AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes – June 18, 2020
3. Library Reports
   a. Report of Director
   c. Statistical and Other Reports
   d. Report of District Consultant
4. Board and Committee Reports
   a. Report of County Council Liaison
   b. Report of Friends and ERLF
5. Adjournment
6. Appendix
   a. News Articles

Join Zoom Meeting
https://zoom.us/j/98331332641?pwd=LzFBaDlaeHVIaUR0OVdWamdWTUlrQT09

Meeting ID: 983 3133 2641
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+19292056099,,98331332641#,,,,0#,,821018# US (New York)
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Dial by your location
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Meeting ID: 983 3133 2641
Password: 821018
Find your local number: https://zoom.us/u/adspurLV0x
1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes – June 18, 2020
   Sent electronically
3. Library Reports
   a. Report of Director
      i. Rotating Board Meetings
      ii. Sunday Services Suspended
      iii. District Budget
   c. Statistical and Other Reports

Numbers Snapshot
- 36,520 overall check outs, down 67%
- 14,748 digital check outs, up 37%
- Bookdrops reopened June 3rd
- Curbside pickup began June 15th
  - Conservatively estimating 1,600+ curbside pickups
- Lobby service began June 29th

Circulation

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d. Report of District Consultant

4. **Board and Committee Reports**  
a. Report of County Council Liaison  
b. Report of Friends and ERLF

5. **Adjournment**

6. **Appendix**  
a. News Articles
Erie County Public Library announced Friday the reopening of lobby service on Monday, June 29. According to library officials, two weeks of truncated services will help transition patrons to the library's new normal and prepare staff for resuming regular in-person interactions. This precautionary phase will be in place until July 13, when the final phase of reopening will begin and additional services will be added. Available services in the lobby service phase include hold pickup, browsing of limited material selections, cash fine/fee payments and the issuing of library cards. The Bookmobile continues to operate a full schedule by delivering patron holds to defined service points. Computer access, printing, seating, fax services, full collection access and restrooms are still not available during the lobby service phase, but will resume when the library transitions to its final reopening phase on July 13. All Erie County Public Library locations continue to offer expanded WiFi that can be accessed from location parking lots 24 hour a day, 7 days a week. Materials can still be returned at outside book drops at all locations. They are then quarantined for 72 hours after return prior to being checked in. All visitors will be asked to wear a mask, maintain social distancing and limit visits to 15 minutes or less. Occupancy limits will also be in effect. Lobby service will be available at all Erie County Public Library locations and select independent libraries, including Union City Public Library and the Albion Area Public Library.

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Blasco Library May Request Visitors to Limit Stay to 15-20 Minutes

Blasco Library is still planning guidelines and regulations for when it resumes full service on July 13.

Wednesday, June 24th 2020, 4:37 PM EDT
By John Last

Many places in Erie County are planning to re-open under Green Phase provisions on Friday. The Blasco Library will not be among those places.

The library has decided to delay the resumption of full service until July 13. The staff needs more time to prepare guidelines to allow safe public access to the entire library.

Preliminary guidelines will call for no more than 125 people inside the library. Many seats, tables, and computers will be removed to comply with distancing regulations. The library is worried that long lines will form and people may come to the building just to hang out.

“We are also going to be suggesting that people spend no more than 15 to 20 minutes during any one visit to the library,” says Blane Dessy, Executive Director, Erie County Public Library.

The library started curbside pickup of books on June 15. On Monday, it will allow people to pick-up their books inside, but they can travel no further than the front desk.

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https://www.erienewsnow.com/story/42285872/blasco-library-may-request-visitors-to-limit-stay-to-1520-minutes

Banking on a new Bookmobile - Erie Times-News (PA) - June 28, 2020 - page 31
June 28, 2020 | Erie Times-News (PA) | Page 31

Booklovers from all over Erie County have looked forward to visits from the Bookmobile for more than 50 years. There have been a few vehicles that carried the Bookmobile name but the most recent version, known affectionately as Bertha by library staff, has been off the road since late 2019. The Erie Regional Library Foundation is in the midst of a campaign to raise funds and public support for a new Bookmobile.

