

# Hamilton Library and Farmer's Market Redevelopment



Hamilton Public Library in Downtown Hamilton is celebrating a new look and role as "Information Central: Your Marketplace of Ideas". The \$14 million reinvention of the former library and Farmer's Market represents a pivotal urban renewal project for the city.

As the New Year approaches Hamilton is celebrating the opening of a much revitalized Library and Farmer's Market. The Farmers' Market was originally founded in 1837 at the corner of York and James Streets, and has been located adjacent to the Hamilton Public Library since August 1980. The now completed \$14 million reinvention of both represents a pivotal project in Hamilton's overall urban renewal strategy. The project successfully accomplishes the reorganization and rebranding of two of Hamilton's most important civic destinations, thanks in large measure to a partnership between David Premi Architects Inc and RDH Architects, led by David Premi, Bob Goyeche and Tyler Sharp.

David Premi Architects Inc. (dp.Ai) is a full-service practice focusing on sustainable design and urban renewal projects. In 2005, after working in Toronto for over 25 years, Premi relocated back to Hamilton with his family to launch his architectural practice. A member of the Canada Green Building Council, Premi has worked on projects located throughout the greater Golden Horseshoe, from the Academic Resource Centre and Doris McCarthy Gallery at the University of Toronto, to the Plaza Building at Brock University and Hamilton's own Theatre Aquarius.

David Premi was particularly intrigued by the unique co-location of a library and farmer's market, and

immediately recognized that a major challenge was to endow increased street visibility to the facilities. "Our architectural vision was to reconnect the Library and Farmer's Market with the people of Hamilton by enhancing the connection to the street, thereby generating a catalyst for downtown renewal," states architect David Premi.

Hamiltonians can now celebrate the Hamilton Public Library as "Information Central: Your Marketplace of Ideas". The revitalized facility features new public spaces, reorganized and enhanced collections, and increased computer and Internet access through the introduction of a 50 workstation information commons.

The transformed Library also includes an expanded DVD and popular media space, new and improved children's area, comfortable reading locations, self-checkout stations and enhanced entrances from Jackson Square and York Boulevard.

Balancing books for the mind with food for the body, the renovated Farmers Market embraces the street, but the project also included improvement of HVAC, lighting, and plumbing services. The Market offers rows of farm fresh produce from sun-ripened tomatoes, fresh picked apples, nuts, dried fruit, bright coloured flowers, lettuce crisp and fresh, the choicest cuts of meats, fish - the finest from the sea, fresh baked goods, tangy cheeses, tropical fruits and even coffee and donuts. Specialty products are also imported from many other countries around the world. This excellent product mix is offered each market day and attracts regular customers from the local community and tourists from all over the world.

The inclusiveness of the redevelopment process has been inspiring. Many diverse interest groups ranging from market staff, stallholders, library administrators and department managers, City staff, city councillors, and the public contributed to the architectural plans. David Premi underscores the particular contributions of Ken Roberts, Hamilton's Chief Librarian and Anna Bradford, Hamilton's Director of Culture, commending their "visionary enthusiasm". Premi points out that "the final streetscape canvas makes what goes on inside, complete with LED lights and transparent frontage, a showcase for Hamilton that is symbolic of and integral to the City's overall rebranding."