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# NEWS RELEASE



May 11, 2020

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## **Pierce County Library Board discusses serving the community during the pandemic**

**PIERCE COUNTY, Washington** – The Pierce County Library System Board of Trustees will discuss how the Library System is serving communities while the library buildings are closed to help reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus pandemic 2019 (COVID-19) and in compliance with Gov. Jay Inslee’s Stay Home, Stay Healthy Order. Also, at the meeting the Board will talk about plans to reopen library buildings to the public in the coming months. Join the meeting **via conference call, 1-510-338-9438, access code: 623 788 004 #, attendee ID: #, on Wednesday, May 13, at 3:30 p.m.**

At the May meeting, the Board of Trustees will conduct the following business.

**Library services during the pandemic:** While the Pierce County Library’s buildings are closed, the Library System is enthusiastically and actively delivering library services [online](#) and in the community. People can get and start using a [library card](#) immediately and gain access to all online library services. Online services include [e-books, audiobooks, and magazines](#) and [e-sources resources](#) to help with personal and professional goals, Ancestry Library, Tumblebook Library featuring animated, talking picture books, and tools for students while studying at home with real-time, online tutors.

Pierce County residents are eagerly accessing these high-valued services:

- In April for the first time 1,878 people started checking out e-books and online audiobooks, this marked the second highest number of new customers since the Library started offering this service several years ago. March 2020 was the highest number of new customers with 2,054.
- In April people checked out 144,595 e-books and online audiobooks, the highest month on record since the Library began offering this service.
- Staff provided resource guides, early learning materials, as well as free books funded by the Pierce County Library Foundation to school food sites at several local school districts and Centro Latino.
- The Library is connecting with residents through social media with Facebook posts reaching 22,232 people with 3,040 engagements with likes, shares and comments on posts, for an engagement rate of 14%, far exceeding the industry standard of 5.4%.
- The Library is also communicating with people via email messages resulting in 39,000 recipients opening each message for an open rate of 46%, exceeding industry standard of 25.17%.

**Planning for opening library buildings:** Staff is preparing to reopen libraries in alignment with Governor Inslee’s Safe Start Washington plan to safely reopen businesses and other activities. Libraries are included in Phase 3 of the reopening plan. As many public health and government leaders are planning, the Library is also preparing to phase in the offering of services with a turning of a dial, and not flipping a switch. The Board will discuss plans for staff to return to the buildings and prepare to provide service in library buildings. The Library is committed to safe and welcoming libraries for the public’s use and a safe work place for staff.

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**More information:** [piercecountylibrary.org/about-us/board-trustees/board-agenda-packets/Default.htm](http://piercecountylibrary.org/about-us/board-trustees/board-agenda-packets/Default.htm)

## **About Pierce County Library System**

The nationally acclaimed [Pierce County Library System](#) serves 614,000 people throughout Pierce County with 20 libraries and online services. The system is the fourth largest in the state and is funded primarily through property taxes. People may choose from 1.1 million books, movies and other materials, as well as nearly half a million online/downloadable materials. Pierce County Library is committed to directing services in three primary areas: learning, enjoyment and community connection. Its services and programs spark success for Pierce County residents. More than 2 million people visit Pierce County Libraries each year. The Library provides services and programs directly to people in adult care facilities or who are homebound, and to children in child care centers and schools. [Pierce County Libraries are located](#) at Anderson Island, Bonney Lake, Buckley, DuPont, Eatonville, Fife, Gig Harbor, Graham, Key Center, Lakewood, Milton/Edgewood, Orting, Parkland/Spanaway, Pierce County Library Administrative Center, South Hill, Steilacoom, Summit, Sumner, Tillicum and University Place. Pierce County Library is an independent municipal corporation and operates as a junior taxing district.

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