Memories of the Bookmobile’s travels are fresh in the minds of residents who look forward to its return.

“Our first date was to the library,” Barb Gross, of Wattsburg, recalled of her romance with husband Dave Gross. “It was quiet and within walking distance.”

Seventeen years ago, the Grosses were expecting their seventh child when Barb first walked to the Erie County Public Library’s Bookmobile with one of her other children. Until recently, the Bookmobile made bi-weekly stops in Wattsburg and more than 30 other locations throughout the county.

“It used to stop about a two-mile walk (from our house),” Gross said. She added that it was good exercise but “we didn’t think about bringing all those books back (to our house)!” The Grosses have instilled a love of reading in all their children, thanks in part to the Bookmobile.

“Even my married children and grandchildren use (the Bookmobile) now,” Barb Gross said. “We have numerous times biked down there with a little bike trailer behind us.”

History behind the Bookmobiles
The current Bluebird bus is the latest in a series of county Bookmobiles dating at least as far back as Nov. 19, 1949, according to Andrew Miller, adult services manager for Erie County Public Library. That first Erie County Bookmobile was known as the Erie County Free Traveling Library. It was driven by librarian Marion Kelly.

“There was discussion on some kind of county service that predated it, which was suspended for WWII,” Miller said. The library was researching Erie County’s pre-WWII Bookmobiles. That early traveling library served 76 one-room and two-room schoolhouses and 12 community stations. It offered a collection of 4,500 volumes plus 2,000 more loaned from the state.

In 1953, a second Bookmobile was added. One served the city, another was for rural routes. Since then, the Bookmobile has been an important way for residents across Erie County’s rural, urban and suburban areas to access not only books but also DVDs, CDs, educational materials and lately even Wi-Fi hotspots.

“I remember the Bookmobile ... back in the 70s (in Lawrence Park),” Jennifer Kovach, of Harborcreek, said. “I remember getting books that were information oriented, like how-to books, more so than stories. I’m still that way.”

In 1992 the library began using a new Bookmobile thanks to a donation by physician Raymond Blasco, who cited concerns over the accessibility of books for the county’s rural populations. That vehicle was eventually replaced by Bertha, which for 12 years has traveled Erie County, serving more than 350 patrons each week.

About 40 children at Erie’s John F. Kennedy Center would hop aboard Bertha every other week, according to Afreeeica Woodard, the center’s youth services director.

“Ever since the Bookmobile started coming here,” Woodard said, “it’s [benefited] our youth and our seniors. For some children it was the first time they’d ever been on the Bookmobile. And having access to the books right here in their own neighborhood [is great], because most parents are working and are not able to access the library or even have transportation to get to the library.”

Superhero books and “LOL” activity books were among the children’s favorite selections. “I even recall one student still liking to read Nancy Drew,” Woodard said. “And children that were not able to check out books — they spend a little more time on the Bookmobile reading.”

Seniors who visited the JFK Center would check out books at a local library branch and then enjoy the convenience of returning them to the Bookmobile. Carolyn Biscoff, 86, was tax collector for Springfield Township for 33 years. She is now one of the most avid Bookmobile patrons and advocates.

“I like (to read) almost anything,” she said. “And I normally like mysteries, detective type things. I think I’ve read every one of the Alex Cross books (by James Patterson). I usually get about nine or 10 books at a time. My grandson helps now, and he says, ‘Boy, these are heavy, Grandma!”

Biscoff’s daughter, Bonnie Howland, followed in her mother’s footsteps as both Springfield Township tax collector and avid reader.

“My mother was like a kid in a candy store [when visiting the bookmobile],” she said. “Now she’s reading and re-reading the books that she has.”

Twelve years of travel in all kinds of Erie weather resulted in structural damage and normal wear and tear that are prohibitively costly to repair — taking Bertha off the road.

“The Bookmobile’s an old girl like me,” Biscoff said. “And they have done wonders keeping it running, but the mechanical end of it is expensive I'm sure.”

