

For Immediate Release:

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Library Responds to Community Survey

Natchitoches, LA, September 8, 2020 – After much public engagement in the Natchitoches Parish Library (NPL) community survey, put out in June, the NPL will be responding to a some of the public's responses. The library's five-year strategic plan will be steered by this community input and will help the Library Board of Directors and NPL administration plan for the future of the library system. The NPL addresses some of the responses below:

Q: Why are there interactive toys in the children's area?

Studies have shown that imaginative play and problem solving, especially with other children, greatly improves a child's mental development from an early age. We provide this sensory engagement in a public environment so that children can interact with others in a constructive way.

Q: Why does the library have bookmobile services and two branches?

In the 1980s, after the current library system was established, multiple branches were requested by the public to service different parts of the parish. Over the years, the NPL system has worked within its budget to save and pay for its current facilities with no need for borrowing money or counting of future revenues. During this time an independent study, paid for by the library, was conducted. It determined that with the large size of our parish and the distance between communities, that the bookmobile and schoolmobile services where vital to the goal of library accessibility for all parish residents.

Q: Why was the library's copper roof siding replaced?

The library's flat roof was having regular leaking issues and in need of replacement. In the process of inspection for replacement work to be done, it was noted that the copper roof had also sustained hail damage over the years. If only the flat roof was replaced, the roof's integrity could not be assured, and leaks might have remained. The library complied with the Historic Business District ruling to allow roof replacement with the same materials. The replacement of the copper roof was paid for using funds from an insurance claim.

Q: How does the library publicize programs and services?

The library regularly distributes press releases to local media outlets, including: the Natchitoches Times, Around the Town, and the Natchitoches Parish Journal. In addition, the outreach coordinator has regular appearances on the Journal's "Magnolia Minute" and also has spoken on KALB's "Good Day Cenla" program. The library also attends local athletic events to promote library services. We also utilize our parish teachers to make kids and parents aware of the educational resources we provide. In addition to information available on the library's website, natlib.org, we also maintain active social media accounts with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. A monthly newsletter is also available via email or in print.

Q: Don't fines inhibit the use of the library?

The NPL has recently transitioned to fine-free for most circulating materials. And while damages and lost items will still be charged to accounts, along with fines for Wifi-2-Go and laptops, there is the opportunity each year in November for patrons to reduce fines with the library's "Fine For-GIVING" program. Even with a fine on an account that might prevent a patron from checking things out, all other library programs and services remain available during that time. Once fines are reduced below \$5, checkouts may resume.

Q: Why doesn't the library reallocate funding to other parish projects?

Library operations are funded by a dedicated property tax. This means that any funds collected, must be used in accordance with the millage, which limits expenditures to the operation of the library.

Q: Do you offer books-by-mail or homebound delivery?

Both services are offered under the umbrella of the Library Express program. For patrons who are blind or visually impaired, materials may be mailed out and returned free-of-charge via USPS. For patrons who are homebound due to age, sickness, or other reasons, red carpet delivery service is available.

Q: Why doesn't the library have textbooks?

Textbooks frequently and quickly become outdated. Also, these types of materials are also traditionally kept for long periods. Due to the limited space for housing books we focus on more in-demand items/titles.

Q: Isn't everything online?

While the internet age has meant easier access to information, that information does not come without cost. Firstly, you need to be able to afford a computer, then an internet connection, plus other costs involved in getting the content you are looking for. Many residents in our community cannot afford these extra costs. The library makes this "free" info accessible to anyone with our computer labs, and laptop and wifi-2-go checkout.

Additionally, the library pays for databases, learning resources, and digital materials that are not free to access. These cover a wide range of topics including, scholarly research, hobbies and crafts, Consumer

Reports, genealogical research, live homework help, live job search help, and so much more. And through Hoopla and Libby, the NPL provides access to digital movies, tv shows, books, audiobooks, comics, and music, all of which would normally have to be paid for individually. On top of that, we provide in person seminars and activities for the public; something you definitely can't get online.

Q: Why can't I pay for prints/copies/faxes with a credit card?

The NPL has recently added the ability to pay with credit or debit at both branch locations.

Q: Why isn't Ancestry.com available remotely?

Ancestry only allows in-library access to the library edition of its subscription service. However, those wishing to do remote genealogical research can use the My Heritage database remotely.

Q: Is curbside service permanent?

While initially implemented due to the constraints of the COVID-19 epidemic, the library will continue to provide curbside service indefinitely. Patrons can call the NPL (357-3280) or NEB (476-3280) to request items for checkout before coming to the library. Once at the library they can call again to have their items brought out to them.

Q: How do I suggest material?

If the NPL does not have the item you are looking for, you may request it for purchase or inter-library loan at any circulation desk or by calling either branch. We will do our best to acquire material for patrons and will notify you when they arrive.

Q: How can the library help students with at-home learning?

The NPL provides access to Tutor.com through its Homework Louisiana service. This grants access to free, live, homework help, and has several learning modules covering topics from kindergarten to introductory college level. They even have an option for parents to get help so that they can then help their kids. Learning Express, another digital database, has practice tests for ACT, SAT, and AP prep. And their School Center has skill-building resources for classroom and homework success as well.

PHOTOS:

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About the Natchitoches Parish Library

Knowledge. Connection. Community. The Natchitoches Parish Library serves the public and community through its competent and friendly staff by providing services and programs aimed at meeting the

informational, recreational, and educational needs of our patrons. We seek to provide a beneficial and usable collection of information and activities to connect Natchitoches Parish residents to the world.