March 11, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries programs canceled starting on Friday

Out of caution and to help protect the public from exposure, library district to cancel all public programs for two weeks

VANCOUVER, Wash. – After consultation with branch managers, input from its Board of Trustees, and following advice from the Washington State Health Department's guidelines for mass gatherings, Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries has decided to cancel its public programs for two weeks, starting March 13 and going through at least March 27. Additionally, the district is canceling outreach visits and bookmobile stops during that same time frame. Public use of library meeting space is not affected, though some private groups who had reserved meeting space at the library have canceled their planned activities. Over the next two weeks, the district will consider when to restore programs, outreach, and bookmobile services, or taking additional steps depending on the situation with the state's COVID-19 outbreak.

"While many library services such as helping patrons find and check out materials or giving them access to computers and Wi-Fi can be maintained, our programs – loved and vital to our community as they are – present unique challenges to maintaining public health," said Amelia Shelley, executive director for FVRLibraries. "Given current health guidelines calling for 'social distancing' of 6 feet or more in public gatherings, we came to the tough decision to cancel programs for the time being to ensure that the library is not bringing people together unnecessarily."

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Library locations: Battle Ground, Cascade Park, Goldendale, La Center, North Bonneville, Ridgefield, Stevenson,
Three Creeks, Vancouver, Vancouver Mall, Washougal, White Salmon Valley, Woodland, Yacolt, Yale

The canceling of programs is across the district, covering three counties (Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat) and the City of Woodland. "We know this is a loss to our local communities, but as a public institution, we also have a duty to help contain the virus and take precautions to protect patrons and staff from exposure," added Shelley.

FVRLibraries is actively monitoring information and advice from state and county public health officials about COVID-19. In addition to canceling programs, the district has taken other steps over the last weeks to ensure patron and staff safety:

- Frequent cleaning of the library counters, keyboards, and entryways
- Making hand sanitizer or wipes available to the public when possible
- Removing hard-to-clean items such as toys and other soft items
- Reminding the public of safety practices regarding virus transmission
- Encouraging everyone to practice social distancing of 6 or more feet

In order to minimize unnecessary exposure for attendees, the district has also decided to move next Monday's Board of Trustees meeting to the district's Operations Center, 1007 E Mill Plain Boulevard, Vancouver and will only allow for written comments.

For more information about the library's response to COVID-19 and updated information during the next few weeks, visit: https://www.fvrl.org/coronavirus-response

About Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries
Established in 1950, Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries (FVRLibraries) provides a vast range of information and cultural services to almost 490,000 Southwest and South Central Washington citizens in Clark, Skamania and Klickitat Counties, and the city of Woodland and Yale Valley Library District in Cowlitz County. FVRLibraries provides a collection of more than 650,000 items, online library services at www.fvrl.org, two bookmobiles, telephone information services, 24/7 online help, outreach programs, and 15 public library locations: Community Libraries in

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