



PRESS RELEASE

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Troup-Harris Libraries to Begin Curbside Service on May 18th and 26th

The LaGrange Memorial Library and the Hogansville Public Library will initiate limited curbside service beginning May 18. The libraries closed on March 17th of this year, in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Limited curbside service at the libraries will allow patrons to pick up holds in a contactless manner. The libraries will call patrons to schedule times in 15 minute intervals, once their orders are ready. Staff will check out materials on behalf of patrons, and then deliver to the trunks of cars via the LaGrange Library's drive through and in bins set outside of the Hogansville Library.

For those patrons needing to return materials, the book drops in Hogansville and in LaGrange will be open at all hours. Returned materials will remain in bins and will be subjected to quarantine for 72 hours before check in. No overdue fines will be charged in the month of May, and possibly in June and July as well depending upon conditions in the community.

In the days before May 18th, staff will call patrons who have had fulfilled holds waiting to be received before the March closure. Following that, they will tend to the extensive list of holds requests that have been building up since the libraries have been closed. Patrons will be given a window of time to schedule their pickup. Only staff will be allowed access to the interior of the facilities. Patrons will also be able to call libraries directly to request materials, should they find themselves unable to use the PINES online catalog for whatever reason.

Troup-Harris Regional Library Director Keith Schuermann gave praise to library staff members, who were tasked with developing a staged plan for reopening that placed the health and well-being of users and staff as the highest priority. Following two or three weeks of curbside, as a next stage the libraries anticipate introducing metered access to facilities that will limit both the numbers of patrons allowed inside and the available services offered. "We're asking for patience from our users as we navigate this process," Schuermann stated. "Every two weeks we will consider public health data, and if we are able to open up to greater access as the summer evolves we will do so. Likewise, should things worsen, we will take a fallback position. Like many of Georgia's public services, we're building this plane and learning how it operates in the midst of our trying to fly it."

The library system's reopening plan consists of five incremental stages, with the final stage being a return to all services at pre-COVID-19 levels. The wildly popular summer reading program may be one casualty of COVID-19, or at very least, it will be reimaged in a significant way. Kate Chambers, manager of the LaGrange location, is creatively answering the important call of summer services. "We're excited to do things a little differently this year. Live-streamed guest performers, circulating prepackaged activity kits for families, and continuing our virtual story times will be unique elements of this summer's program," she stated.



Regardless of approach, staff members are happy to get back to serving their communities, even as they rebuild these services from the bottom up. "Before COVID-19 we had so many programs lined up and our patrons were so excited," according to Hogansville Library manager Wendy Knight. "We are eager to get back to work so we can still share these programs with our community. Plus, we miss seeing the friendly faces of our regular patrons!"

The Harris County Public Library plans to begin similar curbside services on May 26th. Library Manager Stephanie Green understands the need for library services in her community, especially high-speed internet. "Opening for curbside access to print materials will be a relief for many members of our community. However, the residents of Harris County have a voracious need for high speed internet. It is our hope that we will be able to schedule appointments in the near future, so customers can safely enter the building and utilize our technology." The Harris Library provides 24/7 Wi-Fi access, and like all Troup-Harris Libraries, this may be accessed safely from library parking lots.

During this first phase-in period, the LaGrange Library will be open for curbside service MWF 10-4 and TR 1-7. The Hogansville Library will be curbside MTWRF 10-2, and the Harris Library will be doing curbside MWF 10-4. Saturday hours may be resumed in the month of June, and this initial schedule may flex as demand requires. "Every single day we receive emails, text messages, media posts, and so on wanting to know when we're back in business. Our patrons just can't wait," said Schuermann. "It's demonstrated to staff just how valued we are in our communities."

For more information about hours of operation, the library's reopening plan, and to browse the PINES catalog, patrons may visit the library's website, at www.thrl.org.