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New Anna Porter Public Library Ready To Be Checked Out

GATLINBURG – The magnificent new \$1.7 million Anna Porter Public Library is open for business featuring designated areas for teens and children, an adult reading area, public access computers, rocking chairs in front of a stone fireplace and an Internet coffee café.

The bookstore-style library, located directly adjacent to the Community Center, opened this spring to rave reviews, fulfilling a longtime mission by the community to build a state of the art, full service facility stocked with all the modern conveniences, comfortable spaces and ample parking which City of Gatlinburg residents can enjoy and take advantage of as the needs of savvy patrons shift.

“This new library is a wonderful tribute to our community and an asset of which we should all take advantage,” said Gatlinburg City Manager Cindy Cameron Ogle. “The construction of this new facility has been a very positive process and its completion satisfies a need in our community. We certainly have the best small-town library in the country.”

Board of Trustees Chair Sue Bock and APPL Director Kenton Temple joined Ogle in countless hours of negotiations and meetings with Trotter & Associates Architect to finalize the last details of the new building, which opened in March directly adjacent to the Community Center and is abuzz with activity as patrons take advantage of the numerous facets of the library, many of them new or enhanced.

Gatlinburg City Commission appropriated in excess of \$850,000 toward the new Library with community leaders securing a similar amount of funding through donations, pledges, fundraising activities and a State grant. The Library building is owned and maintained by the City.

A donor wall is part of the new facility. Funding is still being sought for art glass windows by local artist Bill May as well as other amenities, said building campaign chair Lee Mellor. The APPL Board of Trustees continues its fundraising activities with the hopes of raising the final \$50,000 necessary to complete the building and outfit it with the latest in offerings from all types of media.

“We’re very close to our ultimate goal,” said Mellor. “Ripley’s Aquarium of the Smokies is sponsoring two additional Library Luau fundraisers, and we have other events like our Murder Mystery Dinner Theater. We would like to thank everyone in the community for their continued support. We are still actively looking for people who would like to make a contribution. There is certainly much more we can do with funding.”

The new building, located directly adjacent to the southeast side of the Gatlinburg Community Center, includes designated areas for teens and children, an adult reading area, and a nifty Internet coffee cafe. One corner of the building houses the Smoky Mountain Collection and includes a stone fireplace where patrons can read to their heart’s content.

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“We have the latest in wireless internet technology with 13 public computers wired into the building and the ability to expand to as many as 40 computers,” said Temple. “We do still cater heavily to the tourism industry, and we expect lots of tourists will come out and bring their laptops to check their e-mails.”

Included in the library is a coffee shop which can serve as a community meeting place as well as a casual setting for small groups to gather. There are “phone zones,” which include the Internet cafe, where patrons can chat (quietly, of course) on their cell phones.

The library is open weekdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with extended hours to 8 p.m. on Thursday only. Patrons can also visit between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

Temple invites everyone to check out the facility.

“Libraries have become much more than places to do research and check out books,” she said. “We really are hopeful Anna Porter Public Library becomes a community hang-out, a popular place for residents of all ages and visitors alike.”

For more information, call 436-5588 or visit www.annaporterpl.org.