The JFK Center children especially miss Bertha, too. “They would look for the ‘big bus,’” Woodard said.

After the Bookmobile had to take time off the road, resourceful library staff stepped in with alternative vehicles to continue visiting the Bookmobile’s 32 stops until the COVID-19 pandemic required not only social distancing but the furlough of many library personnel.

On June 1, library staff returned to work full time. And the library continues to reopen in phases, with lobby service slated to begin June 29 and most in-person services resuming July 13.
What’s next for the Bookmobile?
A new vehicle will require $200,000 to $250,000, depending on the type of vehicle and the level of customization. The Erie Regional Library Foundation is in the midst of a campaign to raise funds with grants, sponsorships and donations from the public.

“It is critical that the public show significant support so the county, too, will show support in a significant way,” Beth Zimmer, board president of the Erie Regional Library Foundation, said. Individual donations can be made online at ERLfoundation.org.

When it comes time to start up again, the next Bookmobile will look and feel new.

“Some (vehicles) are pretty much ready to go, or we could get something that is bare bones and could be customized,” Sheryl Thomas, assistant director for the Erie County Public Library, said.

Safety remains a top priority at all the local library branches, and it will be a priority for the new Bookmobile, too. The library team will adhere to requirements set forth by each Bookmobile stop.

“We’re also moving toward contactless drop-offs and pickups rather than handing (books) to a staff member,” Marcus Yuille, the library’s outreach services manager, said. “Staff will wear masks and gloves; we’ll be spacing staff members out. There may be only one (Bookmobile staff member). It will look a bit different, but the service will still be there, and we’ll still provide the great experiences as always.”

Normally Julie Santana and Yvonne Nodes staff the Bookmobile.

“I will say our staff are famous for personalizing service,” Yuille said. “They really make it their own.”

He added that loyal patrons had invited the staff to proms, weddings and graduations.

Howland’s son, Nathaniel Howland, 14, is a history buff. Her son Nickolus Howland, 6, hasn’t settled on a genre but “Miss Julie and Miss Yvonne keep him hooked up, too,” Howland said.

“They’re like friends, they’re like family,” Gross said. “You bring them a thank-you note. You remember them on a hot summer day and bring them something to drink. They’re thinking of you, too. If you didn’t show up, you might get a note saying, ‘Hope everything’s OK.’”

Some of the Gross family’s best memories are occasions made special by the Bookmobile staff.

“The whole library has a summer reading program, and the librarians would decorate the inside of the Bookmobile and make you feel so welcome,” Gross said. “And the books would all be themed for the summer reading program.”

With the purchase of a new Bookmobile, those special relationships will be restored. Not only that, but “the library hopes to expand the services even more while shrinking the Bookmobile itself,” Thomas said. “Modern Bookmobiles, such as the Sprinter model that the library is considering, tend to be more compact than Bertha.”

Thomas explained that going smaller appears to be the trend to allow more maneuverability and to bring items off the vehicle and into a parking lot or building for patrons to browse.

Bertha allowed the library to lend out Wi-Fi hotspots and Playaways, which are audiobooks on MP3 players. The new Bookmobile may have built-in technology, allowing the vehicle itself to serve as a Wi-Fi hotspot.

Patrons could also get help filing taxes, using computer and printing services, applying for a job or for unemployment at workstations within the vehicle, and even accessing the library’s Idea Lab programs.

“We would love to eventually have multiple vehicles on the road – one that’s a traditional Bookmobile and one that is more technology focused and could provide things like job and resume help, which might take more customization (of the vehicle),” Thomas said.

Hopes are to return to Bookmobile stops in September

The plan is to bring some form of the Bookmobile to each of its previous stops, as permitted, beginning in September.

“This is a very unprecedented time,” Thomas said. “We’re working to find out and formulate a plan for where to go based on who would allow us to come.”

