

FORT BEND COUNTY LIBRARIES

NEWS RELEASE

DATE: August 13, 2025

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RELEASE: IMMEDIATELY

LIBRARIES LAUNCH NEW NETWORK & ONLINE CATALOG ACCESS SEPTEMBER 2

Fort Bend County Libraries is excited to announce the launch of a new, state-of-the-art online network, catalog, and computer/Internet access for library users starting September 2.

Library users will once again have access to computers, Internet, and printing, as well as digital collections and traditional services and materials they have come to enjoy over the years – and much more!

The library system experienced a network outage that began on February 24 that impacted its online catalog and computer/internet access for six months. The outage affected the online catalog, the email system, some phone service, and computer/printing access for library users.

While no library-user information was found to be compromised, the network outage provided an unparalleled opportunity to upgrade and enhance network services that was long overdue.

A completely new infrastructure is in place, with all new replacement servers, modern network hardware and software, and advanced security tools. A transformation of this magnitude has involved lengthy hardware installations throughout the library system, thorough security testing, and meticulous data validations that have been necessary to ensure a safe, resilient, and stronger library system that library users can feel confident in enjoying for many years to come.

The new online catalog is now fully cloud-based, providing stronger security, faster updates, and the ability to add new features more quickly.

The replacement of computers and printing services at all locations will be ongoing, so computer stations may be limited until the project is complete, but each library now offers computers, printing, and Internet for those library users who depend on the library for computer access.

WiFi service has been available for several months, and it will continue to be offered free to the public. The self-check stations will also be operational once again.

In addition to the new computer system and online catalog, the library system is introducing an app that will enable library users to access many features from the convenience of their mobile devices. Initially, basic services – such as searching the catalog and placing holds -- will be available on the app, but more features will continue to be added after the launch.

(more)

1003 Golfview Drive ♦ Richmond, Texas 77469

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During the months that the network was down, library staff continued the process of ordering new books and materials, but without a functioning computer network, the records were unable to be uploaded and the items remained unavailable.

Library users will enjoy discovering thousands of new books that can now be made available on shelves or placed on hold in the online catalog. More and more items will be added to the branch libraries as the logistics for loading, transporting, and shelving the new materials allow.

New collections and services – such as Wonderbooks, Kanopy+, and PressReader -- will soon be available. A new “Library of Things” will be launched at George Memorial Library in Richmond later this fall.

The free “Teacher in the Library” homework-help service (grades 3-6) will resume for the new school year on September 2 at George Memorial Library in Richmond, the Mission Bend Branch, and the Missouri City Branch. The “Lawyer in the Library” service continues to be available at the Willie Melton Law Library in the Fort Bend County Justice Center.

Access to LinkedIn Learning for Libraries and *The Wall Street Journal* has been restored.

Existing users of digital collections such as OverDrive/Libby and Hoopla may find that they will need to update their library settings in the app.

Overdue fines were waived during the network outage. For items that were checked out between February 24 and September 1, fines will continue to be waived until November 30. Items checked out starting on September 2 will resume the regular check-out schedule and will accrue fines as soon as they are overdue.

Free programs and activities for children, teens, and adults continue to be available at all locations. The children’s programs resume their fall schedule in September.

Special activities and giveaways celebrating the re-launch of the new network are planned at the branch libraries throughout the week, starting on September 2, culminating with a big **Re-Launch Party** on Saturday, **September 6**, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm, at **George Memorial Library** (1001 Golfview, Richmond). The Re-Launch Party will feature giveaways, activities, and sweet treats. Library visitors may also choose to get a limited-edition library card, recently designed by winners of the Library-Card Design Contest for Library Card Sign-Up Month!

“We thank you for your patience and appreciate your continued support,” said Library Director Roosevelt Weeks. “We look forward to introducing everyone to our new, enhanced system!”

For more information, see the Fort Bend County Libraries website (www.fortbendlibraries.gov) or call the library system’s Communications Office (281-633-4734).