

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
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MEDIA RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****DATE: March 27, 2019****Contact: Suzanne Lagay, Freeholder Director**Suzanne.lagay@co.hunterdon.nj.us

County Library Annual Report Shows Great Strides, Citing Record Visitors, Increased Hours And Tech Upgrades

The Hunterdon County Library published its 2018 Annual Report, citing a very impressive and successful year with half a million visitors, eighteen thousand program attendees, and offering residents twenty-seven thousand new books, movies, periodicals for lending.

Freeholder Director Suzanne Lagay, liaison to the Library Commission said, "Our libraries today are much more than a place to check-out books. They serve as community centers showing popular current films, holding discussion groups and concerts, offering a creative array of children's and family programs throughout the calendar year. Need WIFI? It's available. Need up-to-date electronics? They're there too."

Some of the community-like services explained in the 2018 report are seasonal music concerts, art and photography shows and the Library's money-saving free museum passes. The Hunterdon County Bookmobile travels year-round to bring books to the homebound and school children. In September, more than forty businesses offered discounts to Library cardholders during the National Library Card month.

Lagay added, "Perhaps the most significant event of 2018 was the hiring of our new Library Director James Keehbler, whose resume includes President of the New Jersey Library Association and being recognized as New Jersey Librarian of the Year. 2018 saw plans finalized to move the South County Branch back to East Amwell, a move has that increased attendance 22%, confirming that the right decisions were made and executed."

More than 1 million items were circulated county-wide during the 2018 calendar year between all three County Libraries.

Library Director James Keehbler reported the desire to make all the library branches a place residents felt comfortable going and the assertion that that goal was achieved. With increased WiFi coverage, mobile printing and scanning options and extending of hours in the North County Branch on Sundays, we are listening to what residents want. Hunterdon County Libraries are accessible!

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Looking ahead: to keep up with increased participation, Library redesign will continue throughout 2019; new stops and events are planned for the Bookmobile; and a strategic planning process will be implemented.

Lagay continued, "If you've not visited your nearest County Library branch during this last year, I invite you to do so. I promise you'll be amazed at what is available at your fingertips."