



PRESS RELEASE

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Writing the Next Chapter

Ascension Parish Library Begins Renovations to Donaldsonville Branch

Gonzales, LA – For many residents, the library in Donaldsonville represents a place in the community for families to spend time together, learn, engage, and grow. Recently, libraries have begun transforming into multipurpose centers – providing connections to digital learning and technology to spur creative thinking. Today, Ascension Parish Library (APL) in Donaldsonville began writing its next chapter as a modern library with opportunities and experiences.

“When this building is finished, it will reflect the reinvention of libraries in the 21st century,” said APL Director John Stelly. “We’ll still have quiet areas, but there will also be a buzz of activity here. This remodel is about the library evolving with collaborative spaces where people can connect and create in a technology-driven society.”

With the addition of 2,700 square feet, the renovated Donaldsonville library will be 15,350 total square feet. It will feature technology and tools to promote creativity and STEAM-based learning. A new audiovisual recording studio and virtual reality room will allow users to record podcasts, songs, and create videos using a green screen. A makerspace will offer digital design software, 3-D printers, and a laser cutter.

The library will also have an expanded children's area, a new dedicated teen space, and a new collection centered on the African American experience; The Jeannette Jefferson Collection, a collection to reflect the history, culture, and interests of African Americans.

Renovations will also include a professionally curated historical display to tell the story of the City of Donaldsonville.

“The library will be a place where people can develop new skills that can lead to a career path or encourage a new hobby. It will be a space to innovate, read, create, and learn. An entry point into the future while also celebrating the past,” said Stelly. “We are excited to be moving forward today.”

The system temporarily relocated its Donaldsonville branch to 420 Mississippi Street (across from the permanent building) at the end of 2021. At the time, the library budgeted \$3.5 million for the project. Bids came back significantly higher than expected, delaying the start of the project.



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In 2022, APL entered a process known as Construction Manager at-Risk (CMAR), where the project architect (Multistudio) and the selected contractor (Lincoln Builders) find ways to save on design without compromising the library's promises.

The library will remain in its temporary location until renovations are completed. The renovation is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2024.

About APL

Ascension Parish Library (APL) is an award-winning library system committed to providing opportunities for lifelong learning to all ages. APL delivers needed resources through traditional library services, digital materials, and innovative programs. Ascension Parish Library encourages residents to read, learn, and create by visiting their local library.

To learn more, visit <https://www.myAPL.org/>.

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