Whatever the next Bookmobile looks like, and wherever, whenever it travels, Howland echoed the
COVID-19 relief headed to county - By Matthew - Erie Times-News (PA) -
July 1, 2020 - page 1
July 1, 2020 | Erie Times-News (PA) | Erie Times-News | Page 1
Erie County government will receive more than $24.3 million to assist small businesses, nonprofit organizations and municipalities and to cover costs associated with the coronavirus pandemic through the state’s COVID-19 County Relief Block Grant program.
The state will distribute the money in two weeks. It must be spent by the end of the year.
During a special meeting of Erie County Council Tuesday, council members voted to name Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper and Erie County Finance Director James Sparber the designated agents for the funding, a formality of the grant process that needed to be done by Wednesday.
“It’s a lot of money to get in and get out the door in a very short amount of time,” Dahlkemper said. “That’s going to be probably the biggest challenge for us is to get the money out, make sure that we’re following all federal guidelines, that there are no mistakes made and that we’re making the biggest impact we can for the community as a whole.”
The program is funded through the state’s share of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act funds. The $625 million of funds will be distributed through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development based on each county’s population.
Seven of the state’s largest counties with populations of more than 500,000 received direct assistance through the federal government and therefore are not eligible for the program. Erie County has about 4 percent of the population of the 60 other counties.
Neighboring counties will also receive funding, according to state Sen. Michele Brooks’ office: Crawford County will receive $7.64 million, Mercer County will receive $9.88 million, and Warren County will receive $3.53 million.
The state is required to distribute the funds by July 15. It can be used for expenses incurred between March 1 and Dec. 30.
In announcing the funding late last month, state Sen. Dan Laughlin, R-49th Dist., Millcreek Township, noted that the state bill that allocated $2.6 billion of the state’s $3.9 billion of CARES Act funding gives counties “a great deal of flexibility in determining the best uses of that money.”
In addition to covering increased costs, the county can use the money to provide small business assistance; provide tourism industry assistance; aid municipalities; expand broadband access, and support behavioral health/substance abuse programs and non-profit organizations.
Dahlkemper established a task force to determine how the money will be spent. She’ll propose a general framework to County Council in a few weeks. The administration would then determine sub-recipients of the funds, like municipalities. And it might partner with other agencies to help distribute the grant funds.
The Erie County Redevelopment Authority, for example, might be tasked with administering grants for small businesses.
Money for small businesses can only go to businesses with fewer than 100 employees.
The state is also distributing $225 million to small businesses through agencies known as community development financial institutions. Bridgeway Capital, based in Pittsburgh but which has
offices in Erie and has worked with the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, will oversee the distribution of those funds for this region. Those dollars are for businesses with 25 or fewer employees.

The county’s Redevelopment Authority, on the other hand, would focus on businesses between 26 and 100 employees, she said.

Businesses would be eligible for either pot of funds even if they received support through the federal Paycheck Protection Program. However, they would not be eligible for relief from both the county and Bridgeway Capital, for example.

“We’re going to try to push the smallest of our businesses to try to get the money through the DCED’s direct funding,” Dahlkemper said, referring to Bridgeway Capital’s role with the Department of Community and Economic Development. “And if they can’t, then they can come to the county.”

Another agency, Visit Erie, for example, could assist the county with distributing tourism-related grants, Dahlkemper said.

The county would likely retain the role of granting money to cities, boroughs and townships for expenses like personal protective equipment. The Erie Area Council of Governments has surveyed municipalities about their COVID-19 expenses to date and their anticipated needs for the remainder of the year.

It is also exploring possible expansion of mobile hot spots beyond the Erie County Public Library and its branch libraries to independent libraries, community centers and other locations to help families that need internet access to telework or for virtual learning.

“I know $24.3 million sounds like a lot, but when you start to look at all those different programs, you can understand how the money could be utilized quite quickly,” Dahlkemper said.

Contact Matthew Rink at mrink@timesnews.com. Follow him on Twitter at @ETNrink.


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 14, 2020
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Erie County Public Library to cease Sunday service operation

Erie, PA – The Erie County Public Library will discontinue Sunday service hours at Blasco Memorial Library, effective Sunday, July 19, through the end of 2020.

