

# Tosa Library Carpet Becomes Something Else

*"Somewhere along the line we have to start helping our planet."*

--Dick Burgmeier

Easy to say. Hard to put your money behind.

Wauwatosa Public Library and RJB Commercial Flooring have formed an unusual partnership to help our planet by recycling carpeting rather than contributing to the seemingly endless expansion of landfills. They have pooled resources to transport 26,000 square feet of carpet to a reclamation plant in the South.

Dick Burgmeier, owner of RJB Flooring, proposed the recycling project to library director Mary Murphy. "She immediately said 'That's a great idea,'" he said.

Murphy presented the recycling plan to the library board of directors, who agreed that the small additional cost to recycle the carpeting was worthwhile -- especially since that cost would be shared with Burgmeier's company. The cost to the library is "less than one percent of the total cost of the project," according to Murphy. That money came from a bequest, according to the library's assistant director, Shawn Duffy.

Burgmeier voiced praise for Murphy and the library board who put action behind their desire to do something good for the planet.

Labor is being done at night and off-hours so there is no disruption to public service for library patrons. As workers tear up the old carpet, they roll the sections and carry them to a 53-foot-long semi trailer storage container in the library parking lot.

"Most of the costs come from transporting the storage unit," said Burgmeier. When filled, the storage container travels by truck to Mohawk Carpet's reclamation center, where the flooring may become something other than carpet in its "next life."

To remove the old carpet and install new flooring, RJB uses hydraulic jacks (The LIFT System) to raise the library's desks, cubicle panels, and stacks of approximately 250,000 items. With the same principle as a hydraulic lift for a car at an auto shop, workers meticulously arrange and rearrange many poles and jacks desk by desk, cubicle by cubicle, stack by stack. Nothing is out of order when patrons visit the library the following day -- and there's a new floor!



Rick Green loads an old carpet roll into the semi trailer storage container. The carpet will be trucked to the south for recycling.



Workers install the LIFT System to raise book shelves so old carpeting may be removed and new flooring installed.