

NEWS

Libraries reopening in-person; business grants; flower farm honored — The buzz

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STAUNTON — Libraries are opening for in-person services, some local businesses received grants and a county flower farm is recognized — here's the buzz.

Libraries reopening

Staunton and Augusta County public libraries will be reopening for its grab and go services starting April 26. This means there will be limited in-person services resuming while following COVID-19 safety precautions, a release said.

Curbside pick-up service will still be available for both Staunton and Augusta County library locations. The public is encouraged to continue to use curbside pick-up in addition to the libraries' digital collections as the safest methods to access library services and resources, the release said.

Staunton hours

Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Details are available at StauntonLibrary.org

Augusta County's Main Library in Fishersville

Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The full schedule for each county branch and location-specific services is available at augustacountylibrary.org/locations-and-hours.

For the protection of the public and employees, the following safety protocols will be implemented:

No one with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19, or known exposure to a COVID-19 case in the prior 14 days, is permitted to enter.

Visitors are expected to comply with Virginia's Executive Order 72, which requires that all patrons aged 5 and over must wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose when inside a local

government building.

Visitors are expected to maintain physical distancing of at least six feet from others at all times.

The libraries are asking patrons to make their visits brief and limit time spent in the facilities. Visitors can “Grab & Go” by using the library catalog in advance and placing holds to have materials pulled and waiting. Library staff will continue to offer personalized reading suggestions and displays to help patrons select materials quickly. The online library catalog can be accessed at ValleyLibraries.org.

There will be a limited number of public computers available for use, as well as printing, copying and faxing availability. Visitors are encouraged to use a library’s Wi-Fi network from the parking lot in the safety of a vehicle.

Visitors will see some adjustments to the facility including:

- Sneeze guards at public service desks.

- Floor markings to help visitors maintain six-foot physical distance from others.

- Limited seating options.

- Reduction in the number of internet computers available.

- Closure of meeting space and other rooms as deemed necessary.

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Grants

Two area businesses won grants thanks to the The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association 2021 DoorDash Restaurant Operator Relief Grant program.

Marino's in Staunton and SweetNanaCakes outside of Waynesboro both received \$3,500 grants under the program.

The initiative is part of DoorDash’s Main Street Strong Pledge, which included a \$10 million grant effort in select cities, counties and states across the U.S. and Canada, a release said.

Grant criteria included:

- No more than three locations with 50 or fewer employees

- Annual gross revenue of \$3 million or less for the location applied for

A brick-and-mortar location, that experienced a reduction in revenue, financial stress or disrupted operations from March 2020 through December 2020

The travel association and DoorDash awarded 128 grants out of 690 restaurants that applied. Each grant recipient will receive \$3,500.

Considerations for the grant included:

- The impact of the pandemic and the ways the business has adapted
- The personal story of the business owner or owners
- The role the organization plays in their community
- How the grant funds will be used

Priority was given to women, veteran, minority and disability-owned businesses as well as those which have not received significant pandemic-related financial support from federal, state or local sources, the release said. Applicants did not have to be a DoorDash partner to be eligible, the release said.

The grant funds for Marino's will be used for working capital for the reopening, scheduled for curbside service in early Summer 2021, and for in-restaurant dining in late Summer 2021.

For SweetNanaCakes will use the grant money to keep staff working, add more ways to have customers feel safe with contactless pick-up, offer a delivery service, more PPE and COVID necessary supplies for day to day operations.

Harmony Harvest

Weyers Cave flower farm, Harmony Harvest, was featured in Better Homes and Garden's "5 Women-owned Flower Farms That Will Deliver Gorgeous Bouquets Nationwide" article published in early March.

"The following flower farms cater to their customers by providing everything from chic burlap packaging to private floral workshops," the article said.

Harmony Harvest was among other flower farms from California and companies that span the country.

"This notoriety comes at a perfect time as the farm is gearing up for a record-breaking Mother's Day season," a release from Harmony Harvest said. "As one of the only farms in the country that ships fresh flowers direct to consumers, Harmony Harvest Farm's online e-commerce store features a variety of American-grown flower bouquets, DIY flower boxes, merchandise and assorted floral gifts."

They will also be hosting a Mother's Day Pop-Up Shop on the farm at 201 Little Run Road in Weyers Cave on May 7 and 8. More information can be found on Harmony Harvest's Facebook page.

Laura Peters is the trending topics reporter at The News Leader. Have a news tip on local trends or businesses? Or a good feature? You can reach reporter Laura Peters (she/her) at lpeters@newsleader.com. Follow her @peterslaura. Subscribe to The News Leader at newsleader.com.