

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Cara Burton, (757) 787-3400

## **GROUNDBREAKING FOR NEW REGIONAL LIBRARY AND ESVA HERITAGE CENTER**



(PARKSLEY, VIRGINIA) September 27, 2019 – The Eastern Shore Public Library will have a groundbreaking ceremony on **October 23, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.** for the new Regional Library and the Eastern Shore of Virginia (ESVA) Heritage Center at 24313 Bennett Street in Parksley, Virginia. The public is invited for the one-hour special event that will include an honor guard and remarks by Governor Ralph Northam. A celebratory cake will be served after the ceremony.

The groundbreaking ceremony has been a highly anticipated event for many Shore volunteers and staff who have worked over ten years for this project to start. A 2008 study of the Eastern Shore Public Library System highlighted facility needs to improve the capacity and efficiency of the four libraries on the Shore. Soon after, a nonprofit 501(c)3 foundation was formed to raise money for a larger, central facility. The ESPL Foundation recruited volunteers and began fundraising. Architects were hired to more closely review space needs and make recommendations.

Based on these reports, the ESPL Board of Trustees voted to build a new regional library in Parksley, Virginia and close the 1965 facility in Accomac. Over time, a public-private partnership was developed between the library board, ESPL Foundation, and Accomack County to launch a \$5 million project. In addition to \$2 million in funding from Accomack County, \$1.5 million in state funding was secured through the Library of Virginia. The ESPL Foundation was then charged to raise the remaining \$1.5 million through donations and grants. Through a combination of fundraisers, capital campaigns, grant writing, and a loan, the library Foundation volunteers raised the necessary funds to start the project.

A library board Construction Committee worked with Waller, Todd, and Sadler, now a Woolpert Company, of Virginia Beach, to design the 20,837 square foot facility. The project will renovate a blighted grocery store in Parksley and create an addition for the ESVA Heritage Center. Construction planning has coincided with Parksley's downtown revitalization project, which will improve pedestrian access to the library.

Accomack County is overseeing the construction project. After a public competitive bidding process, locally owned RH Contracting of Atlantic was awarded the construction contract.

The building of a public library that serves all ages and walks of life turned out to be far more complicated and extensive than the dedicated group of volunteers planned in 2009. The resulting process, however, forged new partnerships that will benefit library support for years to come. Community feedback during the process crafted the ESVA Heritage Center and identified new educational opportunities for library services.

“Because this is truly a community project,” stated Cara Burton, Library Director, “we hope everyone will come out to the groundbreaking on October 23rd. From this point, you will watch the new library being built and then join us again at the end of 2020 for the grand opening celebration.”

The library groundbreaking will be an outdoor event, rain or shine. For more information, call the library at (757) 787-3400. For information about the building project, go to [shorelibrary.com](http://shorelibrary.com).

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