The Erie County Public Library consists of five physical locations, a bookmobile, and two satellite locations operated in conjunction with the Housing Authority of the City of Erie. Of all of these, only the Blasco Library has provided Sunday hours. All other locations are closed on Sundays.

Blasco began its Sunday library hours approximately 15 years ago because of a desire to be open to the public. Sundays are usually a busy day for public libraries, and it was seen as a good opportunity for the Blasco Library from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

“This Sunday service is built upon a completely volunteer schedule of employees,” said Blane Dessy, director of Erie County Public Library. “This system has worked reasonably well over the past years, but it is different now in this time of COVID-19. Because we have no management ability to assign staff, we are faced with a service that we can no longer maintain. During this hiatus, the library management team plans to identify options for reinstating Sunday service in the future.”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 13, 2020
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Erie County Public Library enters final reopening phase July 13

Erie, PA – The Erie County Public Library enters its final reopening phase Monday, July 13. This phase reintroduces most services that were closed, chiefly access to full collections and computer facilities at all library locations. COVID-19 preventative measures such as hand sanitizing stations, social distancing, universal masking, quarantining of materials, and frequent cleaning continue to be implemented.

Erie County Public Library continues to take guidance from the CDC, Office of Commonwealth Libraries, and Erie County Department of Health to provide staff and patrons with responsible services and a healthy environment. To this end, steps have been implemented that aim to reduce the frequency of contact with surfaces and the amount of time that patrons remain within the library.

What to expect when visiting the library:
- Each location has an occupancy limit: Blasco = 240 patrons, Lincoln = 31 patrons, Millcreek = 26 patrons, Edinboro = 24 patrons, and Iroquois = 15 patrons.
- Universal masking and social distancing will be enforced.
- Computer stations are available at all locations. Patrons will be limited to a 60-minute session.
- Patrons will limit their visit to 15 minutes for all non-computer purposes.
- Peer navigators are stationed at Blasco Library to provide social services for patrons in need of assistance.
Mobile printing at Blasco Library allows patrons to send print jobs before arrival. Instructions are available at [https://erielibrary.org/resources/mobile-print/](https://erielibrary.org/resources/mobile-print/).

Patrons may place up to 10 items on hold at a time.

Inter Library Loans are limited to two per account and will be requested only from libraries in other Green Phase comparable areas.

Blasco Library’s Heritage Room will offer limited equipment and occupancy limits; patrons are asked to limit their visits to 15 minutes in this area.

Patrons will be directed to stand in front of partitions at all service points.

Checkout stations will be sanitized between each transaction.

Public restrooms and drinking fountains in the lobby and children’s areas (family use only) are reopened.

Cleaning occurs on a daily basis at all locations by professional cleaners, and a microbial shield is applied to high-touch, non-porous surfaces.

Curbside service will be provided as staffing allows. Please call your local library in advance to discuss pickup options.

Patrons are encouraged to return all items to contactless outdoor bookdrops – open 24/7.

Wi-Fi has been extended to parking lots at all locations. Read more about this initiative [here](https://erielibrary.org/resources/mobile-print/).

Patrons are encouraged to bring their own book bags, pens or pencils as needed to avoid cross-contamination.

Summer Library Challenge returns July 13. Read more [here](https://erielibrary.org/resources/mobile-print/).

Several services will remain unavailable:

- Idea Lab at the Blasco Library
- Children’s play areas and toys at all library locations
- Lounge and study furniture at all locations
- One-on-one patron assistance that cannot be accomplished while practicing social distancing. This includes one-on-one computer assistance, extended research and genealogy, and equipment/device assistance. Patrons are encouraged to bring a helper from their household should they require assistance that cannot be completed from a 6-foot distance by staff.
- Newspapers will be removed from communal areas
- Study rooms, meeting rooms, and collaboratories remain closed
- Phones will not be available for public use
- In-person programming will not resume until further notice

Please stay tuned to the Friends of the Library website for updates on when book donations will be accepted as well as dates for upcoming book sales, reopening of the Bayfront Bookshelf, and book drives.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 6, 2020

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Erie County Public Library launches annual Summer Library Challenge on July 13

