

# Mobile library unveiled to serve citizens across county



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

## Vehicle is equipped with free WiFi, books, workstations

By MICHAEL SYKES II  
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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 of Trustees 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 book-mobile."

There is a distinct difference between the two, she said, and a difference in the services each brings to the county. A book-mo-

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

The mobile library has much more to offer, Bellony-Atanga said. Housed in a 26-foot long truck, the mobile library is loaded with capacity for 2,000 books, two public workstations including computers 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 county schools and communities, 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.



County Commissioners' Vice President Amanda Stewart speaks on the benefits of a mobile library coming to Charles County before the unveiling of the mobile library in front of the County Administration building on Tuesday.



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.

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 priority for the fiscal year in 2017. Now, she said, all residents will be

able to take advantage of the mobile library's custom systems.

Charles County Delegate Edith Patterson (D-Charles) said this is the first semblance of a traveling library moving around the county since 1987. Since then, she said, "the county has changed a lot."

The county commissioners have "stepped forward," Patterson said, to serve communities that have been under-recognized in the past. Many still struggle to access library branches, she said, and this puts a stop

to that.

At the end of the day, Bellony-Atanga said, education is the top priority. A community without education "won't go far," she said. Bettering the quality of life in the county comes along with education, and education comes along with the mobile library.

"We're making great strides in Charles County," she said. "We've experienced a lot of growth, but we're not done yet. Education and literacy is the ticket out of poverty and is the ticket to have options in life."

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## VETERANS STAND DOWN DAY

May 19, 2017

9am - 3pm

Southern Maryland Higher Education Center  
44219 Airport Rd,  
California, MD 20619

Our goal is to serve our nation's heroes and their families while increasing awareness of some of the issues veterans are facing, including unemployment, healthcare issues, homelessness, and drug/alcohol addiction in the tri-county area and beyond.

- Some of the services being provided to our local veterans includes:
- 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:  
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Sasha Seenath  
 Office phone: 301-863-9535 Ext 116  
 Email: [sseenath@threeoakscenter.org](mailto:sseenath@threeoakscenter.org)

Event open to all Southern Maryland veterans and their families (including homeless and disabled veterans)

# Memorial Day

## Special Monday Edition May 29th Photo Tributes

Charles Stanley Tarbutton Jr.  
 U.S. Navy 1981-1985  
 USS Atlanta SSN 712  
 Nuclear Response Submarine  
 10/15/1962 - 4/10/1992

Actual Size - 3.33" X 4"

Deadline is May 12 (Space Limited)

\$30<sup>00</sup>

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 The Calvert Recorder

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