Renovation proposal to state library announced
Submitted by Brett Fisher on Sat, 04/14/2018 - 7:42am

Digital renderings courtesy Nevada State Library and Archives.

By Teri Vance

The Nevada State Library and Archives may soon have a new look — and a more focused purpose — if a proposal explained during National Library week is approved.

"As we strive to provide efficient and responsive public service in state government, I envision a facility such as the Knowledge and Innovation Center to be an integral capstone in our approach to take customer service, business processes and employee enrichment capabilities to the next level," said Patrick Cates, director of the Nevada Department of Administration. "With the help of a re-imagined state library, state employees can be increasingly self-directed in 21st Century skill development and 21st Century public service."

Plans for the Knowledge and Innovation Center were discussed during the Knowledge Summit on Wednesday at the Brewery Arts Center. They will go before the Nevada Public Works Board in August.

Tammy Westergard, deputy director of the Nevada State Library and Archives, said the Knowledge and Innovation Center would serve state employees and administrators much the same way university libraries serve students and professors.

"The vision is to make it a dynamic resource for state workers," Westergard said. "Every employee must be able to efficiently find information, conduct research and analysis, problem solve and purposefully acquire knowledge that is then transferred in the form of services, presentations, trainings and follow-up to various audiences."

Plans include a learning commons, lobby, gallery and conference space.

"We need to be able to attract the next generation of public servants," Westergard said. "We also need to protect our resources that safeguard our democracy. Those resources need to be protected, and they need to be made available."

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Education innovator leads Carson City panel
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By Teri Vance

Milton Chen, 65, recently started taking jazz piano lessons. He's learning from an instructor as well as from an app and other online sources.

"You must take control over your own learning," the best-selling author of "Education Nation" told a group gathered at the Adams Hub for Innovation. "You need to view learning as the most important part of your life and be more entrepreneurial about it."

Chen, who has spent his life developing the intersection of education and technology, is the executive director, emeritus, at the George Lucas Educational Foundation.

He was the keynote speaker at the Knowledge Summit in Carson City on Wednesday as part of National Library Week. He spoke to a lunchtime crowd and hosted a panel that evening at the Brewery Arts Center.

"Sometimes the most innovative places are smaller places," said Chen, who has worked with Carson City for seven years. "This is the kind of place where you know everybody and can work with people because of the relationships you have. It creates this ecosystem of learning."

Each member of the panel discussed one of the Six Leading Edges outlined in Chen's book.

Ron Swurczek, president of the Carson City School Board, talked about the Curriculum and Assessment Edge. He said more than 200 Carson City businesses have partnered with the school district to give students hands-on opportunities for learning.

"In abstract learning, we learn it, take a test and forget it," he said. "There's nothing to apply it to. We need that applied solution."

Mayor Bob Crowell said the Carson City Library embodies the Thinking Edge.

"Education is a societal value," he said. "That's all of us coming together to create that value. You get that in the library."

Tricia Wentz, outreach coordinator at Western Nevada College, spoke to the Time/Space Edge. She said 500 students from 18 schools are enrolled in Jump Start, a program where students earn high school and college credits simultaneously.

"We're bringing college to high school students. We're really proud of the fact that we've gotten all this participation," she said. "We're really proud of our students who've taken on this additional rigor."

John McCleod, executive director of XRLibraries, led the Technology Edge discussion, pointing out that it took 47 years for electricity to be widely accepted across the U.S. It took 22 years for television, 10 years for computers, five years for the Internet and two to three years for smartphones to be universally used.

He predicts three to four years for virtual, augmented and mixed reality to be common.

"It makes people wonder about their environment," he said. "It sparks their curiosity and makes them playful about learning."

Tammy Westergard, deputy director of the State Library and Archives, announced a proposed remodel to the state library as part of the Co-Teaching Edge.

Karsten Heise, with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, spoke about advancing the Youth Edge.

"If we really want to build an education nation, we have to elevate the status of education and elevate the status of teachers," he said. "We also need to change our mindset in the private sector. Companies need to embrace this continuous learning environment."

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Library talk focuses on ‘leading edges of innovation’

By Kelsie Longerbeam
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April 8-14, the Nevada State Library joined libraries across the nation with schools, campuses and communities in celebrating the many ways libraries are leading opportunities for community members to learn new skills, explore emerging technology, and connect face to face and face to book.

Thursday, the Carson City Library hosted a Knowledge Summit at the Brewery Arts Center Black Box Theater. The moderated discussion, among six local and statewide leaders, was facilitated by Milton Chen, senior fellow at the George Lucas Educational Foundation in the Bay Area. Chen's book, Education Nation, the six leading edges of innovation, framed the discussion about what he has termed the "leading edges" regarding education as seen in the region.

"Innovation and transformation seem to be two words to describe what is currently taking place in Nevada libraries. It is so satisfying to see librarians taking a full-fledged seat at the table with technology and workforce development leaders throughout the state," said Nancy Cummings Schmidt, chairwoman of the Nevada State Council on Libraries and Literacy.

One of the discussion panelists was Assistant Administrator for the Nevada State Library, Archives and Public Records, Tommy Westergard, who at the last minute filled in for Patrick Bates, director of the Nevada Department of Administration. She spoke with the audience about the vision to transform the current Nevada State Library into a Knowledge and Innovation Center. The redesign will provide a new environment for state employees which will strengthen their work skills in technology and problem-solving, develop synergistic approaches to challenges, and will create efficiencies that cross state agency lines.

"As we strive to provide efficient and responsive public service in state government, I envision a facility such as the Knowledge and Innovation Center to be an integral capstone in our approach to take customer service, business processes and employee enrichment capabilities to the next level," said Westergard.

With the help of a reimagined state library, Westergard believes state employees can be increasingly self-directed in 21st century skill development. Another panelist, Karsten Heise, technology commercialization director with the Governor's Office of Economic Development and member of the State Council on Libraries and Literacy, spoke on the "Youth Edge" portion of Chen's book, spotlighting the vital role of learning pathways driven by science, technology engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) to support Nevada's economy.

John MacLeod, executive director of XRLibraries, whose team is leading the development of virtual reality in libraries across the country, explained the "Technology Edge" of current education.

"Immersive Xtended Reality is transforming how we learn, communicate and work in the 21st century. Putting virtual, augmented and mixed reality systems in Nevada libraries makes this technology available and accessible to all members of the community. Nevada youth and adults can now start making their future realities come true. Hats off to the library leadership for having the vision and focus to make this happen," said MacLeod.

Tricia Wentz, Western Nevada College's Jump Start Coordinator, discussed the "Time/Place Edge" and Carson City Mayor Bob Crowell focused on the "Thinking Edge," and reflected on how Carson City's library achievements have been driven from a long view of success and multi-jurisdictional coordination.

Ron Swirczek of the Carson City School Board spoke about the "Curriculum & Assessment Edge," distinguishing today's learning trends are being driven by expectations. Students are demonstrating key skills through project-based learning, and less from test scores and assessment.

"It's very exciting to see how Nevada's libraries, at the local and state levels, and in universities, are partnering with schools and industry to invent the future of the state," said Chen. "The world of work is changing rapidly, and these partnerships offer the best chance for Nevada's youth and adults for success and for communities to thrive."

Also recognized at the discussion was that the Carson City Library is one of 29 finalists for the 2018 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. The National Medal is the nation's highest honor given to museums and libraries for service to their communities, for 24 years the award has celebrated institutions that demonstrate extraordinary and innovative approaches to service and making a difference for individuals, families and communities. The five 2018 library medalists will be announced in mid-May.