



## INTRODUCTION

Sometimes the stars truly align. As the new Strategic Plan for the Eastern Shore Public Library is completed, a new constellation of changes and opportunities has formed. The system celebrated its sixtieth anniversary in 2018, which marked the creation of the regional agreement between Accomack and Northampton Counties. Technology in our library system has taken hold so that patron access is now assumed, rather than novel. Landmark events are taking place within the system and in the community it serves.

The new regional library building under construction will offer four new meeting rooms, providing a community amenity that the library never had before. A new Heritage Center will bring the library's local history special collections into the national limelight. Cape Charles Memorial Library is responding to tremendous town growth and will have a new Library Manager, the first in eighteen years. Northampton Free Library has its first fulltime professional librarian and is updating its facility. Chincoteague Island Library has a new library manager and a new board chair and is also responding to tremendous town growth. The ESPL System hired me as its new Director in 2016, the first person in leadership recruited from outside the system since 1974. New staff members have been hired who have worked in other libraries, bringing fresh ideas, different experiences, and new skills to our team.

The library system has a strong base of community support and vision. The ESPL Foundation has been in existence since 2009 and has been highly successful in fundraising and engaging the community in supporting the library system. The system has three active Friends groups, buoying the services offered by the libraries in Accomack, Nassawadox, and Cape Charles. The Chincoteague library's board of volunteers also act as a Friends group.

This is an excellent time to assess the library system's situation and envision how it should grow and what it should be in five years. What will it take in resources to attain system-wide excellence? Enclosed is a road map to help us on that journey. Thank you for joining us in our work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cara Burton".

Cara Burton  
Library System Director