

May 4, 2020

Press release: Continued closure of the Valley City Barnes County Public Library

The Valley City Barnes County Public Library will continue at Level 3 (see below) of our pandemic plan for the month of May. It is our hope to move to Level 2 starting in June at which time we will start to provide limited circulation of library materials utilizing a drive up/curbside service model.

Level Three:

1. No patron access inside building, all doors will remain locked at all times
2. No items will be circulated however staff will continue to monitor book drops and empty as needed
3. All fines and fees will be suspended until library resumes normal operations
4. Staff provides phone and online assistance  
Staff works on internally focused projects such as weeding, collection development, program planning
5. Library is essentially closed to public

This was a very difficult decision to make, we really miss our patrons and providing everyone with the high-quality library service our community expects. The executive committee, comprised of the board president, director, and assistant director, met last week and identified several challenges to opening sooner. This includes making sure we have adequate staffing to provide the more labor-intensive drive up/curbside pickup and adequate protection including masks and gloves, disinfecting wipes, and hand sanitizer. The director is sourcing additional suppliers and hopes to have corona virus approved protective masks and more sanitizer by the middle of the month. We are currently good on toilet paper.

Our plan for May is as follows:

1. After school lets in the middle of May, our staff with school age children will be available to return to work in the library. (Most have been working from home since we closed) Our two college students, one who work summers only, will also be available to work a regular schedule. We also hope to recruit a couple teen volunteers and have a couple adult volunteers already lined up.
2. Starting the week of May 18<sup>th</sup>, staff and volunteers will be getting things set up for curbside pickup. There will be some training and figuring out efficient workflows, testing our procedures, and fixing any issues that may arise. This will be new to everyone and we will need the time to make sure we can serve our patrons as quickly and efficiently as possible when we start curbside pickup the beginning of June.

3. As is typical every May, staff will also be getting the final details put together for the Summer Learning Program. Unfortunately, SLP will have to be scaled back from what our kids and teens have come to expect. We are as disappointed and upset as the kids. All SLP programs will be done virtually, which is a huge change and an equally huge challenge to staff. That said, staff has come up with some creative programs that will still be fun and educational. Just don't tell the kids about the educational part.

Other things to know about: if you still have library items checked out prior to closure, you can either continue to enjoy them or put them in the drop box. Please use the red box between the library and the city/county health building, the drop by the glass doors tends to damage items if it gets too full. To use the red box, enter the city/county health parking lot by Leever's, follow it around turning left and heading south, the box will then be on the driver's side, exit onto 4<sup>th</sup> St across from the city parking behind the Post Office.

We still have all our electronic materials available through our website, [vcbclibrary.org](http://vcbclibrary.org). Staff is also available M-F 10-5ish to answer phone questions or send us an email at [support@vcbclibrary.org](mailto:support@vcbclibrary.org)

A public library is all about people, so from all the staff to all our patrons, we miss you. Stay safe, stay well.