for thought" at this point and nothing is "set in stone."

Once a decision is made between the Y-shaped and rectangular footprints, Elsarelli said they can go about deciding how to best lay out the interior based on what the library staff needs and the community wants.



### Concept C

Like Concepts A and B, Concept C has a main entrance facing Rochester Rd.



## Concept B

Concept B also contains a patio, but it's covered by a roof.

The plan is to fund the project with a combination of savings, a loan, fund-raising and donations of goods and services. Library officials have repeatedly made it clear that no tax increases or new taxes would be sought.

"By the end of this year, we'll have \$440,000 (in savings) roughly," Berman said.

Library officials have been meeting with Oxford Bank about the possibility of taking out a loan.

"Our discussions have been really positive," Berman said.

Although nothing has been agreed to or signed, she said, "They seem very welcoming and happy to support this project."

The library has also been actively seeking donations of goods and services from construction tradesman, artisans and suppliers in the following areas: tree work, earth work, rucking, well and septic installation, landscaping, asphalt paving, concrete foundations, concrete flatwork, masonry, rough carpenters, millwork/cabinets, roofers, siding, caulking and waterproofing, glazing, drywall, tile, flooring, painting, plumbing, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning and electrical.

"We've been approached by two or three people that were interested in doing carpentry, mill work (and) IT (information technology)," Berman said.

She hopes that's just the beginning.

"We want people to be a part of this and feel ownership and pride in what we're doing," Berman said. "It's a real investment in the community."

Elsarelli said some people "believe libraries are being phased out" these days. But, what they don't realize is these institutions are "constantly evolving and changing" to meet people's needs. "It's still an important part of the community," he said.

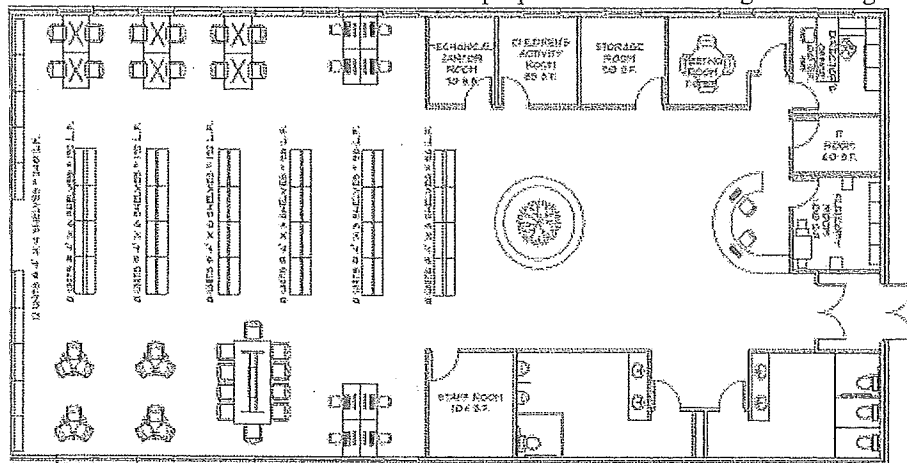
Baldiga noted that when he was handing out information about the new library project during Addison's community cleanup in May, "everybody" he talked to, with the exception of one person, "was behind it."

But, he added there's still "a lot of misinformation and disinformation" and a general lack of information "about what our plans are."

"That's my big battle," Baldiga said.

He encouraged the public to visit [letsbuildalibrary.org](http://letsbuildalibrary.org) to learn more and attend the New Building Committee meetings, which are held at the library (1400 Rochester Rd.) in Lakeville on the first Monday of the month. They start at 5 p.m.

"It's an open meeting. Anybody can come," Baldiga said. "We usually get one or two new people every time. I'd love to see 12 people come to the meeting. That'd be great."



## Concept D

In Concept D, the library would have an eastward-facing main entrance.