Erie, PA – Erie County Public Library’s 2020 Summer Library Challenge will launch Monday, July 13, and conclude Saturday, Sept 12, for readers of all ages. This annual tradition returns with a new twist in 2020: Participants may complete activities, log reading minutes, and earn badges through an online platform – Beanstack – available via beanstack.com or mobile app. As in previous Summer Library Challenges, paper forms continue to be available at all Erie County Public Library locations and offer the same reading log and activity prompts. Committed to slowing the spread of COVID-19 in Erie County, Erie County Public Library has adapted the annual Summer Library Challenge to promote contactless activities while still embracing all the fun and recognition this program provides to readers. By logging reading minutes and completing activities, participants of all ages (0-109) are able to earn badges that enter them into grand prize drawings based on location and age. Five grand prizes will be available at each location, with age brackets segmented into 0-2, 3-5, 6-12, 13-17, and 18+ years old, to be drawn on Sept. 12, 2020. Participants will earn virtual badges by logging the time spent reading, as well as completing four self-guided activities – a hands-on activity, a music activity, a nature activity and a survey – on Beanstack. The virtual reading badges are issued at hour increments with a minimum total commitment of six hours. Pre-registration is now open. Sign up online at erielibrary.org or call the Erie County Public Library at 814-451-6900.

– more –

The Summer Library Challenge is made possible by the generous support of the Friends of the Erie County Public Library and Macaroni Kid Erie. The mission of the Summer Library Challenge is to help students maintain learning acquired during the school year. Studies estimate that summer breaks contribute to the average student losing up to one month of instruction. Some students, particularly those from disadvantaged households, lose up to three months of learning. Summer learning loss is greatest in math computation, reading and spelling. The Erie County Public Library is focused on supporting local children and students through quality books, collections, resources and programming. For more information, please call Shane Donaldson, Erie County Public Library’s youth services manager, at 814-451-6936.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 26, 2020

CONTACT:
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Erie County Public Library reopens for lobby service June 29

Erie, PA – Erie County Public Library moves into its next progressive reopening phase of lobby service Monday, June 29. By having two weeks of truncated services, Erie County Public Library will help transition patrons to the library’s new normal and prepare staff for resuming regular in-person interactions. Available services in the lobby service phase include hold pickup, browsing of limited material selections, cash fine/fee payments, and the issuing of library cards. The Bookmobile continues to operate its full schedule by delivering patron holds to its defined service points.
Computer access, printing, seating, fax services, full collection access and restrooms are still not available during the lobby service phase, but will be offered in Erie County Public Library’s final reopening phase, which commences July 13. All Erie County Public Library locations currently offer expanded Wi-Fi that can be accessed from location parking lots 24/7. Materials can still be returned at outside book drops at all locations; materials are quarantined for 72 hours after return prior to being checked in. To place holds or for any questions, please call 814-451-6900.

To ensure the health and safety of both staff and patrons, all visitors will be asked to wear a mask, maintain social distancing, and limit their visit to 15 minutes or less. Buildings will also have occupancy limits to assist with social distancing in the restricted space. Additionally, glass partitions will be at all service points, staff will sanitize stations between transactions and will take frequent handwashing breaks, and hand sanitizer will be available for patron use.

– more – “As Erie County graduates to the green phase, we will be gradually reopening our libraries in a measured, safe and healthy manner,” said Sheryl Thomas, assistant director of Erie County Public Library. “The lobby service will provide patrons with access to holds, a limited selection of popular materials, and in-person interactions with staff members. This phase helps us ensure that health and safety precautions are working while adding back services and seeing sorely missed patrons as we prepare to more fully open July 13. The libraries will look and feel different, but we are as excited as ever to welcome patrons back.”

Lobby service will be available at all Erie County Public Library locations (Raymond M. Blasco MD Memorial Library, Lincoln Community Center Library, Iroquois Avenue Branch Library, Millcreek Mall Branch Library, and Edinboro Branch Library) and select independent libraries including Union City Public Library and Albion Area Public Library.