

OPINION

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Don't underestimate the library

It's fair to say that neither Town nor County council appeared to be wildly enthusiastic about the proposal brought forward a couple of weeks ago that would see both the main library and the Rotary Children's Library reunited into a single facility in downtown Drayton Valley. The library board is an independent body, but it is funded by the two municipalities and does not have the power to act on its own to secure new premises.

A move to a new location, whether it's one of the two locations under discussion or somewhere else, would re-energize and revitalize the library as well as making the services it provides easier to access for those who need them most. It also has the potential to reduce operating costs in the long term. But it would require a financial commitment at a time when both councils are facing more than their share of financial challenges, and it may be that for now, the timing just isn't right.

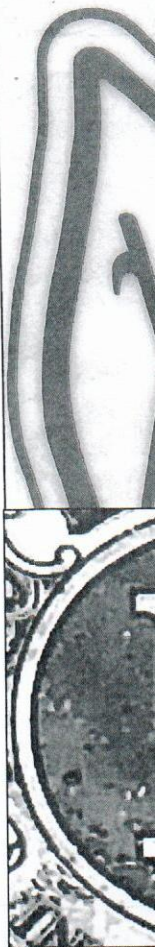
But regardless of whether or not a way is found that enables the move to go ahead, it would be a gross mistake to

underestimate the important role the library plays in our community.

The days when a library was simply a collection of books are long gone. A modern library serves as both a repository of knowledge and an information hub. Sure, it's still the place to go to pick up the latest Danielle Steel or a vintage Ian Fleming, but it's also home to a vast array of resources and programming designed to enlighten, educate or entertain that can benefit every single one of us.

In last week's Free Press we featured a story that showed how the library's outreach program was improving the lives of seniors and others who are isolated due to the pandemic. That's just one example of the important work the library undertakes to strengthen our community and to improve the quality of life for those who live here. We hope that regardless of whether it gets a new home downtown, stays where it is today, or moves somewhere else entirely, the library is able to continue that work for a long time to come.

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