

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — March 19, 2015

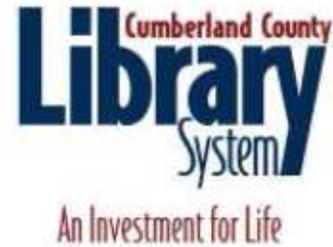
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What Will Happen to Public Libraries?

Public Forum Discussion Set for March 25, 2015 in Shippensburg

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, PA – The Cumberland County Library System and County Commissioners’ will hold a panel discussion on **Libraries of the Future** on Wednesday, March 25, 2015 from 7 pm to 9 pm at the Conference Center at Shippensburg University. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Jonelle Darr, Executive Director of the Cumberland County Library System said that “we’re excited to have four experts from across the nation to discuss the major challenges and changes libraries have faced in the past several years. We’ll also hear how libraries have evolved over time to stay relevant.” Darr said that the guest panelists include:

1. Garry Golden, a professionally trained Futurist who speaks and consults on issues shaping business and society in the 21st century.
2. Bill Schell, President of the York County Library System and the Martin Library Association.
3. Karen Archer Perry, founder of Clarion Collaborative, a research-based consultancy that focuses on creating and supporting digital access programs that drive large-scale systemic changes in educational and civic institutions.
4. Amy Garmer, Director of the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries, s a partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Global Libraries program that brings together leaders in libraries, government, business, technology and community development to explore and champion new ways of envisioning public libraries for a knowledge-based society.

Larry Thomas, Cumberland County’s Chief Clerk, said that this session would be the second in a three-part panel discussion series. The first was held in February on the topic of **Community Needs for Libraries**.

“A very positive outcome of the first meeting was a strong consensus on areas where libraries were uniquely equipped to address our County’s unmet needs,” said Thomas. These included:

1. Provide young children with the resources and programs they need to be ready for school and to support children’s learning needs so that they are able to graduate successfully from high school.
2. Provide more programs and resources for the county’s growing elderly population.
3. Provide greater library access and support to the growing numbers of people in Cumberland County who are living in poverty.

4. Provide resources and programs to address five essential literacies: basic, information, financial, health and civic/social.
5. Provide access to information technology, especially the Internet.
6. Provide community meeting and gathering spaces.

“But,” Thomas said, “next comes the difficult task of defining a sustainable scope for libraries.” He said this has to take place within the context of rapidly changing customer needs, preferences, and technology and limitations on funding.

“In short, as partners in addressing County needs, where should libraries expand, contract, or possibly disengage its resources; and where can the funding come from to support it?”, Thomas asked.

Darr said that the final panel discussion will be held April 30, 2015 from 7 to 9 pm at Messiah College’s Boyer Hall, The Parma Cinema Center on the topic of **Library Finance**.

For more information about the meetings, visit

http://www.cumberlandcountylibraries.org/?q=Building_Consensus.

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Garry Golden



Karen Archer Perry



Bill Schell



Amy Garmer