

Lots more than books now available at Flossmoor library

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The Flossmoor Public Library — it's not just for books anymore.

Books still make up the bulk of circulation, according to Library Director Jamie Paicely. But the single most-checked-out item of last year? A hotspot that went out the door 94 times. And people remain continually surprised that the library has so much more than print material, Paicely said.

"I think there's always going to be people that until they're exposed ... don't realize what a resource the library is," she said. "We're trying to fix that. We're trying to get word out."

The library added Nintendo Switch games such as "New Pokemon Snap" and "Kirby and the Forgotten Land" to the PlayStation and Xbox titles already offered. Paicely said the library is starting with popular family games from the Mario Kart, Kirby and Zelda series, "just that we know a wide age range likes and enjoys to play." Plans are to add from there.

"Any time we see our patrons ordering items regularly from other libraries with a steady demand, we usually look at seeing if it's something we can offer or carry or something that we can increase in our own collection, as well, just so they're able to get it a lot quicker through their home library," Paicely explained.

Circulation of the games has been frequent, Paicely added, with titles typically going back out within a day or two of being returned.

Also popular are the backpack hiking kits filled with Illinois hiking and nature guide books, binoculars, a compass, and a walking pole.

The library bought the kits with funds from an AgeOptions grant, which focuses on senior citizens. In 2020 the library used the money to buy iPads and the hotspots. Staff also created instructional videos so that seniors could connect with family through the technology during the pandemic. In 2021, the grant was used to buy Launchpads — tablets with preloaded brain games.



Provided photo

Craft and DIY kits are available each month, while supplies last, for all patrons of the Flossmoor Public Library.

This year's grant focused on physical well-being, so the library purchased the backpack hiking kits. The idea was inspired by how many people have been requesting hiking and guide books, Paicely said.

"We just thought it would be a tie-in that would also help people get outdoors," she said.

The library also used the grant to purchase workout kits. Materials for home

yoga, chair yoga and yoga for seniors will be rolled out in the fall, Paicely said.

In June, the library added monthly take-home craft/DIY kits for adults over 18. That adds to grab-and-go craft kits already offered to seniors, children and teens. Paicely said parents were the driving force for the adult kits.

"It was just a comment that several of the parents were making: 'Oh, I wish there was something I could do,' or 'I like these because I help my child with them,'" Paicely said.

The library director said with all these additions, libraries are practically synonymous with literature for a reason.

"People are still coming out for their books, especially now because you don't have to buy them," she said. "With gas prices rising, entertainment prices rising, we see that demand for our materials back. ... We slowly see the demand for our collection coming back, because it's an expense you don't need to make yourself."

Visit flossmoorlibrary.org for more information.

D233 to be part of new Career & Tech Education Center

BY MARILYN THOMAS

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District 233 is joining with five other high school districts, Prairie State College and the SPEED Cooperative in forming the South Career and Technical Education Center.

Johnnie Thomas, superintendent of Rich Township District 227, made a presentation on the career center to the District 233 board at its June 21 meeting. Thomas, who is spearheading the initiative, said the plans have been in the works "for almost two years." He said the project has gone through an initial review by the Illinois State Board of Education and ISBE "recognizes us as being able to provide these services."

Former District 233 Superintendent Von Mansfield has supported the project. He

said there was a regional training center in the 1990s, but it failed to flourish.

The career center would be built on the site of the now closed Rich East High School in Park Forest once the building is demolished. The district would donate the 50-acre site. Thomas said cost estimates for a new, specially designed building are between \$92 and \$100 million. He said the group is looking for public/private and federal dollars.

"We're trying to bring a service back to this community that hasn't been in this community for over 30 years," Thomas said. "There hasn't been a new facility built in the state of Illinois in over 45 years. We always talk about career development and bringing the new age, a new work force to our community, this is our attempt at trying to address that need."

The career center would draw students served by Homewood-Flossmoor District 223, Rich Township District 227, Crete-Monee District 201-U, Bloom Township District 206, Thornton-Fractional District 215, Southland College Prep and the SPEED Cooperative. Prairie State College is also involved with the project.

Thomas said at any one time, the career center would serve 600 students during the day, and it would be open evenings to adult learners.

H-F has a strong Career and Technical Education Department offering students courses in four specialties areas:

- Business and Technology with courses in computers, entrepreneurship and management, accounting, marketing and investing.

- Industrial Technology with courses in automotive technology, drafting and design, manufacturing technology and networking systems.
- Family and Consumer Sciences with courses in child development, culinary, interior design and apparel and textiles.
- Engineering with courses under the Project Lead the Way umbrella.

Thomas spelled out seven programs for the career center—aviation training for future pilots, construction trades, information technology, logistics and supply chain, manufacturing trades, public safety and urban agriculture.

"It's a real impact and something we believe is going to enhance our community," Thomas said. "It's going to give us the workforce of the future."

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LOST FAMILY PET "Tater" is a 9 mo old male brown tabby w/ gold eyes & white paws. Missing since May 11th from the vicinity of 179th and Hood, Homewood.

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