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Save the Bricks Environmental, Recycling Effort Part of Ames Library Construction Project

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Save the Bricks Environmental, Recycling Effort Part of Ames Library Construction Project

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—Illinois Wesleyan University, the city of Bloomington, the Old House Society of McLean County, and two companies are teaming up to save bricks from Prairie and Graham Streets that could have been headed to the dumpster as part of construction of IWU's new \$25-million Ames Library.

It's expected that about 25 truckloads of brick and asphalt will be carted away from the site. The work is slated for Thursday and Friday of this week (Feb. 24-25), weather permitting, according to Colin Logue, project site manager.

The city of Bloomington is providing the trucks. Stark Excavating Inc., of Bloomington will handle the demolition and salvaging of the bricks. Felmley Dickerson Co., of Bloomington will coordinate the salvage operation as construction manager of the library project.

"Bricks are prone to theft," said Mark Edwards, executive director of the Old House Society of McLean County, "because the resale value is high, so we will be working quickly to clean the loose debris off them and store them."

Edwards added: "When road work is done around the city, pavement and the underlying bricks are torn up and usually thrown away. The city does not have an inventory of bricks [for replacement] or for streets where bricks are needed for repair."

The city, according to Edwards, will provide wooden palettes that the cleaned bricks will be placed on, the bricks will be wrapped in plastic, and locked in a storage area.

Edwards said the Old House Society appreciates IWU's support and cooperation on the brick-recycling project.

IWU's Environmental Concerns Organization (ECO), a student group, will help clean and store the bricks. ECO President Sacha Latham, a senior majoring in biology from Campbellsport, Wis., said the group's motto is "reduce and reuse"—a motto that symbolizes the brick salvaging project.

The Old House Society, a non-profit organization with about 120 members formed in 1979, helps to preserve the history of Bloomington-Normal. "There is nothing like being able to experience history than by going and seeing it," Edwards said. "You can't do that when buildings and streets are no longer there."

The new Library will contain 103,000 square feet of space and accommodate more than 400,000 volumes and a minimum of 100 computer workstations. The five-floor building will be ready for occupancy no earlier than August, 2001. A \$12-million leadership gift commitment from B. Charles Ames, IWU class of 1950, and his wife, Joyce Eichhorn Ames, IWU class of 1949, is spearheading the library-construction project. The facility will be named The Ames Library. A groundbreaking ceremony for the library took place Nov. 6, 1999.

This story was reported by Tina Williams, office coordinator, IWU Office of University Communications.

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