Mobile library unveiled to serve citizens across county

Janet Salazar, the executive director of Charles County’s Public Library system, unveiled the new mobile library to the audience on Tuesday afternoon in front of the Charles County Administration Building.

With four branches across the county, the Charles County Public Library system is accessible to many citizens — but some, particularly in the northern and central regions, still struggle to access library resources. In 2015, Janet Salazar, the library system’s executive director, County Commissioners’ Vice President Amanda Stewart (D) and Library Board President Claudia Bellony-Atanga came up with the idea to expand the library in a mobile capacity.

“It’s a mobile library,” Bellony-Atanga said, “not a bookmobile.”

There is a distinct difference between the two, she said, and a difference in the services each brings. “The services each brings said, and a difference in the two, she said. “not mobile capacity.”

The mobile library is much more to offer, Bellony-Atanga said. Loaded in a 26-foot long truck, the mobile library is equipped with capacity for 2,000 books, two public workstations including a computer as well as access to free WiFi. Citizens will also be able to register for a library card.

The mobile library will be making visits to communities and schools, planned to be on the road for 20 days each month. The Library will also offer home delivery services for residents upon request. This library will feature more than just books, Salazar said. “It’s the hub of our community. We’ve asked our community many questions about our services and we’ve found out that while many are at our physical branches, many do not have access to our resources,” she said.

Salazar said the library system will improve thanks to the new addition of a mobile library. The community has been enthusiastic about the project, she said. With this, they will be able to take advantage of “all the library has to offer,” Salazar said.

The support for this project shows how important libraries still are in communities, the director noted. Not only as places for education, she said, but as community hubs.

Stewart, who has long championed the mobile library in her role as a commissioner, said one of her first meetings with the library’s board of trustees was focused on “bringing back the book-mobile.”

“I’m so excited,” Stewart said. “It’s easy to say I’m going to do A, B and C. But when you stand tall and see your project actually happen, it’s exciting.”

The project received support from the board of commissioners, Stewart said, and was turned into a reality for the fiscal year in 2017. Now, she said, all residents will be able to take advantage of the mobile library’s custom systems.

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Some of the services being provided to our local veterans include:

• VA benefits Eye Care (Provided by the Lions Club)
• Dental Screening by Mission of Mercy (MoM)
• Basic Healthcare Screening (MedStar)
• General benefits counseling (Social Security, Food Stamps, Local Health and Human Services)
• Support Group - DAV VA, DLH, and many other veteran support organizations
• Spiritual Services
• Local Employers, Lawyers and much more

For more info or questions please contact: threeoakscenter.org
www.facebook.com/ThreeOaksCenter/
Sasha Seenath
Office phone: 301-865-9335 Ext 116
Email: sseenath@threeoakscenter.org
Event open to all Southern Maryland veterans and their families (including homeless and disabled veterans)

 mobile travel around with different reading materials that citizens are free to browse, she said. A mobile library is technology-oriented with access to online materials as well as books.

The mobile library has four branches, she said, but as community places for education, she championed the mobile library in her role as a commissioner. Stewart said one of her first meetings with the library’s board of trustees was focused on “bringing back the book-mobile.”

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The Charles County Board of Commissioners cut the ribbon to symbolize the opening of the new Charles County Mobile Library in front of the County Administration Building.

STAFF PHOTOS BY MICHAEL SYKES II