



Library services in Sayward

Thursday, August 18, 2017, Nanaimo, BC: Plans are underway to restore library services to the Village of Sayward. Village Council has provided Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) with access to its Council Chambers to offer temporary library services while a permanent solution is finalized. Of the three permanent options provided by the Village, VIRL has indicated its preferred location on which to house a 1,500 – 1,800 sq. ft. prefabricated facility on the lands occupied by the Kelsey Community Centre.

"We recognize that the library is vital to the community," says VIRL's Executive Director Rosemary Bonanno. "Since the closure, we have been working closely with Village Council to arrive at a solution as quickly as we can. From the moment the branch closed, restoring library services to the Village has been a priority for VIRL staff and the Board of Trustees."

Up until the August 15 Sayward Council meeting, at the request of the Mayor and Council our discussions had remained in camera. VIRL can now provide the following information:

- **Closure:** On May 31, the Sayward branch was closed to staff and the public due to concerns about air quality. In June, an air quality assessment was undertaken, the results of which indicated air quality concerns. VIRL staff worked with the landlord to address the air quality issues; however, a second assessment conducted in July yielded similar results. Due to health and safety concerns for staff and customers and WorkSafeBC regulations, the decision was made to keep the library closed.
- **Temporary Location:** We hope to open a temporary location in Council Chambers within approximately 8 weeks' time. Once open, the space will provide free WiFi, public computers, work stations, a location to pick up requested materials, and a selection of physical materials available for loan.
- **Permanent Location:** We plan to open a prefabricated branch on leased land at the Kelsey Community Centre that will include a parking lot, accessible entrances and landscaping. With the larger space, we are looking at various service improvement options, including a larger collection, more IT infrastructure, seating areas, and programming space.

Before the temporary library opens, VIRL plans to install a WiFi hotspot outside the current library for public use. We are also offering a Books-by-Mail service to all Sayward cardholders. More information about this service is available 1.877.415.VIRL or by contacting us at info@virl.bc.ca.

A timeline and budget for the permanent branch are still to be determined. In the meantime, VIRL will conduct a land survey, and undertake the geotechnical, environmental and other work required to prepare the site. VIRL will also develop the lease for the land with Sayward.



Media Release

Of the three possible options provided by the Village, the site at the corner of H'Kusam Way and MacMillan Drive is VIRL's preferred location. Pursuant to the *Library Act*, a final decision about where to locate the new library rests with the VIRL Board of Trustees.

Information about public consultations, surveys, and other ways the public can provide input, will be provided soon.

More information is available at virl.bc.ca/sayward-story.

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