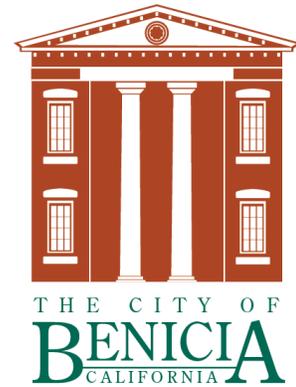


PRESS RELEASE

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BENICIA PUBLIC LIBRARY INCREASES ONLINE OFFERINGS

Benicia, CA (July 3, 2020) – In the midst of the current COVID-19 pandemic, Benicia Public Library is increasing its offerings of online and virtual resources and programs. Over the next months, more and more of a “digital shift” will take place, to augment the limited in-person curbside services now available.

“Clearly, the library needs to pivot in order to fulfill our mission during a time when we can’t be open to the public,” said David Dodd, Director of Library and Cultural Services. “It’s important that we quickly and with purpose re-think how best to reach the community with the resources they expect and need.”

Even though the library is closed to the public, staff began meeting patron needs on June 1 by offering curbside pickup of books and other items by appointment. Additional online and virtual resources now available include access to the Testing and Education Reference Center (TERC). This valuable resource includes full-length practice tests for GED, SAT, ACT, PSAT, GRE, LSAT, MCAT, TOEFL, U.S. citizenship, and more. It offers information on undergraduate and graduate programs and tuition and scholarship assistance, as well as resume, interviewing and networking advice.

In this time of increasing unemployment, TERC offers career guidance for job seekers of all levels and experiences, from professionals trying to navigate the ever-changing job market to students looking to deepen their understanding of potential career paths. Explore careers and occupations, assess your strengths and interests, get resume and cover letter advice, practice interviews virtually, match existing work or military experience to new fields, search for jobs and education options, and more, whether you’re a student planning for college or a professional embarking on a new career path.

Another new offering, available through the end of August, is the Virtual Library Comic Convention. This is an app-based resource, featuring over 4,000 comics, graphic novels, and children’s materials for free to all residents of California this summer. No holds are required. Materials are available to everyone simultaneously.

As library staff look to offer additional digital and virtual resources, they will be aided by a \$50,000 grant from the Benicia Library Foundation, a community-supported fundraising group which sponsors the annual Trivia Bee. Library staff have conducted a community survey, and have gathered information on the best digital, virtual, and other electronic approaches to providing basic library services. Patrons can expect to see these rolled out continuously over the next months.

During COVID-19, when outdoor activities are preferable, the library's wi-fi signal has been boosted to be more accessible for those in the outdoor spaces around the perimeter of the library. "Come and sit on the benches near the fountain, on the lawn beside the library, and in the 'amphitheater' space behind the library near First Street, and you should get good access to free wi-fi," Dodd said, adding "and stay tuned for more to come."

To access Benicia Public Library online services, visit www.BeniciaLibrary.org and sign up for a free library card to take advantage of digital and virtual offerings.

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