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## YMCA to get new leader as construction on new building begins

Sam Carroll, who led the YMCA of Marion and Polk Counties from near-bankruptcy to a new building project, is retiring in October. Timothy Sinatra will take his place.

By Rachel Alexander – Salem Reporter

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The executive who took over Salem's YMCA when it was near bankruptcy won't stay on to see his largest project complete.

Sam Carroll, CEO of the organization, announced Monday he's stepping down Oct. 1. Timothy Sinatra, formerly the executive director of the Boys and Girls Club of Marion and Polk counties, will join the YMCA in July, taking over his job.

Carroll said he and the YMCA board had discussed Sinatra as a likely successor once the rebuild of the downtown building was completed in 2021.

But on reflection, Carroll said he realized now was the right time to hand over the organization.

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"The best thing for the Y would be for Tim to begin to develop his staff and ... lead the staff into the new building because it's going to be his to lead," he said.

Carroll began his job in December 2014, when the YMCA was losing money each year and running low on cash reserves. Many of the organization's financial struggles were tied to its aging building, which cost hundreds of thousands of dollars per year to maintain and repair.

He's been the leader behind the campaign to replace the building with a state-of-the-art fitness center in downtown Salem, securing \$12 million in lottery bonds in 2017 and kicking off a fundraising campaign to cover the \$20.5 million project. Demolition took place late last fall, and

construction of the new foundation will begin later this summer, Carroll said.

Carroll said the Covid pandemic “changes perspective” and made him realize he wanted to retire sooner.

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“It certainly changed mine as far as having a greater appreciation of life and knowing there’s other things that are important in life: family, grandkids. You certainly don’t want to miss out on those,” he said.

YMCA board chair Dan Moore praised Carroll’s leadership during a difficult period.

“It’s been a heavy lift for him. The last five years have not been easy. We were on the verge of bankruptcy,” he said.

The organization earlier this month closed on a real estate transaction selling a portion of the YMCA’s lot to Isaac’s Room, the nonprofit organization that owns the IKE Box coffee shop, which can now remain in place. The YMCA also purchased a parking lot across the street from Salem First Presbyterian Church to serve as the home of a future apartment building for veterans.

Moore said with those transactions out of the way, work on the foundation can begin. He said construction on the new YMCA will finish in late 2021.

The project still needs to raise between \$6 and \$7 million, Moore said, and donations have slowed somewhat during the pandemic.

Carroll said he's already talked to Sinatra about fundraising strategies and is optimistic about their prospects.

"I feel great about the opportunity for the Y and its future," he said. "I look forward to working with Tim and I look forward to spending more time on my farm."

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